

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 (Ramna) 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 Sultana 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.

Three cases filed over Thakurgaon polls violence, infant's death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Three cases were filed with Ranishankoil Police Station yesterday afternoon over the polls-time violence in Thakurgaon on Wednesday, which led to the killing of an infant, said police.

Violence broke out on Wednesday evening after the announcement of the results of the elections to Bachor Union Parishad.

According to the case statements, Khatibar Rahman, presiding officer at Bhangbari VF Junior School polling centre, and also an assistant professor at Ranisankail Degree College, filed the first case accusing 300-350 unidentified people in connection with confining election officials and police personnel and also killing seven-month-old Suraiya.

Thakurgaon Police Station ASI Bilash Chandra Roy, who was on duty at the polling centre, lodged the second case against 150-200 unidentified people on charges of intercepting cops and attacking them while they were returning to the election control room at the UNO office from the polling centre.

The third case was lodged by Ranisankail Police Station ASI Ahadul Zaman against 200-250 unnamed people over laying siege to the police station on Wednesday night.

Three die of Covid, 349 get infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Covid-19 patients died in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, said a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A total of 349 new Covid cases were logged after testing 5,256 samples countrywide during the same period.

The positivity rate was 6.64 percent.

With the latest counts, the total number of Covid fatalities in the country reached 29,288 and the total cases 200,489.

The country has so far witnessed four Covid waves since the first cases were reported on March 8, 2020.

US Asst Secy Sison to visit Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organisation Affairs Michele J Sison will be visiting Bangladesh, India and Kuwait on August 2-10 for consultations on a range of US multilateral priorities.

The priorities include combating food insecurity, advancing global health, addressing human rights and humanitarian needs, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and support for Rohingya refugees.

The assistant secretary's meetings with senior government officials will focus on opportunities to deepen US cooperation at the UN, and US support for the candidacy of Doreen Bogdan-Martin to become the next secretary-general of the International Telecommunication Union, according to a US State Department statement issued yesterday.

In meetings with civil society leaders, Sison will exchange ideas on how the US and other countries can collaborate on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

'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 gateman 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 gateman'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 gateman 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 Baratakia area on Friday in connection with the accident.

SCHOOLYARD TURNED MOURNING GROUND

The premises of Khandkia Chhampia 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 schoolyard was overflowing with thousands of mourners.

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.

"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 Majidiya 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 road, while that of two others – Maruf and Jisan – were held last night.

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

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

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..."

'Importing' goods 'Made in Bangladesh'



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investigation, he said, adding that Conda Art has paid the penalty and the duties.

"We will consider what punishment can be applied for tampering with the rules of origin since the matter is new to us," Ahmed said.

Contacted, Eric Fu, general manager of Conda Art, told The Daily

Star through a translator on July 20:

"The matter has been settled with the Customs and the evaded duties along with the penalty have been paid as per the authority's demand. There is nothing more to comment."

The finished goods were brought in accidentally, said Saiful Islam, assistant manager of Conda Art's commercial department, who liaised with the customs to sort out the

issue.

When prodded on the "Made in Bangladesh" labelling on the products, Islam danced around the issue.

"According to the law, there is no obstacle to exporting those goods after paying the dues and penalty. Besides, we have already applied for approval to manufacture those products in our factory," he said.

To prevent a repeat of the incident, the authorities will be more watchful, said Moshiouddin Bin Mesbah, executive director of CEPZ.

At present, 179 companies are operating in CEPZ with registration from the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority, 12 of which are Chinese-owned.

"EPZ is not a warehouse where a company imports finished goods for export to a third country. Exporting products without any value addition is not allowed," Mesbah said.

Russia suspends gas

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Washington which backs them."

Zelensky laid the blame squarely on Russia.

"This was a deliberate Russian war crime, a deliberate mass murder of Ukrainian prisoners of war," he said. "Over 50 are dead."

Zelensky said an agreement for the Azovstal fighters to lay down their arms, brokered by the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross, included guarantees for their health and safety and called on those two organisations to intervene as guarantors.

Zelensky also urged the international community, especially the United States, to have Russia officially declared as a state sponsor of terrorism.

The mayor of the southern city of Mykolaiv, Oleksandr Sienkevych, said one person died and six were injured following Russian shelling in two residential districts overnight.

Rights issues, Rohingyas to figure high

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This visit comes when Bangladesh faces US sanctions on Rab and seven of its current and former officials on the grounds of human rights violations, while the country also faces the burden of one million Rohingyas and the recurrence of natural disasters induced by climate change.

The foreign ministry official said violations of human rights of the Rohingyas have been a focus area for Bachelet, who will definitely focus on it during her visit to Bangladesh, specifically the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

"Also, for Bangladesh climate change is a serious issue. A lot of people are being affected by the impacts of climate change and there are issues of their rights violations as well. So, this will also be highlighted," he said.

In a statement on March 14, UN human rights experts called on Bangladesh to immediately cease reprisals against human rights defenders and relatives of forcibly disappeared persons for their activism

and co-operation with international human rights bodies and UN mechanisms.

They said following the announcement of US sanctions against Rab on 10 December 2021, Bangladeshi authorities had reportedly launched a campaign of threats, intimidation and harassment against relatives of forcibly disappeared persons, human rights defenders, and civil society actors.

The experts noted with concern the increasingly challenging situation relatives, human rights defenders, and civil society are facing in Bangladesh. Repeated accusations by senior government officials against some civil society organisations of providing "false information" to the UN mechanisms risk undermining the civil society's key role.

The statement said since 2009, the Rab has reportedly been involved in the perpetration of the majority of cases of enforced disappearance in the country, as noted in several reports by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

In the latest statement of

Bachelet's office on June 10, it said it was concerned by Bangladesh's decision not to approve the renewal of registration for Odhikar. The decision follows repeated accusations by the authorities against Odhikar for "spreading propaganda" and "publishing misleading information" about extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

Another foreign ministry official said the government would clarify various aspects of human rights issues in Bangladesh and the measures already taken.

Under the UN Wing of the foreign ministry, an official was designated to better coordinate the issues of human rights. Earlier experiences suggest that the reporting mechanism was not comprehensive or the way the UN and other rights bodies want, he said.

Since the US sanctions, there are almost no allegations of "extrajudicial killings", the official said.

"We have already improved our rights situation and will highlight these."