

Weinstein jury to begin deliberations

AFP, New York

Jurors will begin deliberating the fate of ex-Hollywood titan Harvey Weinstein on Tuesday in his high-profile sex crimes trial that marked a watershed moment in the #MeToo movement.

The disgraced movie mogul, 67, faces life in prison if the jury of seven men and five women convict him of predatory sexual assault charges in New York.

More than 80 women have accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct since allegations against him ignited the #MeToo global reckoning against men abusing positions of power in October 2017.

But the jury is considering charges related to just two: ex-actress Jessica Mann and former production assistant Mimi Haley, with many claims too old to prosecute.

Mann, 34, says Weinstein raped her in March 2013, while Haley alleges he forcibly performed oral sex on her in July 2006.

The proceedings, which began

hearing testimony on January 22, threw up complicated issues surrounding consent and abuse of power for the jury.

Under cross-examination, both Mann and Haley acknowledged at least one consensual sexual encounter with Weinstein after the alleged attacks.

Defense lawyers presented dozens of emails and text messages in court that appeared to show both Mann and Haley on friendly terms with Weinstein years after the alleged attacks.

His team said the relationships were consensual and transactional, arguing that the accusers used sex with the defendant to advance their own careers.

Prosecutors said he was a career sexual predator who took advantage of his powerful position in the American film industry to prey on aspiring young actresses.

Weinstein, the producer of "Pulp Fiction" and "Sin City," is the first man accused of abuse in the #MeToo movement to face a criminal trial.



A bulldozer destroying bricks at an illegal brick kiln in Gazipur city's Dhitpur area on Monday. Department of Environment conducted a mobile court drive there. Toxic fumes emitted from brick kilns are largely blamed for the poor air quality in and around the capital.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

We're looking for alternatives

FROM PAGE 1

The money is being siphoned off abroad ... there is no money at banks, there has been a debacle in share market ... how the country will cross Malaysia and Singapore?"

In reply, Hasina said there was enough money at banks.

"She [Raushan] said there is no money in banks but our reserve now stands at \$32b. There is no problem. If there was no money at banks, how are we carrying out all these development works?"

"I will urge her [Raushan] to read the president's address in parliament. It will help her forget her frustrations."

Raushan said many Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia were passing their days in agony. "I met many of them in Saudi Arabia. They broke down in tears. They said they were not getting work or proper wages."

On this issue, Hasina urged Bangladeshis wishing to go abroad to work to properly follow the procedures.

"Expatriate Bangladeshis who go abroad through the wrong path, through middlemen, they face problem. We have to bring them back spending our money."

"I don't understand why they go abroad through middleman. There is Probashi Kallyan Bank, they can take loan from there, they do not need to go abroad by selling their home and land."

Referring to rape incidents, Hasina termed rapists beasts and said her government announced a zero tolerance policy against rapists. She urged people to help law enforcers arrest those involved in the crime.

"How can a person have such a heinous character? We're taking proper action against them as we did against [those involved in] militancy and illegal drug trade. The government will surely take legal action against such criminals."

Raushan also claimed there were hardly any anti-mosquito drives in the city and that the authorities hardly care for its waste management. "We will not give any tax. Why will we pay

tax as there is no service?" she asked.

She also criticised Education Minister Dipu Moni, saying she stays abroad most of the time. "She [Dipu Moni] remains absent in parliament. She stays abroad. How will there be improvement in the education sector?"

The sixth session, which is the first session of the calendar year, was prorogued yesterday after 28 sittings. Seven bills were passed during the session, which began on January 9.

The session also unanimously adopted a thanksgiving motion on the president's speech delivered in the first sitting. Altogether, 224 MPs spent 54 hours and 24 minutes participating in the general discussion on the thanksgiving motion.

Hasina's comments came at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has left large swathes of China's factories as desolate as a ghost town. The country's latest official figures released yesterday put the overall death toll at 1,868 and 72,436 infections.

