

SSC student stabbed to death in Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An SSC examinee was stabbed to death and another was injured in the capital's Jatrabari yesterday evening.

The dead is Mushfiq Islam Tajun, student of AK School and College.

The incident took place around 6:00pm in front of Dania College in Shanir Akhra area, police said.

"Some people took the two youths to a hospital in Dania after both were stabbed in front of the Dania College... We took them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Tajun dead," Mohammad Rabbi, a local youth told reporters at the DMCH.

Rabbi said he did not know who stabbed them. Hospital sources said the body of Tajun bore stab wounds in his chest.

Sayem, another SSC examinee, is receiving treatment at the hospital with wounds in his head.

Ashiqur Rahman, brother-in-law of the deceased, said Tajun went out of the house in the afternoon to hang out with friends after today's exam.

"In the evening, we came to know he was stabbed. We saw his body at DMCH," he said adding they did not who stabbed him.

Mofizul Alam, officer-in-charge of Jatrabari Police Station, said they are investigating the incident and trying to arrest those responsible.

SUDAN CONFLICT

Govt hires planes to evacuate 555 Bangladeshis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has arranged four aircrafts to evacuate 555 Bangladeshis from conflict-stricken Sudan to Saudi Arabia.

"We have chartered four planes with our own funds as we are yet to find available ships from the Saudi authorities to transport the Bangladeshis from Port Sudan to Jeddah," said State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam yesterday.

Three of the flights were scheduled to fly yesterday and the other one today.

On Monday, 136 Bangladeshis, evacuated from Khartoum, were brought back home.

They were supported by IOM with air tickets through its internal emergency assistance funding mechanisms to travel from Jeddah to Dhaka with support from Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Since May 2, about 700 Bangladeshis have been taken to Port Sudan, around 800km from Khartoum, on 13 buses.



People of Nirail village of Tangail's Basail upazila have to use this makeshift bamboo bridge to go to town in the rainy season. A 60-foot-bridge was built there five years ago but so poor was its construction that it tilted even before inauguration and eventually fell apart. All that remain are the pillars of the bridge. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Rohingyas will have a better life in Rakhine

Says Bangladesh refugee commissioner

STAR REPORT

Rohingyas refugees will have a far better life in Myanmar's Rakhine state, said Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mohammed Mizanur Rahman.

If they agree to return to their motherland, they will have access to better housing, education and medical facilities, he told The Daily Star in an interview on Sunday.

They will also have a National Verification Card (NVC) card, which is a kind of citizenship document, he added after a visit to Rakhine with a 20-member Rohingya delegation on Friday.

The RRRC led a seven-member Bangladesh team along with the Rohingya delegation to two model villages build as a pilot project for the resettlement of the Rohingyas.

Officials said they expect repatriations to begin later this month.

"Here, their children don't have enough opportunities for education. Even the adults are not permitted to go outside the camps to earn," Mizanur said.

He said the Myanmar authority has

amended the form of National Verification Card (NVC).

"Rohingyas' main demand is citizenship. The amendment has opened up the possibility for them to attain any of the three kinds of citizenship -- citizenship, associate citizenship or naturalized citizenship," said Mizanur.

Earlier, while filling up the NVC form, the Rohingyas had to mention their racial identity as Bangalee Muslims.

He said when the Rohingyas return to Myanmar, they will get a document of their "citizenship" at the transit centre in Maungdaw.

Mizanur said if the Rohingyas return, Myanmar authorities will provide them with trainings on agriculture, fisheries and livestock. Each family will get fertiliser, seeds and an acre for agriculture.

The RRRC said Myanmar will arrange placement tests for Rohingya children and students and enroll them according to their competence level. Rohingya students will be allowed to enroll in



Mohammed Mizanur Rahman

Sittwe University with the authority's approval, he said.

On medical services, Mizanur said Myanmar authorities have set up clinics at villages and a 100-bed hospital in Maungdaw.

About security, the RRRC said Myanmar authorities have set up police and BGP (Border Guard Police) boxes.

"The settlements there are far better than the shanties in the refugee camps here. We visited two villages and saw each of the houses has two rooms and a toilet," he said.

"The Myanmar authority informed us that they will provide money to the Rohingyas to build their own houses. In the primary step, around 3,500 Rohingyas can be resettled there," he added.

The repatriation process will gather pace if the names of the Rohingyas, who are willing to go back to Myanmar, are enlisted through a discussion between Bangladesh and Myanmar, he opined.

Once the repatriation process begins, the other Rohingyas will feel interested in returning, he hoped.

Bangladesh, EU to ink partnership deal

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and the European Union have agreed to sign Partnership Cooperation Agreement at an early date for cooperation in strategic areas.

