

Police 'assault' madrasa boys Teacher calls cops to discipline them

STAR REPORT

Police in Narsingdi have allegedly beaten up four madrasa students after their teacher called law enforcers to discipline them.

The boys, aged between 15 and 17, said the madrasa superintendent falsely accused them of criticising the madrasa on Facebook and had them tortured and detained by police.

Jahangir Alam, a member of Alokali Union Parishad in Narsingdi Sadar, went to the Kazirkandi Police Outpost and got them released after signing what he said was a blank paper.

The boys who passed the SSC-equivalent Dakhil exams recently went to Char Madhabpur Madinatul Ulum Dakhil Madrasa to collect a document on Thursday morning.

One of them told The Daily Star that after they went to madrasa superintendent Zainul Abedin's room, the latter told them to come back after around 20 minutes.

When they went back, they saw five-six policemen in the room. The police team led by Sub-Inspector Alim Hussain then started beating them with sticks while Superintendent Zainul with three assistant teachers stood there and watched.

"While the police hit us, SI Alim hurled abuse and warned us against criticising the madrasa on Facebook," said another student.

"None of us had to do anything about the Facebook posts that criticised the madrasa," he added.

This correspondent saw marks of torture on the bodies of the boys.

Locals said the madrasa drew criticisms after 22 of its 49 Dakhil students failed their exams.

UP member Jahangir, who had the boys released, told this correspondent that police did not tell him why they detained the students.

Local Awami League leader and member of the madrasa management committee Asad Ullah said he talked to the police about the matter. "The police beating encouraged by the madrasa superintendent is unacceptable."

Contacted, madrasa superintendent Zainul said the allegations were false.

"Police caught them for catcalling girls. We protested when police beat them up," he said.

Officer-in-Charge of Narsingdi Sadar Police Station Abul Kashem Bhuiyan said the head of the madrasa called the cops and a team went there to see what had happened.

The police did not hit anyone there, he said, adding that there was a complaint about students catcalling girls.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4



Women walk next to a kindergarten building damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kramatorsk, Donetsk region, Ukraine yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

UKRAINE'S SOUTHERN FRONT

Fighting 'sharply' increases

Kyiv says 20 settlements attacked; Germany wants allied consensus on sending tanks to Ukraine

AGENCIES

Fighting has "sharply increased" in the southern Ukraine region of Zaporizhzhia, where the front has been largely stagnant for months, a senior Moscow-installed official in the area said yesterday.

"In the direction of Zaporizhzhia, the intensity of military activity has sharply increased," the official, Vladimir Rogov, said on the Telegram social media platform.

Both Rogov and the Russian army said Moscow's forces had seized the village of Lobkove, some 50 kilometres south of the Ukrainian-held regional capital also called Zaporizhzhia.

"Lobkove is ours," Rogov said. He added that Russian forces had fired at Ukrainian positions with "tanks, mortar and artillery" in a dozen villages in the region.

The Ukrainian army said yesterday that "more than 20 settlements" had been attacked.

The front in southern Ukraine has been considerably quieter recently than the east, with Moscow withdrawing from the major city of Kherson in November.

Also yesterday, Russia said it had captured a hamlet south of the eastern

town of Bakhmut, now the epicentre of fighting between Kyiv and Moscow's forces, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, Germany said it would need agreement from allies to give the green light for the delivery of German-made tanks to Ukraine to fend off Moscow's invasion, dashing Kyiv's hopes for a quick decision.

Defence ministers from Nato and other countries were meeting in Germany amid warnings that Russia will soon reenergise its almost 11-month-old invasion to seize parts of Ukraine's east and south it says it has annexed but does not fully control.

The United States and Finland announced new military aid before the gathering at Ramstein Air Base, where the main focus was on whether Germany will allow the re-export to Ukraine of its Leopard 2 tanks used by armies across Europe.

German Defence Minister Pistorius said he could not say when there would be a decision on the tanks but that Germany was prepared to move fast if there was agreement between allies, reports Reuters.

"All pros and cons must be weighed very carefully," Pistorius said, adding that

the issue had been discussed yesterday but no decision had been made.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government has appeared reluctant to authorise the re-export of the tanks from countries that use them for fear of provoking Russia.

Some allies, along with Ukraine, say Germany's concern is misplaced with Russia already fully committed to war.

The Kremlin said that supplying tanks to Ukraine would not help, saying the West would regret its "delusion" that Kyiv could win on the battlefield.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, speaking at the start of the meeting, thanked allies for their support, but said more was needed and more quickly.

"We have to speed up. Time must become our weapon. The Kremlin must lose," said Zelensky, who earlier implied Germany was holding other countries back from sending their tanks.

Russia was regrouping, recruiting, and trying to re-equip, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said at the meeting.

"This is not a moment to slow down. It's a time to dig deeper. The Ukrainian people are watching us," he said, without making specific reference to tanks.

