

Journalist assaulted by coaching, hotel staffers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A journalist was allegedly confined to a hotel room and assaulted by employees of a coaching centre in Rajshahi city yesterday.

It happened around noon when Anisuzzaman, a senior reporter of *Dainik Ittefaq*, was taking photos at an event of Jibon Biology Coaching Centre at the auditorium of Hotel X.

The event was organised for the 10th grader girls of the coaching centre.

While he was taking the photos, several employees of the hotel and the coaching centre branded him as a fake journalist and assaulted him, even though he showed them his identity card, Anisuzzaman later told reporters.

"I fell to the ground after one of them kicked me. They then took me to a room and hit me again," he said.

Another journalist who was present at the hotel at the time called senior reporters in Rajshahi and told them what was happening.

Local journalist leaders and police arrived at the hotel in less than an hour and freed the victim.

Anisuzzaman said he went to the event because he was working on a report on alleged tax evasion by the coaching centre.

Local journalists later demonstrated in front of the hotel.

Some reporters also demonstrated in front of Rajpara Police Station alleging that the police refused to record a case over the matter.

Contacted, Jibon Kumar Ghosh, founder of the coaching centre, refused to make a comment on the matter.

Mainul Islam Tipu, a sales executive at Hotel X, said, "The girls' parents got angry when a journalist took photos. The hotel security then took him to another room. There was no incident of violence."

11 killed in Iraq gas tank explosion

AFP, Sulaimaniyah

Rescuers searched for more victims yesterday after a fuel tank explosion that killed at least 11 people and caused a house to collapse in northern Iraq, according to local authorities.

The blast in Sulaimaniyah occurred Thursday evening and left at least 11 dead and 13 injured, the city's emergency response chief Saman Nader told AFP.

He blamed the blast on "a gas leak from a tank".



With their pneumonia affected baby girl, the parents have been at Bhola Sadar Hospital for the last three days. Without getting any bed at the children's ward, they are staying on verandah. The number of children suffering from various cold-related diseases are increasing. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

Dhaka, Delhi discuss border, common security

Home boss meets Indian counterpart

BSS, New Delhi

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and his Indian counterpart Amit Shah yesterday held a meeting to discuss various aspects relating to border management and common security-related issues between the two countries.

The home bosses held the meeting on the sidelines of the No Money for Terror (NMFT) Ministerial Conference on Counter-Terrorism Financing, which began in New Delhi yesterday.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi opened the two-day conference at Hotel Taj Palace in the morning.

"Both sides had productive exchanges on border management and common security-related issues," the Indian home affairs ministry tweeted after the meeting.

Bangladesh delegation sources said they also discussed ways to bring down border killings to a "zero".

Regarding the repatriation of Rohingyas, who were forcibly displaced from their homeland in Myanmar, the Indian side assured Bangladesh of extending necessary cooperation, the sources added.

Both the home ministers expressed hope that the countries will stand beside each other as they did in 1971 in the time of future crises.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Md Mustafizur Rahman, Joint Secretary of the

Home Ministry of Bangladesh Abu Hena Mostafa Zaman, Deputy High Commissioner Md Nurul Islam, Minister (consular) Selim Md Jahangir, among others, were present at the meeting.



As many as 450 delegates from 76 countries across the world have been attending the NMFT conference to discuss issues on terror financing and other related issues. Home ministers of 20 countries including Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, France, Australia, Indonesia, and Singapore attended yesterday's sessions.

The Bangladesh home minister is leading a 3-member delegation to the conference, which "will offer a unique platform for participating nations to deliberate on effectiveness of the current international regime on Counter Terrorism Financing and steps required to

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Beijing mulling currency swap with Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming has said Beijing and Dhaka are working together to deepen financial cooperation, including currency swap.

"China is positively considering some financial cooperation with Bangladesh in one way or another," he said in reply to a question at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

The ambassador said he had in-depth discussions with the finance minister of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Bank governor recently.

During the meetings, the two sides reached consensus about taking some measures that include currency swap arrangement and the clearance of trade with the Chinese yuan, he noted.

"But before anything substantial can be achieved, we have a lot of technical issues, technical difficulties to overcome," he added.

Nora Fatehi lands in Dhaka, finally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a lot of speculation regarding the arrival of Nora Fatehi, the Canadian-born Indian actress finally reached Dhaka yesterday.