The commitment came during the Bangladesh-European Union Bilateral Discussion on Sectoral Issues at state guesthouse Padma in Dhaka yesterday.

Shahriar Alam, state minister for foreign affairs, and Helena König, deputy secretary general for economic and global issues, European external action service led the respective sides.

The issue was also discussed at the First Political Dialogue between Bangladesh and the EU in November last year in Dhaka.

As Bangladesh and the EU celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations this year, they want to elevate the relationship from development and economic to political and strategic levels where they want to work together on regional and global issues.

A foreign ministry statement said Bangladesh and the EU sides discussed ways and means to enhance cooperation on important sectors like climate change, energy security, renewable energy, ocean governance, digitalisation and cyber security and knowledge-innovation-infrastructure development under EU's Global Gateway.

EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley recently told The Daily Star that the EU is planning large loans for development of green technology and infrastructure.

The EU is Bangladesh's largest export destination, with Bangladesh exporting \$24 billion worth products annually.

Top commander of ARSA arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police have arrested a top commander of Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and seized firearms, bullets and two walkie-talkie sets from a refugee camp in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar.

Members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn) arrested Mohammad Zubair, 32, on Wednesday night, said Additional Deputy Inspector General Mohammad Amir Zafar, commander of APBn-8.

Later, acting on information received from the arrestee, the law enforcers conducted a raid at the refugee camp early yesterday and seized the recoveries, he added.

Suspect of Rabeya's murder held in Tangail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab has arrested the sole accused in the case filed over the murder of Rabeya Akter and bodily harm to her mother and three sisters in Gazipur's Salna.

Saidul Islam, 25, was arrested from Tangail's Bhuapur yesterday evening, confirmed Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, to The Daily Star.

Rabeya, of Gazipur's South Salna area, was stabbed to death in her home for refusing to marry her younger sister's house tutor.

Rabeya's mother Bilkis Begum, 45, and younger sister Khadija, 14, were also injured in the knife attack by Khadija's house tutor Saidul Islam.

Govt should stay

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Corporation polls at the city's Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Auditorium yesterday.

He said providing necessary assistance to the Election Commission is mandatory for the government.

"We will not tolerate any irregularities in voting. If we see any lapse on our part or by the government, or if we receive any complaint in this regard, we will not hesitate to take measures to address those issues within the bounds of our limited capabilities."

The CEC said the entire world is looking at Bangladesh's upcoming elections. The US, the UK, European Union and Japan are talking about the elections, he added.

Awal said the May 25 Gazipur city polls are very important for the EC as those are going to be held ahead of the next parliamentary election.

He urged all candidates to ensure a peaceful and fair election atmosphere. He said there should be a mutual understanding among the candidates and they should refrain from getting involved in any violence.

The CEC said the EC alone cannot do much if the related administrations, including that of the police, do not carry out their duties strictly and professionally.

Talking about electronic voting machine, Awal said the EVM has a lot of positives. Though voting was delayed in some places, voters could cast their votes using EVMs, he said.

The use of EVMs should not be a problem for the voters if the candidates demonstrate how to use those, the CEC added.

The assistant returning officer of Gazipur city polls, AFM Kamrul Hasan, also addressed the meeting, presided over by Returning Officer Faridul Islam.

Container falls

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Soon after the incident, firefighters rushed to the scene, but they could not lift the container until a crane of the Bangladesh Navy was brought in about an hour later.

Police detained lorry driver Sazzad Hossen, 25, and handed over the bodies to the family and sent the injured to a hospital.

WB concerned about project delays

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process of government internal consultations and clearances that lead to project approval by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), the report said.

Only after Ecneec approval is granted can financing agreements be signed and the project ultimately be declared effective; this, in turn, paves the way for the disbursement of project proceeds to finance activities.

The key player in the process for the government is the Bangladesh Planning Commission, which oversees public investments, appraises all investment projects, and convenes Project Evaluation Committee (PEC) meetings to advise on and clear projects before they are submitted for ECNEC approval.

To make the PEC decision-making process more efficient, the WB called for establishing timelines for PEC clearance after project submission.

Better communication is needed between PEC and the ministries involved in the project, specifically when the PEC prepares guidance on activities to be changed and their costs reduced.

In addition to preparation delays, there have been consistent delays

during project implementation (following effectiveness), such as in the timely release of funds (from the government budget) for approved projects as well as in the government procurement and auditing processes.

After the WB approves the project financing, it takes another 11 months for first disbursement. It takes three years to get to the 25 percent disbursement, the report said.