Motorcyclist killed in bus-bike collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A motorcyclist was killed after a bus collided head-on with a motorbike on the Dhaka-Rangpur Highway in Rangpur yesterday.

The victim, Mamun Miah, was a resident of Rasulpur village of Mithapukur upazila, reports our local correspondent, quoting police.

The accident took place in front of the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) in the city around 5:30pm.

Nazmul Kader, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tajhat Police Station, said a Shyamnagar-bound BRIC bus from Kurigram collided with the motorcyclist coming from the opposite direction in front of the BRRI.

Following the collision, the motorcyclist was thrown off his bike and killed on the spot, the OC said.

Police seized the bus but its driver and his assistant fled the scene.

Meanwhile, after the accident, the locals blocked the highway and halted traffic for about an hour.

Locals withdrew the blockade after police assured them of the driver's arrest.

Drone attack hits US-led coalition base in Syria: US military

AFP, Beirut

A drone attack hit a US-led coalition base in southern Syria yesterday, the US military's Central Command said, with a war monitor saying it was launched by Iran-backed groups.

"Three one-way attack drones attacked the Al-Tanf Garrison in Syria," a CENTCOM statement said.

Race on to replace Ardern as New Zealand PM

AFP, Wellington

Jacinda Ardern's shock resignation yesterday sparked a push for New Zealand to choose its first Maori prime minister, as a small pack of candidates emerged for the top job.

Ardern, a global figurehead for progressive politics, stunned New Zealand on Thursday by announcing her abrupt exit from office, less than three years after securing a second term in a landslide election win.

The 42-year-old - who steered the country through natural disasters, the Covid pandemic, and its worst-ever terror attack - said she no longer had "enough in the tank".

Ardern resigned with no clear successor and her ruling Labour Party is now scrambling to settle on a replacement.

Labour members of parliament will try to elect the next prime minister on Sunday, with the winning candidate needing two-thirds of the vote.

Death penalty proposed

FROM PAGE 1

supplying imported, old or polished foods to the government warehouses, illegal selling of foods from the warehouses and spreading false and fabricated information on food production and distribution.

The ministry also suggests punishment for government-appointed dealers, millers, contractors, and staffers for refusing to take part in the process of food production and distribution. The violators will get five years' imprisonment or a Tk 10 lakh fine or both.

Right now, for the above-mentioned offences, there is a maximum of three years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 5,000 or both in the Foodgrains Supply (Prevention of Prejudicial Activity)

If that does not happen, it will become a drawn-out contest involving rank-and-file party members and affiliated unions.

Chris Hipkins, 44, is the early frontrunner after Ardern's deputy Grant Robertson swiftly ruled himself out of the race.

Other names in the mix are Justice Minister Kiri Allan, one of Labour's senior Maori MPs, and Immigration Minister Michael Wood.

None of the three has so far confirmed they will contest the ballot.

Allan, a former commercial lawyer who entered parliament in 2017, has been touted as possibly New Zealand's first Maori prime minister.

She was forced to take leave from parliament in April 2021 after she was diagnosed with stage 3 cervical cancer but returned to work just three months later.

Labour's 15-member Maori caucus is expected to have a significant say in picking the next leader.

Ordinance, 1979.

In the proposed draft act, the court concerned is given the liberty to preserve a small amount of a perishable food item as evidence and sell the rest at auction instantly. For non-perishable goods, the court will get 45 working days to auction it.

SM Nazer Hossain, vice-president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said though there is a provision of strict punishment in the existing Special Powers Act, it is not being implemented.

Taking advantage of this, a section of people continues food adulteration, he said.

"We're welcoming the move and we expect the government will implement the act properly," said Nazer.

Job well done

FROM PAGE 1

Physicians, meanwhile, have taken off the bandages from the eyes of Suzon and Ferdous Akter yesterday, according to Prof Habibur.

He said, "They can move their eyelids and we hope they will be able to see everything clearly shortly."

The donor, Sara Islam died on Wednesday after her 19-year-long sufferings due to tuberous sclerosis, a rare genetic condition that causes mainly non-cancerous tumours to develop in different parts of a patient's body.

She was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at BSMMU on Monday as her health deteriorated after undergoing surgery on her brain tumour in India recently.

As her mother consented to donate Sara's organs, surgeons started the transplantation surgeries, known as cadaveric transplantation, after she was brain-dead and her organs were kept working using medical devices in the intensive care unit.

Kidney transplantation from living donors began in the country in 1982. But taking a kidney from a clinically dead patient was legally restricted.

In 2018, the organ donation law was amended allowing collection of organs from the clinically dead with consent from relatives.

AFP, Beauvais

A court in northern France on Thursday sentenced 14 Sri Lankans to prison for operating a migrant smuggling ring across Europe, as authorities across the continent try to crack down on the lucrative criminal networks.

