NEWS

PURCHASE OF 'FAULTY' BUSES, TRUCKS

# **BRTC to start** probe soon

#### TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The authorities will finally start investigating the purchase of "faulty" buses and trucks from Indian manufacturers for the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation.

The BRTC has formed a probe committee last month, almost three months after the Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader directed the officials concerned to launch an investigation.

"We will start the investigation very soon and complete it within the shortest possible time," BRTC Chairman Ehsan-E-Elahi told The Daily Star on Sunday.

Buet has yet to send the name of its representative in the probe committee, he said. "We will start investigating within one week after getting the name."

Duration of the probe would be fixed once the committee members held their first meeting, he added.

The government brought 600 buses and 500 trucks from different Indian makers with Tk 559 crore in multiple phases last year. The funds were lent by the Indian government. The vehicles have already arrived in Bangladesh. Farid Uddin Ahmed was the chairman of BRTC at that time.

After the vehicles arrived, especially the buses, it was reported in the media that some of the non-AC buses had leaky roofs and several double-decker ones were not what their spec sheets mentioned.

On September 16, Quader at a programme at the BRTC head office said, "There must have been experts among those involved in bringing the buses [from India]. They [Indian companies] supplied us vehicles full of defects.

"I am directing the [BRTC] chairman to launch a proper investigation to find out whether anyone [from our officials] accepted the defects willingly or they had been tricked.

Quader, also general secretary of the Awami League, had also mentioned that those who supplied the vehicles had taken the responsibility and promised to fix the issues

In last October, the Road Transport and Highways Division

Liberation Leader

(RTHD) directed the BRTC to launch the investigation and asked BRTC chairman to form the probe committee with representatives from different bodies, officials said.

Led by Ehsan-E-Elahi, the committee will have representatives from the RTHD, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and mechanical engineering department of Buet.

the BRTC director Besides, (administration and operation), who was the project director of purchasing the 500 trucks; director (technical), who was the project director of purchasing the 600 buses; deputy general manager (maintenance) and general manager (technical) were also included in the committee.

The general manager (technical) will be the member secretary of the committee.

The probe committee does not include anyone from the RTHD.

The committee will check whether the buses and trucks delivered are the ones mentioned in the contracts and will provide its opinion, BRTC chairman said.

However, the inclusion of BRTC officials, who were involved in the purchase, in the committee has raised evebrows.

Transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque said those officials should not be in the probe committee.

"It will raise questions about the probe," he said.

Asked, BRTC Chairman Ehsan said, "We will check the technical specification of the vehicles in person. So, their inclusion in the committee will not affect the investigation."

The vehicles include 300 doubledecker buses (Tk 90 lakh each), 100 non-AC buses (Tk 49 lakh each), 100 AC city buses (Tk 67 lakh each), 100 AC intercity buses (Tk 72 lakh each), 350 (16.2 tonne) trucks (Tk 20 lakh each) and 150 (10.2-tonne) trucks (Tk 21 lakh each). The prices include VAT.

Indian makers Ashok Leyland supplied the double-decker buses, AC city buses, AC intercity buses while Tata Motors supplied the non-AC buses and 10.2-tonne trucks. VE Commercial Vehicle supplied the 16.2-tonne trucks.



## DU erupts in protest

#### FROM PAGE 1

She was raped and tortured there, some of her friends said, quoting her.

After regaining consciousness around 10:00pm, she somehow went to her friend's home and her friends then took her to the DMCH.

DU Proctor AKM Golam Rabbani visited her at the hospital early yesterday while Vice Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman later in the morning. Talking to reporters, the VC said the university authorities would do everything necessary so that the victim gets justice.

Later in the day, DU students as well as members of different socio-cultural organisations came to the streets on the campus. They demanded that the government bring the rapist(s) to book immediately.

Many took to social media to express their anger at the lack of women safety in the country.

Rights body Ain O Salish Kendra condemned the rape incident and demanded legal steps against those involved.

In a statement, the ASK said, "Increasing violence against women has become one of the major concerns in our lives.

"It is undoubtedly a weakness of the state that it cannot ensure the environment conducive to women's

The rape took place days after the ASK said the number of rape incidents in Bangladesh doubled last year from the previous one.

A total of 1,413 women were either

body said in its annual report released

"We have already sent those to lab for tests," he said.

Chakraborty, deputy Sudip commissioner (Gulshan Division) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said apart from police personnel, members of other agencies were also working to

by a single person.

