

6 JCD leaders arrested with firearms: cops

BNP says plainclothes men picked them up Friday night

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of BNP, were arrested with firearms and ammunition, police said late last night, over 24 hours after they were allegedly picked up by plainclothes men from the capital's Lalbagh area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police in a WhatsApp message to reporters at 11:35pm said detectives arrested them with three pistols and 37 bullets.

Officers will brief journalists on the matter today, it added.

Contacted at 11:19pm, Khandaker Mohammad Helal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station, said that filing of two cases -- one for carrying illegal arms and another for acts of sabotage -- was underway against the six.

Earlier in the day, a family member of one of the arrestees said a team from the Detective Branch picked them up in a microbus which was later seen entering the DB headquarters.

However, Mashur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Lalbagh division) of DB, had then denied detaining the Chhatra Dal men.

The arrestees JCD leaders are Mominul Islam Jisan, senior joint secretary of the Dhaka University unit; Shahadat Hossain, assistant general secretary of central committee; Hasanur Rahman, vice president of the DU unit; Abdullah Al Riyad, joint general secretary of the DU unit; Shariful Islam, joint secretary of the DU AF Rahman Hall unit; and Zahir Mohammad Babar, former leader of the Jahangirnagar University unit.

Contacted at 12:00am, Jisan's brother Anamul Haque, said that no one from the law enforcement agencies informed him about the arrest of his brother and that he learned it from the media.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday issued a statement, saying Jisan went missing after he left home Friday night.

Rizvi further said, "Five other Chhatra Dal leaders were taken away by men in plainclothes when they went to Jisan's home looking for him."

Moreover, Amnesty International also expressed its concern in a statement, urging the police to "immediately disclose the whereabouts of these six individuals, clarify on what legal grounds they have been picked up and held and also to grant them access to proper legal representation."



Policemen firing tear gas shells during a clash with BNP activists, who were marching on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Narayanganj yesterday. At least 25 people, including five cops, were injured in the clash.

PHOTO: STAR

RESPONSE TO LAI'S US TRIP China launches drills around Taiwan

Taipei strongly condemns, deploys ships, aircraft

REUTERS, Shanghai/Taipei

China yesterday launched military drills around Taiwan as a "serious warning" to separatist forces in an angry but widely expected response to Taiwan Vice President William Lai's visit to the United States, drawing condemnation from Taipei.

Lai, the front-runner to become Taiwan's president in elections in January, returned from the United States on Friday. He officially made only stopovers on his way to and from Paraguay but gave speeches while in the US.

China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, despite the strong objections of the island's government.

The People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command, said in a brief statement it was carrying out joint naval and air combat readiness patrols around the island.

Taiwan's defence ministry said it had detected 42 Chinese aircraft and eight ships involved in drills around the island from yesterday morning and that it had deployed ships and aircraft in response.

Twenty-six Chinese aircraft crossed the median line of the 100-km (60-mile) wide Taiwan

Strait, or areas beyond each end of the line, the ministry said in a statement. For decades, the line served as an unofficial barrier between the two militaries.

The PLA's Eastern Theatre Command said it was holding joint exercises and training of naval and air forces, focussing on ship-aircraft coordination, seizing control and anti-submarine drills to the north and southwest of Taiwan to test the forces' "actual combat capabilities".

"This is a serious warning against Taiwan independence separatist forces colluding with external forces to provoke," it said.

The command released video footage purportedly taken yesterday, showing J-16 and J-10 fighter jets and a naval destroyer on patrol.

In text accompanying the footage, set to a thumping orchestral score, it said the drills were to "test the actual combat capabilities of joint operations of forces in the theatre".

Equipment deployed included destroyers, frigates and fast attack missile boats as well as fighters, early warning and jamming aircraft that "assembled in a predetermined area", it said, without giving details.



William Lai

Delhi stands with Dhaka as 'steadfast partner'

Says Indian envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma yesterday said India stands with Bangladesh as a "steadfast partner" and committed to supporting its aspirations for a "peaceful, prosperous, and inclusive" future.

"Today, Bangladesh is on a path of progress and development," he said, adding that their "collaborative efforts" in areas such as trade, connectivity, security, and people-to-people ties continue to flourish, cementing our place as two nations united by common goals and shared values.

Verma was invited by Bangladesh India

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Pranay Verma

Survey reveals grim picture

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Academics and stakeholders have been talking about the issue for a long time, but nothing has changed," Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed, founding director of the Institute of Educational Development at BRAC University, told The Daily Star.

A lack of proper classroom teaching, high student-teacher ratio, poor student-teacher interaction, inadequate infrastructure, and fund shortage are responsible for this state of primary education, he added.

The assessment shows 12 percent of class-III and 8 percent of class-V students have advanced proficiency in Bangla. In maths, the percentages are 11 percent and 9 percent respectively.

Students in Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions perform better while those in Sylhet continue to underperform.

Children from plain land, coastal

areas, and border regions perform better than the ones from near water bodies, remote places and islands.

Mohammad Tariq Ahsan, professor at the Institute of Education and

Students are learning maths, but they do not know how to use that in real life. Once the exams are over, they forget what they learn.

"In many cases, there are so many students in a classroom that a teacher cannot pay attention to individual learners. So, the slow learners get no special care."

Tariq also points out that the teachers don't get pre-service training. In classrooms, the teaching method is "one-way", and the student-teacher interaction is almost non-existent, he adds.

Contacted yesterday, Primary and Mass Education Secretary Farid Ahmed said the findings are similar to those of the National Student

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Assessment 2017.

"We don't want the same performance. We have to work to get better. We have the opportunity to analyse the findings and address the problems."

He is of the opinion that students in Sylhet do not perform well because of poor attendance, and lack of awareness among parents.