The main suspect, accused of overseeing the operation from a grocery store in the village of Serfontaine, was handed a four-year

Three dead as truck hits auto-rickshaw in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Three people were killed and three others, including a woman and a child, were critically injured after a truck collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Sylhet's Dakshin Surma upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as auto-rickshaw driver Babul Miah, 65, and passengers Anhar Miah, 40, and Rejal Miah, 20, confirmed Moglabazar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Rezaul Karim.

The speeding truck coming from the opposite direction collided with

the auto-rickshaw on Sultanpur-Gaharpur road in Battala area around 4:30pm, OC Rezaul said.

The crash left the auto-rickshaw driver and his passenger Anhar dead on the spot and four others injured, he added.

The injured were rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where Rejal died.

While three others, Sona Miah, Rozina Begum and Al Amin, were undergoing treatment there with critical injuries, added the police official.

Low-income people hit hard

FROM PAGE 1

winter with regards to prices of essentials was no longer there.

The price of ginger has almost doubled in just a week. Spinach was selling for Tk 15-20 a bundle yesterday, up from Tk 10 last week. Eggs were being sold for Tk 130 a dozen yesterday against last week's price of Tk 110.

Cauliflowers were selling for Tk 40-50 each yesterday, up from Tk 20-30 last week.

Nur Islam, a ginger and garlic trader at Karwan Bazar, said supply of the two items dropped recently due to dollar crisis as large quantities

are imported from China.

Abu Sufian, a vegetable vendor at Kachukhet kitchen market, said he has been selling vegetables for 20 years. He sold bitter guard for Tk 140 per kg, ridge gourd for Tk 130 and pointed gourd for Tk 110 yesterday.

"I never saw such high prices of these three vegetables in my business life," he added.

He said most of the people are buying less, but there are some buyers for whom price is not a factor.

The prices of meat, fish and broiler chicken increased by Tk 10-Tk 20 per kg yesterday than the previous week.

French court convicts 14 Lankans of migrant smuggling

prison term, with one year suspended.

Investigators determined that he set the prices and routes for moving migrants from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh across the continent from Ukraine, with the help of bribes to officials in Eastern Europe.

Another suspect, who is based in Britain but fighting extradition requests, was given a five-year sentence by the court in Beauvais, while the others were given lesser

prison terms.

Smuggling gangs have flourished as increasing numbers of migrants have headed for Europe in recent years, with many hoping to cross the English Channel to Britain.

More than 45,000 migrants crossed the Channel from mainland Europe in 2022, surpassing the previous year's record by more than 17,000, according to British government figures.

2 children burnt to death while playing

UNB, Rajbari

Two children have been burnt to death as a house caught fire in Rajbari's Kalukhali upazila.

Hujaila, 8, son of Babu Biswas, and his neighbour Hasan, 3, son of Ikram, accidentally exposed a gas cylinder to fire while playing in the kitchen, said Kalukhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shah Md Shajeeb.

Both the children received serious burn injuries as the fire quickly ripped through the kitchen where dried branches of trees and jute sticks were stored.

They were rushed to Faridpur's Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College and Hospital where Hasan succumbed to his injuries.

Hujaila was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for better treatment where he died while undergoing treatment, the UNO added.

Man arrested after 19yrs of killing mother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police have arrested a convict who remained absconded for 19 years after killing her pregnant mother.

Dipu Sarkar, 45, of Habiganj's Madhabpur, was sued in the murder case in 2004. A court later sentenced him to life imprisonment.

On Thursday night, Rajeev Kumar Roy and Shuvo Dey, sub-inspectors of Madhabpur Police Station, finally arrested him from Fatehgazi shrine where he was hiding as a fakir.

Muhammad Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of the police station, said, "Dipu spent 19 years at various shrines in disguised of a fakir."

On information, police arrested him, he added.

Schoolboy found dead in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pubna

Police yesterday recovered the body of a schoolboy at Ratanakandi union in Sirajganj Sadar.

Ananda, 12, of Gojaria Uttarpara village, was brutally tortured before his death, said police.

According to the victim's family, he went to attend an "Islamic Jalsa" on Thursday night.

On Friday, locals found his body inside a room. On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body, said Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Sirajganj Sadar Police Station.

The body was sent to Sirajganj General Hospital for autopsy.

No case was filed in this connection till the time this report was filed.

Google cuts 12,000 jobs as tech woes bite again

AFP, New York

Google's parent company Alphabet announced yesterday it will cut about 12,000 jobs globally, citing a changing economic reality as it became the latest US tech giant to enact large-scale restructuring.

The layoffs come a day after Microsoft said it would reduce staff numbers by 10,000 in the coming months, following similar cuts by Facebook owner Meta, Amazon and Twitter as the tech sector grinds for economic downturn.