Talking to this correspondent early today, he said they were yet to identify any suspect and that they collected the footage of the CCTVs installed in the area for investigation.

He added that the case was handed to the Detective Branch of police. VICTIM'S CONDITION

DMCH Director Brig Gen AKM Nasir Uddin said they formed a sevenmember medical board, headed by

adding that she had been traumatised

since the incident. He also said the

professor of the hospital's forensic

medicine department, told reporters

that they found evidence of rape after

her throat and it suggested someone

her body and sent them to DNA and

microbiology labs for tests," he added.

DU students, including members

of different student bodies, started

their demonstration in the morning.

Their number increased as the day

activists of Bangladesh Chhatra

League formed a chain in front of Raju

Vashkorjo in TSC area around 10:45am,

demanding arrest and punishment of

Central BCL President Al Nahian

A group of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal

Birodhi

Chhatra

men also staged protest at the foot of

Aparajeyo Bangla during the same

Oikya, a new alliance of 12 student

organisations of Dhaka University,

brought out a procession on the

campus around 11:00am. At one stage,

Khan Joy demanded law amendments

to hand capital punishment to rapists.

Nearly a thousand leaders and

He said they found injury marks on

"We've collected samples from

conducting forensic test on the victim.

Dr Sohel Mahmud, associate

victim has breathing problem.

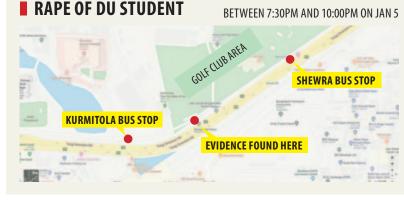
tried to strangle her.

PROTESTS

progressed.

the rapist(s).

Santrash



authorities concerned for the arrest of obstetrics and gynaecology department the rapist(s). chief Salma Rouf, for the victim's

## Raped, sixth grader dies by suicide

### **OUR CORRESPONDENT**, Thakurgaon

A sixth grader died by suicide in Panchagarh Sadar upazila yesterday, hours after she was allegedly raped by her neighbour.

Morium Khatun, 13, of Mollapara village, was a student of Vatapukuri Girls' High School.

After the incident, the victim's mother filed a case against Md Palash, 20, who was arrested later.

According to the case statement, the girl, along with her widowed mother, lived in a thatched house. Palash used to stalk the girl.

When the victim's mother recently informed local influential people about it, Palash became angry.

On Sunday night, Palash entered their house and raped Morium when her mother was sleeping, added the case statement.

In the morning, the mother noticed that her daughter was not at home. Later, she found her daughter's body hanging from a tree adjacent to the

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the body to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Contacted, Manjurul Islam, subinspector of Panchagarh Sadar Police Station, said they were investigating the incident.

BCL leader held over rape of woman

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DOWRY

Over 3 raped every day in the first

6 months of 2019

732 raped in 2018 and 818 in 2017

173 sexually assaulted in 2018 and

255 in 2017

they staged a sit-in blocking capital's

Haque Nur issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the DU and other

Speaking there, Ducsu VP Nurul

Shahbagh intersection for an hour.

Police yesterday arrested the organising secretary of Chattogram South District Bangladesh Chhatra League on charges of raping a mother of two.

The arrestee is Akibul Islam Akib, 27, of Chattogram's Anwara upazila.

Quoting the case statement, Moin Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Bakalia Police Station, told The Daily Star that the woman, a divorcee, was in a relationship with Akibul, who introduced him as a police officer.

Promising her marriage, Akibul had raped her for the last five months, he said.

The victim also alleged that he took Tk 10 lakh from her.

She filed the case against Akibul with the police station in the morning. Police arrested him around noon and produced him before a Chattogram court that sent him to jail, the police official said.

The woman was sent to the One Stop Crisis Centre at Chattogram Medical College Hospital for medical tests.

Contacted, SM Borhan Uddin, president of Chattogram South District BCL, told this correspondent that they would take disciplinary action against Akibul

#### IN COLLABORATION WITH and domination, repeated time and time again that he would not be one to accept alms.'

The next few days were spent in

safe movement."

pursing the request for arrangements to go to Bangladesh. It was clear that since over 90,000 Pakistani military personnel were prisoners of war in Bangladesh, this would ensure Bangabandhu's safety and early return. Bangabandhu and Dr Kamal were told that they would be flown to London within the next few days; the night of 7 January was specifically indicated

• 167 tortured over dowry • 96 of them died in torture • 3 killed themselves

find the culprit(s) and solve the case. OC Shahan said the victim's statement suggest that she was raped

But the nation was worried as well. Because the man who had led the nation to freedom was still detained in the Pakistani jail.

