

Fake doctor, aides 'serving' hijras arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man providing gender affirmation services to the hijra and gender-diverse population in the capital was arrested for not having any medical licence.

An outfit named Laser Beauty Parlour in Malibagh, was allegedly conducting castrations without having any medical clearance, and the surgeries were being conducted by a man named Mohammad Hadiuzzaman, posing as a doctor.

In addition to castrations, the establishment also provided hormone therapies, botox, and silicone breast implants, said the first information report (FIR) filed with Shahjahanpur Police Station.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Ramma) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch Mishu Biswas said they raided because they did not have any clearance to perform these surgeries. "Because they are not doctors," he said.

"We are still verifying if such services are legal in this country," he said. The parlour was raided around 7:25pm on Wednesday.

Akash, a hijra individual named in the FIR as a "victim", said he was asked for Tk 1 lakh for castration.

"I do not want a castration but I was sent to verify the information. A lot of hijra individuals, however, want this surgery to fully lead their lives as women," she said.

Moyna Pal, a hijra individual present on spot as a customer, said she was doing acne and facial hair removal.

"Not all places allow us or provide us with the services we need, but this parlour did," she said.

The FIR stated, "They used to defraud people of the 'third gender' and exploit them by posing to be doctors even though they are not, and different illegal services such as skin-bleaching, silicone breast implants, and different surgical services."

The arrestees are Mohammad Hadiuzzaman, 45, Sonia Khatun, 25, Mohammad Nur Islam, 30 and Mohammad Johnny Ahmed, 33.

Sri Lanka police arrest man for stealing president's flags

AFP, Colombo

Police yesterday said they arrested a Sri Lankan trade union leader who allegedly took two official flags from the deposed president Gotabaya Rajapaksa's palace and used them as a bedsheet and a sarong.



Boatloads of bamboos at Tarabo on the Shitalakkhya are for sale. The boats brought in the building and scaffolding materials from districts as far away as Mymensingh to the Narayanganj side of the river. The photo of the wholesale market was taken from the Sultan Kamal bridge in Demra.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PELOSI'S POTENTIAL TAIWAN TRIP US seeks to reduce boiling tensions

Blinken hopes to manage differences 'in wise way';
China announces Taiwan Strait drills

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden's administration yesterday tried to defuse heated Chinese warnings against a possible trip to Taiwan by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, as Beijing announced live-fire military drills in the Taiwan Strait.

Pelosi is reportedly about to leave on an Asian tour that would include Taiwan -- although she pointedly refused to confirm Friday that she would visit the self-ruled island citing travel security considerations.

China sees any such stop by the speaker as a provocation, upsetting the tense status quo under which Washington formally recognizes China's sovereignty claim over the island -- while backing the democratic Taiwanese government.

"We have many differences when it comes to Taiwan, but over the past 40 plus years, we have managed those differences and done it in a way that has preserved peace and stability and has allowed the people on Taiwan to flourish," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

"It would be important as part of our shared responsibility to continue to manage this in a wise way that doesn't create the prospect for conflict and

keeping open lines of communication on this issue."

The temperature has been steadily rising in Beijing over the prospect of a Pelosi trip.

A day after Chinese leader Xi Jinping told Biden in a lengthy phone call that the United States shouldn't "play with fire" when it comes to Taiwan, the communist country's state-run media announced drills in the region.

"Live ammunition will be fired... between 8:00 am and 9:00 pm (0000-1300 GMT) and any entry (into these waters) will be prohibited", said a government statement.

The statement did not mention Pelosi. Also, the location of the exercise is just off mainland China's shore, rather than out at sea in the straits nearer to Taiwan.

However, there appears to be little doubt in the messaging.

While US officials often make discreet visits to the island in a show of support for its democratic self-ruling government, Pelosi is second in line to the US presidency and one of the country's most powerful politicians.

Pelosi, who would be traveling on US military aircraft during her Asia tour, told

reporters Friday that she planned the trip because of the Biden administration's "strong emphasis" on the Asia-Pacific region.

But she continued to refuse to confirm or deny plans for a stop in Taiwan. "I don't ever talk about my travels, because some of you know, it's a security issue," she said.

What China might actually do remains unclear.

A spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry said "a visit to Taiwan by Speaker Pelosi would challenge China's red line, and any challenge to our red line will no doubt be met with resolute countermeasures."

In his comments to Biden, reported by Chinese state media, Xi made an equally heated, but vague statement, saying "those who play with fire will eventually get burned."

The area where yesterday's Chinese maneuvers were set to take place is located on Pingtan island, which is in the Taiwan Straits, but about 120 kilometers (75 miles) from the actual Taiwanese coast.

However, a commentator for the state-run Global Times newspaper urged intercepting Pelosi's plane.

'Couldn't help but drag them

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Care Unit with critical head and neck injuries.

Jonayed said, "While crossing the line, we did not see any gatekeeper or gate bar on the crossline."

Another injured victim stated the same.

However, Abul Kalam Chowdhury, divisional railway manager in Chattogram, told The Daily Star, "The microbus forcefully moved into the crossing without paying heed to the gatekeeper's command. The level-crossing, where the accident took place, is a legal crossing and it has gate bars on both sides of the track."

He said the Bangladesh Railway (BR) formed a five-member committee to investigate the cause of the accident. It was directed to submit its report within the next seven working days.

The BR yesterday suspended

Saddam Hosen, the gatekeeper of the level-crossing due to negligence in duty, added the divisional rail manager.

Meanwhile, railway police filed a case against Saddam and detained him from Baratka area on Friday in connection with the accident.

SCHOOLYARD TURNED MOURNING GROUND

The premises of Khandia Chhambia Government Primary School in Hatazhari upazila's Jugirhat became a mourning site as the namaz-e-janaza of five of the 11 victims was held there yesterday.

The janaza of another deceased, who was Hindu, were already completed.

All the bodies were later sent back to their homes for burial.

The crowd fell silent as the bodies were brought out one after another.

Syedur Rahman, 60, told The Daily Star that the people of this idyllic village have never seen so many dead bodies at once in the last 50 years.

The schoolyard was overflowing with thousands of mourners.

The crowd fell silent as the bodies were brought out one after another.

As the body of Golam Mustafa, the driver of the microbus, was being taken out of the ambulance, whimpers of his four-year-old struck everyone's ears -- "Baba, Baba, please get up..."

"My grocery store is next to the coaching center -- R&J Private Centre -- where these students used to attend. I will not be able to see the 11 faces that I used to see almost every day."

Ishaq Bhuiyan, imam of Majidia Hafezia Madrasa Mosque, who led the funeral prayers, said this is the first time he has presented a prayer for five people together.

The janaza of another deceased was held yesterday on the Najumiya School ground, while that of two others -- Maruf and Jisan -- were held last night.

The last rites of another deceased, who was Hindu, were already completed.

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