In such a situation, many of Bangladesh's manufacturers are left playing a nervous waiting game: will normal service resume anytime soon in China?

Bangladesh imports the most from China, starting from the simplest needle to high-tech capital machinery, industrial raw materials to finished consumer goods and foodstuff.

Last fiscal year, about 26 percent of Bangladesh's imports worth \$52.19 billion came from China, according to the central bank's country and commodity share import data. A year earlier, the share of imports from China was 23.8 percent.

At a press conference at the capital's Jatiya Press Club on Monday, the Chinese envoy in Dhaka, Li Jiming said, "In view of these concerns of the business community, I would like to say, please have faith in China and rest assured. Right now China is making huge economic sacrifices to contain the virus. Chinese companies are also losing money both at home and abroad, and many Chinese projects are being halted."

Moreover, there is a risk to social

Khaleda seeks bail again

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Earlier, the Supreme Court's HC Division denied her bail twice in the case and the Appellate Division once.

Anti-Corruption Commission chief counsel Khurshid Alam Khan, who received a copy of the petition, told The Daily Star that Khaleda sought bail in the graft case on merit and medical grounds.

"We will oppose the petition before the High Court when it will be heard," he said.

The lawyer said the BNP chief needs to secure bail in at least two cases -- Zia Charitable Trust and Zia Orphanage Trust graft -- to be released from jail.

On August 8, 2011, the ACC filed the Zia Charitable Trust graft case with Tejgaon Police Station against four people, including Khaleda. They were accused of abusing power in raising funds for the trust from unknown sources.

A special court in Dhaka jailed Khaleda and three others for seven years in the case on October 29, 2018. She later moved a bail petition

before the HC.

On July 31 last year, the HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice SM Kuddus Zaman denied her bail.

"We have gone through the impugned judgment and order of conviction and sentence but did not notice any apparent or glaring infirmity in the same," the bench said rejecting the petition.

In the order, the bench also said Attorney General Mahbubey Alam has assured this court of his readiness for an expeditious hearing of the appeal against the trial court verdict and therefore, there is no possibility of delay in hearing the appeal on merit.

"In the above view of the matter, we do not find any cogent reason for granting the appellant bail at this point of time. Accordingly, the application for bail is rejected," the HC judges said in the order.

On September 3 that year, the BNP chief filed another petition with the HC seeking bail.

On September 11, another HC bench of Justice Farid Ahmed and

Justice ASM Abdul Mobin refused to hold hearing on the bail petition. This bench told Khaleda's lawyers that a senior HC bench (led by Justice Obaidul Hassan) had earlier rejected a similar bail petition on merit.

Later, the BNP chief sought bail from the Appellate Division on health grounds.

The apex court on December 12 last year dismissed her bail petition in the case. The court, however, asked the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) authorities to provide Khaleda with treatment immediately.

The BNP chief landed in jail after being sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case by the same special court on February 8, 2018.

On October 30, 2018, the HC enhanced her punishment to 10 years in the case after dismissing her appeal.

Khaleda then filed an appeal with the SC challenging the HC verdict. The appeal is now pending with the SC.

IEDCR boss cautions against rumours

FROM PAGE 1

Satkhira's Shyamnagar upazila died of cardiac arrest after hearing rumours that police were looking for her son Ratan Roptan, 35, and "they would shoot him dead as he was infected with coronavirus", according to a UNB report.

Ratan, who had fever and cough upon his return from India, escaped Sadar hospital in Satkhira in panic after doctors advised him to get admitted to the hospital. Health officials and police later started looking for him, it added.

Yesterday, Flora said, "It's worrying that rumours are spreading especially on social media. The mother of a suspected coronavirus patient died because of such rumor."

Moreover, there is a risk to social

and personal security of the returnees from China and Singapore.

"Being influenced by rumours, law enforcement agencies and administration are showing coercive attitude towards the returnees. This will prompt suspected patients to hide themselves and eventually hinder detection of real cases."