FROM PAGE 1

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of independence of Bangladesh, had been put in solitary confinement for nine and a half months. Soon after December 16, he was moved from the jail to a more remote place.

On December 24, he was brought by a helicopter to the compound of a police academy at Shihala, not far from Rawalpindi of Pakistan.

Soon after his arrival, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the president of Pakistan, came to meet him. Bangabandhu asked him if he had also been placed in detention.

In reply, Bhutto told him that he had become the president of Pakistan.

"How have you become president when I got twice as many seats in the National Assembly?" asked Bangabandhu, laughingly.

Embarrassed, Bhutto responded that Bangabandhu could become president if he desired.

"No, I do not desire it, but I desire to go to Bangladesh as soon as possible," replied the father of the nation.

Bhutto then told him that he would make necessary arrangements but needed a few days. Bangabandhu told him that he had gathered, from the conversation between the lawyers who had attended his trial some months earlier, that Dr Kamal Hossain was also held in custody awaiting trial.

On Bangabandhu's request, Dr Kamal was also brought to Shihala.

According to a secret telegram sent from US Embassy in Pakistan to Secretary of State, the USA, on January 3, 1972, Bhutto shared with the US ambassador in Pakistan his conversation with Bangabandhu.

"Mujib had been virtually cut off from all outside sources of information while he (Mujib) assumed that a war of some major proportion had gone on, and that "perhaps a part of East Pakistan had been occupied by India," he had no idea of the magnitude of the "tragic defeat" which Pakistan had suffered," said the telegram.

It added that, "...Mujib seemed "almost stunned" by the changed circumstances in which he found himself, and appeared highly despondent to learn that Indian troops occupied all of the East. Bhutto also noted that during his conversation the Sheikh, referring to Indian occupation

They were also informed that Bhutto would like to host a dinner for them at the President's Guest House before they leave.

Bhutto arrived and, after initial greetings, he requested Bangabandhu to maintain links with Pakistan.

"After what has happened, and the blood spilt which could have been avoided had you listened to us. Instead you unleashed a brutal armed assault. I cannot see how any relation with Pakistan is possible other than as between two sovereign states, Bangabandhu replied.

After Bhutto kept pressing him to consider his appeal, Bangabandhu said he would give him a reply after returning to Bangladesh.

Then Bhutto came up with an unexpected suggestion: that the departure be delayed till the following morning when the Shah of Iran was due and would like to meet Bangabandhu.

Bangabandhu turned to Bhutto and said that he should ensure permission for their flight to leave that night; insisting that he did not wish to meet the Shah, and that they should be transported back to jail immediately if their departure could not take place after dinner as scheduled.

Realising the annoyance caused, Bhutto said that a plane would be instructed to be flown over from Karachi to ensure their departure after dinner.

Bangabandhu and Dr Kamal Hossain were driven to the airport. Bangabandhu was escorted by Bhutto up to the plane. They were briefed that no announcement would be made about the plane journey until they were an hour away from London.

As they approached London, a message would be sent to the British authorities to say that Bangabandhu was due to land at London's Heathrow airport around seven in the morning.

[The report is based on the autobiography of Dr Kamal Hossain titled "Bangladesh: Quest for Freedom and Justice, and US State Department cable]

gang-raped or subjected to rape last treatment. year. Of them, 76 were killed after rape and 10 others died by suicide, the rights on the victim's face and throat, he said,

on December 31.

THE SCENE

Police identified the crime scene based on the victim's statement.

The place is several yards off the pavement of the busy Airport Road. It is about 150 yards north to the Kurmitola General Hospital's gate and 30 yards south to the gate of a golf club there.

The scene is outside the boundary net of the club and surrounded by bushes, several officials told this correspondent at the spot.

A guard stationed at the club told our correspondents that many people use the pavement during the daytime, but the number of the pedestrians go down at night.

Asked, he said he was not on duty when the incident took place. **EVIDENCE** 

Kazi Shahan Hoque, officer-in-charge of Cantonment Police Station, told this newspaper that they visited the scene around midnight Sunday, after being informed by the victim.

Finding some pieces of evidence, they informed the CID's crime unit, which collected them yesterday morning.