The assessment says specific measures should be adopted for madrasahs and the schools in low-performing areas.

It recommends capacity-building programmes to improve student-teacher interaction, safe environment in schools.

Deepa Sankar, chief of education of Unicef Bangladesh and Prinaka Sharma, director of Australian Council for Educational Research, presented the findings at the event in Cox's Bazar.

can expand our relations," said the foreign minister.

International relations analysts said there is nothing wrong for Bangladesh joining the BRICS for expanding trade and investment. However, the time is very interesting because of the new global polarisation -- one led by the West and the other by Russia-China -- amid Russia-Ukraine war.

Therefore, some people may perceive that Dhaka is trying to join the alliance amid pressure from the West on human rights and democracy ahead of the national polls, they said.

M Humayun Kabir, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, said in the long run, BRICS intends to introduce a common currency and push for de-dollarisation, which the US would not like.

"So, we need to be clear in our mind -- how we can get benefits joining the BRICS and how we avoid any risks of geopolitical trap," he said.

PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK Test run of inspection car on Dhaka-Mawa route ends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A test run of an inspection car on the Dhaka-Mawa route of Padma Bridge Rail Link Project was completed yesterday.

The inspection car left Dhaka's Gandaria Railway Station around 9:30am and reached Munshiganj's Mawa around 11:00am after a 40km journey, said Brig Gen Ahmed Jamiul Islam, the project manager of the scheme's Dhaka-Mawa section.

An observation team identified some problems at different points and stations, the official said.

"After leaving Dhaka, we stopped at Keraniganj station. The railway director general inspected the project work there. We reached Mawa after crossing four main bridges, including those over the Buriganga and the Dhaleswari. The gang car left Mawa for Faridpur's Bhanga in the afternoon."

Missing HSC examinee's body found after 22 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

The body of a college student was recovered yesterday, 22 hours after he went missing while swimming in Rowmari canal in Jamalpur's Madaraganj upazila.

The deceased, identified as HSC examinee Shohardho, 16, son of Shahjahan Ali of the upazila's Degolkandi village.

Quoting locals, Madaraganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Delower Hossain said Shohardho with some friends went swimming in the Rowmari canal Friday evening.

At one point, he drowned in the canal and went missing. A seven-member dive team from the local fire service unit started a rescue operation around 1:30pm. Later, locals found the body floating in the canal around 2:30am and informed police.

Member of Oreo community stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

An indigenous man was stabbed to death allegedly over a land-related dispute at Parishadpara in Thakurgaon municipality on Friday night.

Stephen Tarki, 50, was a local and a member of the Oreo community.

Police detained three people, Julian Toppo, 42, Prodip Tarki, 19, and Manaranjan Tigga, 37, for interrogation early yesterday.

Maria Lalita, 32, a local grocery store owner, claimed to have seen Stephen with several members of his community, including one Gabriel, 40, near her shop around 10:30pm.

At one point, Stephen fell to the ground after Gabriel stabbed him in the chest before fleeing the scene, she added.

Quoting locals, Thakurgaon Police Station Sub-Inspector Md Mamun said locals took Stephen to Thakurgaon General Hospital around 11:00pm, where the on-duty doctor declared him dead on arrival.

Police suspected that the murder occurred over a land-related dispute, said Md Mamun, also the case investigating officer.

The victim's family is preparing to file a case in this connection.

'Unscientific methods are causing surge in cases'

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same time, 1,983 more patients were hospitalised, raising the total number of cases to 97,860, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

At the press conference, entomologist Monjur Ahmed Choudhury, who is also chairman of the National River Conservation Commission, said, "The activities taking place under the guise of 'mosquito control' in the country is a farce. Earlier, there were even attempts of controlling mosquitoes using frogs, deer and ducks. Such methods aren't used anywhere in the world."

He added that physicians were assigned to carry out researches on mosquitoes. "This is not their [physicians'] job. Kolkata [city corporation] has been seeing success [in mosquito control] because they made proper use of their entomologists."

Entomologist Dr Saifur Rahman, of National University, said, "We still couldn't develop an effective method of mosquito control. As a result, the dengue outbreak has taken a dangerous turn."

He said the authorities remain confused about their primary focus -- whether to eradicate dengue or to treat the patients.

Lambasting the city corporations, he said, "We have long been asking for a mosquito research centre. We have to know if the mosquitoes alone are carrying the virus or if asymptomatic people are carrying it too ... We need to strengthen our serosurveillance."

He also stressed clear and compact planning with a timeline to eliminate mosquitoes and budgetary allocation for the activities.

Entomologist Prof Dr Aslam expressed his skepticism about the authenticity of the bacteria (Bacillus

thuringiensis israelensis) imported by Dhaka North City Corporation for mosquito larvae control.

"Spraying BTI may lower mosquito numbers, but it won't provide a lasting solution for dengue and the casualties among patients. Those who have made the decision to use it should have consulted experts first."

He recommended using multiple methods to control dengue mosquitoes.

Tahmina Aktar, a medical entomologist of Jahangirnagar University, said the information on the presence of Aedes mosquitoes in lakes and canals is completely "unscientific and baseless".

"Aedes mosquitoes are mostly active two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset. They are most likely to bite people during these times."

"No one has done any complete study," she said, adding that containers with stagnant water are the main breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes.

She also said the latest circulated information on the time that Aedes is most active is also misleading.

"Aedes mosquitoes are mostly active two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset. They are most likely to bite people during these times."

The experts further said the authorities have been misled by unscientific claims by a few people and are taking up paths that are failing to control mosquitoes and ultimately resulting in human deaths.

Former secretary Margub Morshed and entomologist Indrani Dhara were also present among others.