

FACEBOOK POST Sherpur judge withdrawn for 'hurting religious sentiments'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Iman Ali Sheikh, judge of Sherpur's Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman (Women and Children Repression Prevention) Tribunal, has been withdrawn and attached to the law ministry over "hurting religious sentiments" through his Facebook status.

The ministry yesterday issued a notification to this effect.

It says that Iman Ali, a judicial officer with the rank of district and sessions judge, has been attached to the law and justice division of the ministry and ordered to join there immediately after handing over the responsibility of the current position.

Contacted, Anisul Huq, law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister, told The Daily Star that he has hurt the religious sentiments. As a judge and under the code of conduct, he cannot do it.

He said departmental proceedings would also be initiated against Judge Iman Ali under the relevant rules for his act.

In reply to a query, Anisul said his ministry has taken the action in consultation with the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the SC administration yesterday issued a notification asking the lower court judges to strictly follow the restrictions imposed on using social media on September 22, 2019.

The SC administration issued a notification with a set of directives for the lower court judges on using social media, asking them not to upload images and video clips of SC judges and also not to publish information or make comments that go against the national unity and spirit.

The notification also said the lower court judges have to stop using social media during their working hours from 9:30am to 4:30pm.

If the instructions are defied, it will be considered misconduct and Bangladesh Judicial Services (Discipline) Rules 2017 alongside other relevant existing laws and rules will be applicable in this regard.

The notification also asked the judges to refrain from uploading, sharing, tagging, any status update, post, link, and image that are "irrelevant, unnecessary, defamatory, and unethical".



Shop owner Ismail Hossain tries to assess the damages to his wholesale boutique in the capital's New Super Market, a day after a massive blaze tore through the market. Traders yesterday returned to their shops there to calculate their losses and somehow try to start afresh.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

APPROVAL FOR LABOUR RECRUITMENT

Malaysia's transparency questioned by Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has questioned Malaysia's transparency in the approval process for recruiting Bangladeshi and other foreign workers as researchers and the media are increasingly exposing their exploitation and defrauding in the Southeast Asian country.

"Not a single worker is supposed to be jobless if the Malaysian government's foreign worker recruitment approval process is transparent," said Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia in a statement on Saturday.

Based on preliminary surveys, researchers said there could be thousands of migrant workers, mainly Bangladeshis, facing precarious conditions without jobs for months after arriving in Malaysia.

Independent researcher Andy Hall, who is based in Nepal but has his researchers in Malaysia, said many bogus Malaysian companies in connivance with the Bangladeshi agents are hiring Bangladeshi workers for making money. Those companies don't have actual workites and thus the workers are being left jobless.

"Our preliminary surveys found Bangladeshi workers' recruitment cost ranges from Tk 4 to Tk 5 lakh. When they

are arriving here [Malaysia] and finding no jobs, it means they are getting irregular and debt bonded," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Hall said the previous records of labour recruitment from Bangladesh to Malaysia suggest presence of syndication linked to the powerful lobbies in both the countries. Now that Malaysia is increasingly recruiting workers from Bangladesh, several examples of defrauding and exploiting the workers suggest that its scale is quite high.

Malaysia freshly started recruitment from Bangladesh in August last year, four years after suspending in 2018 on the allegations of excessive recruitment fees, corruption and labour exploitation. A syndicate of 10 Bangladeshi agents was allowed to send workers then.

Last year, Malaysia initially allowed 25 Bangladeshi agents to recruit workers in Malaysia and then it was expanded to 100 agents.

According to Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia, Malaysian labour department has approved recruitment of 3,58,892 Bangladeshi workers. Of them, 1,34,595 workers have already arrived there and arrival of 2.25 lakh more are in the process.

It said it got to learn from media reports and personal sources of the joblessness of foreign workers, including those of Bangladeshis, and has taken initiative to address the problems.

The high commission further said Malaysian authorities through diplomatic letter clarified that the Bangladesh mission in Malaysia should not inspect the project sites of companies that were applying for Bangladeshi workers, rather the inspection was under the purview of the labour department.

The statement claimed that the number of workers not getting jobs is small compared to the total number of those arriving there for jobs and workers of other countries also face the similar situation. The high commission is working to place the jobless workers under new employers.