The evidence, included a gabardine pants, a piece of undergarment, a pen, a notebook, a key ring, two inhalers, wrist watch, and some medicines (for common cold-related disease), CID Inspector Aminul Islam told this newspaper.

We will announce tougher programme if the rapist is not arrested There were several injury marks on within 48 hours," he said.

Around 200 students went to the Kurmitola area in university buses and formed a human chain blocking the Airport Road near the crime scene. The demonstrators left after 40 minutes. In another development, Sifatul

Islam, a student of DU's philosophy department, started a hunger strike at 3:30am yesterday in front of the Raju Sculpture, demanding punishment of the rapist.

He was later joined by two other students -- Saiful Islam Rasel of soil, water and environment department, and Mostafizur Rahman of information technology institute.

In a statement, Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) yesterday demanded immediate arrest of the rapist(s) and urged the government to ensure their exemplary punishment.

Last night, DU students, under the banner of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu), held a candlelight vigil on the premises of Central Shaheed Minar to press for the arrest of the culprit(s)

Later, a group of Ducsu leaders, led by Assistant General Secretary Saddam Hossain, submitted a memorandum to Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, demanding that the culprit(s) be identified in 24 hours.

Talking to reporters after a programme earlier in the day, the home boss said the culprits would be brought to book within the shortest possible time.

### 'GUNFIGHT' WITH BGB 2 Rohingya 'drug dealers' killed in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two Rohingya men, suspected of being drug peddlers, were killed in a "gunfight" with members of Border Guard Bangladesh in Cox's Bazar early esterday.

The dead are Mohamamd Ismail, 28, and Helal Uddin, 20, inhabitants of block-22 in Ukhiya Rohingya Refugee Camp

Haider Azad Ali Ahmed commanding officer of 34th BGB battalion, claimed they conducted a raid in Palongkhali area of the district's Ukhiya upazila around 5:00am on information that a consignment of drugs would be smuggled through the area.

Sensing BGB members' presence, the criminals opened fire, forcing them to etaliate, he added.

At one stage of the "gunfight", two drug peddlers sustained bullet injuries. They were rushed to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital where on-duty doctors declared them dead, he further added.

The bodies were sent to the hospital's morgue for autopsies, said the BGB officer.

BGB also claimed to have recovered 20,000 pieces of yaba pills, a locallymade firearm and two cartridges from the spot.

Abul Monsur, officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station, said a case was filed with the police station in connection with the "gunfight".

### Egypt to meet four European countries on Libya crisis

AFP, Cairo

Egypt announced yesterday that it will hold a meeting with four European Mediterranean countries about developments in neighbouring Libya after Turkey began deploying troops in the war-torn North African nation.

The talks -- to be held in Cairo on Wednesday-- will bring together foreign ministers from France, Italy, Greece and Cyprus, Egypt's foreign ministry said.

## Ban single-use plastics

#### FROM PAGE 1

soil fertility, agricultural production, human health and safety were violations of citizens' constitutional rights to life, health and environment.

generates around 3,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day, the petition said.

A joint study carried out by the DoE and Waste Concern has found that 36 percent of plastic waste was formally recycled while 39 percent was dumped in landfills and the remaining 25 percent leaked into the environment, eventually flowing to the Bay of Bengal through the rivers.

According to the 2018 research

findings of the National Geographic Channel, an American television channel, 300 different types of plastic goods end up in the Bay of Bengal via the Padma river.

The National Geographic study covered an area of 2,575 square kilometres from the Padma to the Bay of Bengal to reach this alarming conclusion, the rights organisations said in the writ petition, adding that in 2018 the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had reported the dumping of 73,000 tonnes of plastic waste into the Bay of Bengal through the Padma, Jamuna and Meghna Rivers.

In the petition, they stated that according to a 2015 study by the tripled to 17.24 kg in 2017.

Waste Concern, a total of 821,250 tonnes of plastic waste were generated annually in urban hubs of Bangladesh, while some 207,685 tonnes were dumped in marine

According to this study, 95 percent of the solid plastic waste generated in Dhaka comprise poly-packed including throwaways, plastic bottles, polythene bags and sachets of fast food and non-food consumer goods such as toiletries, food items nd toothpastes.

The study also revealed that per capita annual consumption of plastic products in Dhaka was 5.56 kg in 2005, which has more than

environments every year.

time.

According to the DoE, Bangladesh