To accelerate project implementation, the WB together with other development partners are currently working with the government to establish a Project Preparation Facility as a platform to support the preparation for implementation of critical investment projects.

For the investments to produce results, the study found institutional and implementation arrangements, readiness and capacity were the most important bottlenecks for successful and timely project implementation.

This requires the WB's continued role in supporting institutional strengthening and capacity building, while remaining flexible in adapting operations to the country's needs.

Regardless, the 2016-21 CPF was overall successful, the report said.

For instance, the share of projects

with excessive cost overruns has decreased significantly from fiscal 2018-19 and remained below 10.

The proactivity in terms of restructuring and turning around problem projects with unsatisfactory performance was at 100 percent in 3 out of 6 years.

A total of 24 projects were restructured in fiscals 2019-20 and 2020-21 to adapt to the changes under the pandemic.

In addition, the number of projects with unsatisfactory implementation progress or unsatisfactory progress towards achieving their development objectives remained close to the average of 5 per year.

The percentage of commitment at risk declined over the years, remaining substantially below the South Asian average in each fiscal year.

In addition to project restructuring, efforts undertaken by teams to counter implementation challenges also include the introduction of innovative methods of supervision, such as those facilitated by the Geo-Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision, to optimise project design and project implementation support, specifically in the pandemic years.

IHR said the latest hangings mean Iran has seen at least 64 executions in the last 12 days alone.

"The killing machine of the government is accelerating -- its goal is to intimidate the people and its victims are the weakest people in society," said IHR director Mahmood Amiry Moghaddam.

IHR posted footage which it said showed families of the three men executed on drug charges protesting outside Ghezel Hesar prison in a last-ditch bid to stop the hangings.

drug-related charges in Ghezel Hesar prison in the city of Karaj outside Tehran, the Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) NGO said.

It added that four other men were hanged on rape charges in Rajai Shahr prison, also in Karaj.

The judiciary's Mizan Online website confirmed the three executions on drug charges, saying the convicts were members of a cocaine distribution cartel. There has been no official confirmation so far of the four executions on rape charges.

Unrest in Pakistan

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buildings and ransack the residence of a top army general in the eastern city of Lahore.

As the violence spread, the government yesterday said it had approved requests from two of Pakistan's four provinces - Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, both Khan strongholds - and the federal capital Islamabad to deploy troops.

The army issued a statement saying it had shown restraint during earlier violence but any further attacks on the military or law enforcement agencies, state installations and properties "will be met with severe retaliation".

As protests raged on the streets, a Pakistani court turned Khan, 70, over to the custody of Pakistan's anti-graft body, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), for eight days for further questioning, government adviser Ataullah Tarar said.

The former international cricket star is now being held in a police guesthouse in Islamabad.

Another court indicted Khan earlier yesterday on charges of selling state gifts during his four years in power, a day after his arrest in the unrelated fraud case.

The indictment followed a decision by the Election Commission of Pakistan in October that found Khan guilty of illegally selling state gifts between 2018 and 2022, and as a result, barred him from holding public office until the next election due in November. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha, a lawmaker from the ruling coalition who was a plaintiff in the case against Khan on state gifts, accused him of putting the "country's peace at stake".

Khan's colleagues in his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party did not immediately respond to a request for comment on his indictment. His legal team has challenged his arrest in the Supreme Court.

Mobile data services were shut for a second day yesterday as street

protests continued, with federal ministers accusing Khan's supporters of torching several buildings and vehicles.

At least four people died in clashes in the northwestern city of Peshawar yesterday, a hospital official said. Another protester died on Tuesday.

Police said they had arrested more than a thousand protesters for violence in Khan's home province of Punjab.

Khan, a cricket hero-turned-politician, was ousted as prime minister in April 2022 in a parliamentary no-confidence vote. He has not slowed his campaign against the ouster even though he was wounded in a November attack on his convoy as he led a protest march to Islamabad calling for snap general elections.

The corruption cases are two of more than 100 registered against Khan after he left office. In most of the cases, Khan faces being barred from holding public office if convicted.

Khan was arrested a day after the powerful military rebuked him for repeatedly accusing a senior military officer of trying to engineer his assassination and the former armed forces chief of being behind his removal from power last year.

The military has denied Khan's allegations.

The armed forces remain Pakistan's most powerful institution, having ruled it directly for close to half its 75-year history through three coups. Despite its major influence it recently said it was no longer interfering in politics.

Amid the turmoil over his arrest, Pakistanis are reeling from the worst economic crisis in decades, with record high inflation and anaemic growth, and the nuclear-armed country faces possible default unless it receives massive support.

An IMF bailout package has been delayed for over six months even though foreign exchange reserves are barely enough to cover a month's imports.