"We are also closely working with the Malaysian government so that not a single Bangladeshi worker coming legally here faces harassment," the statement said.

Last week, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission arrested Human Resources Minister V Sivakumar's private secretary and another senior officer in connection with an investigation into the approval of migrant worker quotas.

Hold single admission test for all public univs

President tells UGC

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid, who is also chancellor of universities, has directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to take necessary measures to hold a single admission test for all public universities for the 2023-24 session.

A media release signed by Md Mahmudul Alam, joint secretary of secondary and higher education department of the education ministry, conveyed the directive yesterday.

The release also said the public universities that earlier held admission test in the cluster method for 2022-23 session were asked to complete the admission process.

DB gets 11th date to submit report in Tipu murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked the Detective Branch of police to submit its probe report in a murder case filed over the deaths of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity by June 15.

This is the 11th date given by the court as DB failed to submit its report.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Sheikh Sadi passed the order after Md Yasin Sikder, a DB inspector and the investigation officer of the case, failed to submit any report yesterday.

The duo was shot dead in the capital on March 24 last year.

Journo gets bail in DSA case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A cyber tribunal in Rangpur yesterday granted bail to Rahim Shuvo, Thakurgaon correspondent of Protidin Bangladesh, in a DSA case filed on April 18, 2020.

Hearing the bail petition, Judge Md Abdul Majid passed the order around 12:50pm.

Around 5:30pm, the journalist walked out of Rangpur jail.

Asked, Rahim told The Daily Star that he was given interim bail.

Mominul Islam Bhashani, president of Baliadangi upazila unit of Swachhasebak League, filed the case against Rahim and three others for tarnishing his image.

UK cancels new 'smart motorways'

AFP, London

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has cancelled the building of new "smart motorways" amid concerns about safety and cost, the Department for Transport said.

Fourteen planned smart motorways, which use technology to regulate traffic flow and ease congestion, will be removed from the governments road building plans, the department said.

Sonar Bangla Express

FROM PAGE 1

The express train from Chattogram rear-ended the stationary freight train at Hasanpur Railway Station of Cumilla, claimed locals.

Abidur Rahman, divisional railway manager (Chattogram), such a collision with a freight train is rare. "I cannot say what caused it. A four-member probe body, led by Divisional Transport Officer (Chattogram) Tarique Md Imran, has been formed."

However, a railway official said the signalling system was broken at the station and that the switch there was mistakenly directing trains to a loop line instead of the main line, which does not require a train to stop at the station.

The official claimed that the express was doing 70kmph when it hit the freight train, causing extensive damage to carriages.

Historic Mujibnagar Day today

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president of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, while vice president Syed Nazrul Islam became the acting president.

The Pakistan army massacred thousands of unarmed Bangalees in Dhaka and elsewhere on the night of March 25.

At the Mujibnagar ceremony, a contingent of police presented a guard of honour to the acting president. He received the salute and hoisted the national flag of independent Bangladesh.

The Mujibnagar government with Tajuddin Ahmed as prime minister led the country's nine-month Liberation War that ended in surrender of the Pakistani forces on December 16, 1971.

Capt M Mansur Ali, AHM Qamaruzzaman and Khondoker Moshataque Ahmed were cabinet members.

The ruling Awami League and its associate bodies will observe the historic Mujibnagar Day amid due enthusiasm and importance as various programmes have been

BR Director General Quamrul Ahsan said the driver should have stopped the train if the signal was not functioning. He overshot the signal causing the crash, he said.

Of the seven carriages that got damaged, three were AC chair carriages and four were non-AC carriages.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Railway last night cancelled today's Dhaka-Chattogram trip of Sonar Bangla Express. People had bought advance ticket for this trip on April 7. BR, however, said the ticket holders will travel on a special train that will leave Kamalapur Railway Station at 8:00am on April 19, said Nahid Hossain Khan, director (public relation) of BR.

He said if anyone wanted to cancel their trip, they could do so via the BR online portal and they would be refunded.

Shops on ground, 1st floors to reopen today

FROM PAGE 1

After a meeting of the affected traders, Khayer said the badly affected 243 shops on the second floor will be reopened once the shops are ready while the others on the floor will resume their business today.

He added that business will start using generators if power supply is not restored.