She will be performing at the Global Achievers Awards show, titled "Women Empowerment in Bangladesh", which has been organised by the Women Leadership Corporation. The performance will also be made into a documentary.

Initially, Nora had been denied the permission to arrive in Dhaka, with the hike in dollar prices being cited as the reason. On Monday, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) issued an order stating that Nora and other international artistes and celebrities would be barred from entering Bangladesh, unless they paid tax at source.

Later, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said the NBR does not have the jurisdiction to stop the programme.

9.5kg gold seized in Jashore

BSS, Jashore

BGB members recovered 82 gold bars, weighing around 9.558kg, from Panchbhulat border area in Sharsha upazila of Jashore on Thursday night.

Lt Col Tanveer Rahman, commanding officer of 21 BGB Battalion, said acting on a tip-off, a team raided the border area. But sensing presence of BGB personnel, the smuggler fled leaving the gold bars on a motorcycle.

Later, the bars were recovered from the bike. A case was filed in this connection.

Elephant found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered the carcass of a female elephant in Netrakona's Kalmakanda upazila yesterday morning.

Quoting locals, Abdul Ahad Khan, OC of Kalmakanda Police Station, said the elephant was found dead in a muddy part of a field in Bedghora area.

He said the animal, whose carcass bore no injury marks, might have died from overeating.

Police later handed over the body to forest department officials.

Saidul Islam, officer of Durgapur Range Forest Department, said samples were collected from the animal carcass for a forensic test and the cause of its death would be known after getting report.



Strikes on yet Sylhet

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the city and different other places today.

"Over 900 police personnel will be deployed and four mobile teams led by magistrates will be on the streets," he added.

The BNP is holding rallies in the divisional cities to protest the price hike of essentials and fuel.

Rallies have already been held in Chattogram, Mymensingh, Khulna, Rangpur, Barishal and Faridpur.

Transport strikes were enforced ahead of those rallies, except the one held in Chattogram.

[Our Moulvibazar correspondent contributed to the report]

'Where did that attitude go?'

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"Where did that attitude go?" asked Quader, urging party members to remain vigilant to BNP's apparent change of tactics.

Challenging the BNP to join the upcoming polls, slated to be held between December next year and January 2024, Quader said, "We are ready. The BNP will realise again how popular Sheikh Hasina is."

Quader's comments come a day after BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir accused the government of trying to create chaos ahead of the planned rally.

The BNP has sought permission from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to hold the rally in front of the party's Nayapaltan headquarters on December 10.

NEW COMMITTEE OF SAINIK LEAGUE

Quader announced the new committee of the Bangabandhu Sainik League after the conference.

Harun Ur Rashid, chairman of Asian Television, was elected as the president of the committee. Tanzil bin Rahman was elected as the general secretary.

Shahidur Rahman, ASM Shamsuddoha, MA Kashem, Shaikat Azam were elected vice-presidents while MA Elah was elected as joint general secretary.

UK faces fresh wave of strikes over pay

AFP, London

Britain yesterday faced a fresh wave of strikes over pay, as London Heathrow airport ground staff began a three-day walkout and postal workers planned to extend industrial action.

Wages this year have failed to keep pace with rocketing consumer prices, sparking a cost-of-living crisis that has resulted in mass UK strike action across multiple sectors.

British inflation surged in October to a 41-year peak at 11.1 percent on soaring energy and food bills.

Heathrow is "braced for major disruption" as baggage handlers employed by contracting firm Menzies started their strike, trade union Unite said.

The walkout "will lead to

disruption, delays and cancellation for flights leaving Heathrow Terminals 2, 3 and 4" by airlines including American Airlines, Air Canada, Lufthansa and Swiss Air, it added.

"Menzies is a wealthy company and it can fully afford to pay its workers a decent pay increase," said Unite boss Sharon Graham.

A Heathrow spokesman insisted no cancellations were anticipated, adding it would seek to minimise the impact.

In a separate development, the Communication Workers Union said postal workers had voted overwhelmingly for more strikes this year and next, affecting deliveries in the run-up to Christmas and opening hours at post offices.

The CWU said those in charge of Royal Mail, which employs delivery workers, "need to wake up and realise we won't allow them to destroy the livelihoods of... workers".

Formerly state-owned Royal Mail recently announced it would axe up to 10,000 jobs, blaming the move partly on staff strikes that contributed to a first-half loss.