The IEDCR urged government officials and people to contact it through hotline and act on its advice if there is any suspected coronavirus case.

It has provided hotline numbers for any information or help regarding coronavirus. The numbers are 01927711784, 01927711785, 01937000011, and 01937110011.

Meanwhile, the IEDCR has tested two more suspected coronavirus

cases at its virology laboratory. Both were tested negative, according to its press release.

So far, it has tested 72 suspected samples and found no case of coronavirus infection.

According to the IEDCR, 13,256 incoming passengers were screened at all airports, seaports and land ports across the country in 24 hours till 3:00pm yesterday. None of them had any coronavirus symptoms.

It also mentioned that the five Bangladeshis, infected with the virus, are still under treatment in Singapore. One of them is in the intensive care unit and his condition remains unchanged.

A total of 77 coronavirus patients are receiving treatment in the Southeast Asian country.

Rohingya woman beaten to death inside camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya woman was beaten to death by two others in their camp in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The deceased, Nur Nahar, 40, was wife of Nur Alam, a resident of Leda Rohingya camp (Block B) in Hnila union.

According to witnesses who talked to our correspondent, Nahar was quarrelling with two other Rohingya women and was critically injured when the duo physically assaulted her.

She was taken to the camp hospital run by International Organisation for Migration, where doctors declared her dead.

Contacted, ABMS Doha, inspector (investigation) of Teknaf Police Station, said the body was sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police are looking into the matter.

Set up nursing areas

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prayed to the HC to direct authorities to set up breastfeeding and baby care corners at all mills and factories across the country in line with section 94 of the Labour Act 2006.

Section 94 (1) of the Act says "In every establishment, where 40 (forty) or more female workers are ordinarily employed, one or more suitable rooms shall be provided and maintained for the use of their children who are under the age of 6 (six) years".

"The said rooms shall be adequately furnished and in particular, 1 (one) cot or cradle with bed shall be kept therefore each child, and there shall be at least one chair or any similar seat for the use of each mother while she is feeding or attending to her child, and adequate and suitable toys shall be supplied for the comparatively older children", according to section 98(7) of the Act.

Following the same writ petition, another HC bench on October 27 last year issued a rule asking the authorities to explain why they should not be directed to take necessary steps to set up breastfeeding and baby care corners at all public places.

The court asked the authorities concerned of the government to show cause why the women and children affairs ministry should not be ordered to formulate a guideline to establish breastfeeding and baby care corners at all workplaces, shopping malls, airports, bus stops and railway stations, and public, private and autonomous institutions across the country.

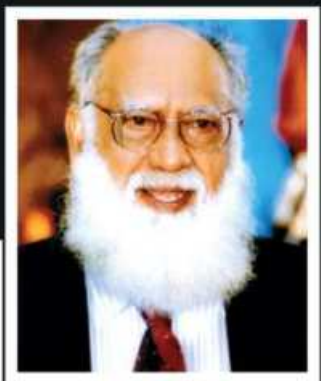
The writ petition said that mothers feel uneasy to feed their children at workplaces and other public places as there is no specific breastfeeding and baby care corner.

It further stated that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2009 had directed the authorities concerned to establish breastfeeding corners and daycare centres at all public and private workplaces to ensure that children are being raised in a healthy environment.

But the PM's directives are yet to be fully implemented, the petition said.

Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder represented the state.

Sixth Death Anniversary



Today, 19th February, is the Sixth death anniversary of Mohammad Abul Khayer, former member of the National Assembly. He was elected from Muksudpur-Kashiani constituency of Gopalganj in 1970 general election that spurred the Independence movement.

Mr. Khayer was a freedom fighter, industrialist and a trusted close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He received the Swadhinata Padak posthumously in 2014 for his contribution to the 1971 War of Independence. Mr. Khayer was the founder-chairman of Jamuna Bank.

We pray for the eternal peace of his soul in heaven.