"We have already incurred loss. If the market remains closed for another day, the traders will face further loss," he said.

Khayer said they would work with the nine-member investigation committee of the Dhaka South City Corporation to prepare a list of the affected traders and seek compensation accordingly.

The DSCC has formed the body yesterday to determine the cause of the fire, the extent of damage and prepare the list. The committee has been asked to submit its report in three days.

During a visit to the market yesterday, it was found that most of the market's gates were closed, and only shop owners and staffers were allowed in.

Traders, along with their staffers, were seen busy cleaning up the floors. Some were arranging the retrieved clothes on the shelves on the second floor, while the others were removing the burnt ones from their shops.

Some traders were lamenting their loss.

Holding back his tears, Abdur Razzak, owner of MR Block and Boutiques-1 and -2, said he had borrowed Tk 25.6 lakh from a lender, a multipurpose society and relatives to stock up for Eid sale.

"I invested a lot to recover the losses incurred during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the fire destroyed everything," he told this paper while removing the burnt sarees from one

of his shops.

"How will I repay?" he asked with a despairing tone.

He also expressed doubt over how he would pay his staffers.

In another development, business resumed at adjacent New Market, Gausia, Chandrima and Nurjahan markets yesterday morning.

Traffic movement was restored from Science Lab to Home Economics College around 6:00am yesterday, said New Market police.

Akhtaruzzaman, assistant director (Dhaka) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the market building was handed over to the authorities around 10:00am, as the situation came under control.

The cause of the fire is yet to be determined, and an investigation committee will be formed to find the cause of the blaze and assess the damage, he told reporters at the spot.

Akhtaruzzaman said the market lacked a fire safety plan, adding, "A few fire extinguishers were found in the market."

At a press conference in the headquarters of the Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence yesterday, Lt Col Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations and maintenance), advised the market authorities to increase manpower on the night shift at shopping malls and markets across the country to prevent such fire accidents.

No case has been filed in connection with the fire incident, said Shafiqul Gani Sabu, officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday questioned the recent fire breaking out before dawn.

"We are investigating the cause of the fire," he said at an event in the capital.

No let-up in heat until Eid

FROM PAGE 1

temperatures are usually seen in desert areas.

They also said April is the hottest month in Bangladesh.

However, Abdul Mannan, a former meteorologist of BMD, said heatwaves are usually created by hot winds, but this year it has happened due to cloud-free skies over the region.

Explaining the situation, Ashraf Dewan, professor at the School of Earth & Planetary Sciences at the Curtin University of Australia, said, "It is because of high pressure in and around West Bengal and a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal. Because this high pressure is not allowing moisture to

penetrate from the Bay of Bengal, people are experiencing low humidity inland than on the coast."

He said that a disturbance is currently over Iran and Pakistan and it is expected to reach Bihar, West Bengal, and Bangladesh – bringing not westers, rain, hail, and severe lightning from April 23.

The second reason for the current heatwave is another weather phenomenon called Mason Julian Oscillation, Kamal said, adding that it periodically creates suppressing conditions for cloud formation and favourable conditions for cloud formation over the Bay.

Unfortunately, for the last 15 days, Mason Julian Oscillation has been going through a suppressing phase and it is expected to be in a favourable condition for forming clouds from April 20, he said.

He said clouds will start flowing over Bangladesh and rainfall may start from April 21 over the Sylhet division. Rain is expected across the country after April 23.

Mohan Kumar, executive director at National Oceanographic and Maritime Institute (NOAMI), said there is almost no cloud and moisture content support from the Bay and the winds are too weak.

Meteorologist Mannan said the weather and heatwave patterns this month are very unusual.

He said the heatwave is gradually expanding. Usually, heatwaves sweep over the western region of the country like Khulna, Rajshahi, and some parts of Rangpur. But this year Barishal, Chattogram, and Dhaka regions have also been affected.

Experts, however, also blame rapid urbanisation, and depletion of forest and water bodies for the gradual rise of temperature in the country.

Researcher Mostofa Kamal said the smaller the green space and water bodies in an area, the faster it becomes hotter.

Prof Dewan said the issue of urban temperatures, especially in Dhaka, has become a serious concern and this is a result of the increase in air conditioner usage, rapid loss of green-blue space, construction of high-rises and increased industrial activities.

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