Post offices themselves are owned by the government.

Britain has seen strikes this year in various sectors, spearheaded by railway staff. State-employed lawyers have also walked out while nurses and teachers are considering action.

In the private sector, plush London department store Harrods faces the threat of a strike by security guards over the busy festive period.

Football moves centre-stage in Qatar

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"The World Cup is full of surprises," Neymar said. "You get teams that unexpectedly get very far even in the competition even if many don't believe in them. But I believe the favourites are Argentina, Germany, Spain and France."

"I think those four along with Brazil are fully capable of reaching the final."

While Argentina and Brazil have arrived in Qatar in prime form, defending champions France touched down in Doha shrouded in uncertainty.

The 2018 champions are bidding to become the first back-to-back World Cup winners since Brazil completed a double in 1962, but have been beset by injuries that have deprived them of midfield stars Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante.

France face Euro 2020 semi-finalists Denmark, Tunisia and Australia in Group D. The reward for winning the group will likely mean avoiding Argentina in the last 16.

If France emerge top of their group, it could well set up a quarter-final against England, who head into the tournament with little to suggest that their 56-year wait for a major title is about to come to an end.

Gareth Southgate's squad have failed to win any of their last six matches, the team's worst run of form since 1993.

The Three Lions kick off their campaign against Group B rivals Iran on Monday, and then face potentially awkward tests against Wales and the United States.

England's preparations have also been hit by the injury absence of

in-form defender Reece James, just one name on a lengthening list of players ruled out of the tournament. Senegal star Sadio Mane was added to the absentees late Thursday after undergoing knee surgery.

The mounting injury toll has been attributed to football's compressed schedule leading into the tournament -- a cause for concern for global players' union FIFPro.

Most players in Europe were in action for their clubs just days before heading to Qatar, and many will be pressed back into action swiftly after the tournament concludes with the final on December 18.

"Significantly reduced preparation and recovery periods before and after this World Cup pose an ominous threat to player health and hinder performance optimisation," FIFPro warned this week.

'Loss and damage' key sticking point

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damage" caused by climate change.

A cascade of climate-driven extremes in recent months -- from floods in Pakistan and Nigeria to heatwaves and droughts across the world -- have shone a spotlight on the ferocious impacts of a warming world for developing nations that are also struggling with debts and surging inflation.

In a bid to find a compromise, the European Union proposed late Thursday the creation of a fund for the most vulnerable nations but warned it was its final offer.

The EU proposal indicated that the bloc, previously fearful of open-ended climate damages liability, has "shifted significantly," said Rachel Cleatus, lead economist at the Union of Concerned Scientists' climate programme.

But she said all eyes were now on the United States and China, the world's top two polluters, fresh from a thaw in their climate relations after a meeting between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping earlier this week in Bali.

"It's crunch time," Cleatus told AFP. "There's no time anymore for the US to sit on the sidelines. They have to come out with what their position is to show that they're

being constructive."

Cleatus added that China should also make its position clear, particularly on the issue of whether it would contribute to such a fund and pledge not to draw from it.

"We think China and the US can really unlock this in these last 24 hours," Cleatus said.

Earlier in the week, the G77 and China bloc of 134 developing countries proposed creating the loss and damage fund at the COP27 meeting, with other details to be agreed later.

European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans told reporters yesterday that the EU offer had two "very important" conditions that differ from the G77 proposal.

He said the fund should be for "the most vulnerable" nations and the money should come from a "broad funder base" -- code for countries including China that have become wealthier since they were listed as developing countries in 1992.

Developing nations have been relatively united in calling for the loss and damage fund at this COP. Some small island states said they had discussed walking out if they do not see progress.

Saudi crown prince

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Justice Department lawyers said that the executive branch of US government, referring to the Biden Administration, had "determined that defendant bin Salman, as the sitting head of a foreign government, enjoys head of state immunity from the jurisdiction of US courts as a result of that office."

In late September, Saudi King Salman named Prince Mohammed prime minister in a royal decree

which a Saudi official said was in line with responsibilities that the crown prince was already exercising.

"The Royal Order leaves no doubt that the Crown Prince is entitled to status-based immunity," lawyers for the prince said in an October 3 petition requesting a federal district court in Washington dismiss the case, citing other cases where the United States has recognised immunity for a foreign head of state.