JAMUNA BANK

WHO urges calm as death toll climbs

FROM PAGE 1

The World Health Organization, which has previously said travel restrictions were unnecessary, rejected the suggestion that all cruises should be halted after hundreds of passengers were infected on one vessel off Japan.

"Measures should be taken proportional to the situation. Blanket measures may not help," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Geneva.

The WHO has praised China for taking drastic measures to contain the virus.

Authorities have placed about 56 million people in hard-hit central Hubei under an unprecedented lockdown.

Other cities far from the epicentre have restricted the movements of residents, while Beijing ordered people arriving in the capital to undergo a 14-day self-quarantine.

The official death toll in China hit 1,868 Tuesday after another 98 people died, most in Hubei and its capital Wuhan, where the virus emerged in December. More people died outside China so far.

There were nearly 1,900 new cases -- a drop from the previous day. Reported new infections have been falling in the rest of the country for the past two weeks.

Tedros warned that it was too early to tell if the decline would continue.

The situation remains dire at the epicentre, with the director of a Wuhan hospital dying yesterday-- the seventh medical worker to succumb to the COVID-19 illness.

But a study among 72,000 confirmed, suspected and clinically diagnosed cases showed that 81 percent of patients had only mild infections.

Those most at risk were the elderly, and people with underlying medical conditions.

The study released by China's Centre for Disease Control and Prevention also showed that the death rate stood at 2.3 percent, falling below one percent for people in their 30s and 40s.

Zhong Nanshan, a prominent expert with China's National Health Commission, told reporters that 85 percent of patients can improve "if they have good life support,

treatment conditions, and nutrients".

The research was cited by WHO officials, who said the COVID-19 illness was "less deadly" than its cousins, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

"This is a very serious outbreak and it has the potential to grow, but we need to balance that in terms of the number of people infected," said Michael Ryan, head of WHO's health emergencies programme.

"Outside Hubei this epidemic is affecting a very, very tiny, tiny proportion of people."

There have been some 900 cases around the world, with only five deaths outside the mainland -- in France, Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Another 88 people tested positive for the virus on the quarantined Diamond Prince cruise ship off Yokohama in Japan, raising the number of infections to 542.

Since the US repatriated more than 300 American passengers on Monday, Britain became the latest country to offer its citizens a way off the boat, after similar plans by Canada, Australia, Hong Kong and South Korea.

Attention was also turning to the Westerdam, a cruise ship in Cambodia, where many of the 2,200 people aboard passengers were allowed to disembark after all initially received a clean bill of health.

They were met by Cambodia's premier, taken on a bus tour of the country's capital, and allowed to fly around the world.

But an 83-year-old American woman was later diagnosed with the virus after arriving in Malaysia.

Despite the WHO's reassurances, global concerns persist, with an international inventions show in Geneva postponed, a mixed martial arts event in Singapore closing to the public, and Chinese wrestlers barred from the Asian Championships in India.

China's lockdown of cities and tough curbs on travel and movement have limited the spread of the virus outside the epicentre, but at great cost to the economy and global business.

Advertorial

Bangladesh Honda Private Limited handed over Honda's flagship motorcycles to SSF produced at ABDUL MONEM ECONOMIC ZONE



Mr. Himihiko Katsuki, Managing Director and CEO of Bangladesh Honda Private Limited, handed over two units of "GL1800 Goldwing (1800 CC)" to Special Security Force (SSF) in presence of the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina on Monday, 17 February 2020, at the office of the Prime Minister in Dhaka.

We consider it as a historical moment for all of us. World class products of the world class company are now being manufactured in Bangladesh. Abdul Monem Economic Zone is extremely proud to be an integral part of this desired industrial revolution process towards fulfilling the dream of the Honorable Prime Minister. The Managing Director and CEO of Abdul Monem Economic Zone and President of the Private Economic Zones Association of Bangladesh (PEZA) Mr. ASM Mainuddin Monem, son of the renowned industrialist of the country Mr. Abdul Monem told the reporters following the event.