

**INDIA-CHINA
BORDER TENSIONS**
Rivals hold fresh talks on
ending faceoff along LAC
SEE PAGE 6

The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

SECOND EDITION

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXX No. 261

ASHWIN 28, 1427 BS

Your Right to Know

SAFAR 25, 1442 HIRI

16 PAGES PLUS LIFESTYLE PRICE : Tk12.00



"Our expatriates are the problem. You know that they don't abide by the law in Italy."
FOREIGN MINISTER ABDUL MOMEN WHILE TALKING TO REPORTERS



"I believe the country will become free from rape following the amendment of the act,"
STATE MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS FAZILATUNNESHA INDIRA



"In my nearly five decades of public service, I have never publicly endorsed any political candidate."
TOP US SCIENTIST ANTHONY FAUCI ON TRUMP CAMPAIGN AD PAGE 6

Rapists to face death penalty

Cabinet okays proposal to amend law; president to issue ordinance today; govt moves to ensure speedy trial of rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid countrywide protests denouncing violence against women, the cabinet yesterday approved the draft of Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 2020, incorporating the provision of capital punishment for rape.

President Abdul Hamid is all set to promulgate an ordinance in this regard today.

The approval came at the weekly cabinet meeting held virtually with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. She joined the meeting from the Gono Bhaban, while her cabinet colleagues attended it from the Secretariat.

Later, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told reporters that the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs proposed incorporating the provision of capital punishment in the Act, terming rape a heinous crime.

"The matter was discussed in detail in the cabinet meeting. Everyone agreed to incorporate capital punishment in the Act," he said.

Following the amendment, "Lifetime Rigorous Imprisonment" mentioned in Section 9(1) of the Act would be replaced by "Death or Lifetime Rigorous Punishment". The same changes will be applicable to Section 9(4) of the Act, he said.

Pointing to another amendment, to Section 11(C) of the Act, the cabinet secretary said in case of simple injury -- caused not during rape -- the matter could be compoundable.

The section that deals with dowry has provisions for three years in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A CNG-run-autorickshaw driver pushing his vehicle from behind, while a motorcyclist waits to get on the lane on a waterlogged Mirpur Road near Dhanmondi Road-27. The entire road remained flooded for four to five hours after torrential rain yesterday afternoon. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Faridpur-4 MP Cabinet Division seeks actions over violation of election code

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Cabinet Division has sought actions over violations of the electoral code of conduct for local body polls by the Faridpur-4 lawmaker and a newly elected upazila chairman.

It yesterday wrote to the Prime Minister's Office, the Parliament Secretariat, the Election Commission Secretariat and other authorities concerned to that end.

Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, an independent lawmaker from Faridpur-4, issued threats in public to the deputy commissioner of Faridpur and the upazila nirbahi officer of Charbhadrashan for deploying an "excessive" number of magistrates in the upazila chairman by-polls held on October 10.

In its letter, the Cabinet Division said the activities

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

RMG worker gang-raped in Gazipur

More rape incidents, arrests in other dists

STAR REPORT

A garment worker was gang-raped in Gazipur and four people were arrested in rape cases in three other districts over the last two days.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court placed four arrestees on three days' remand each over the rape of a 13-year-old girl in the capital's Pallabi area on Sunday.

Police said the 25-year-old RMG worker lives at a rented home in Chakpara area of Gazipur's Sreepur upazila.

Victim's neighbour Ashraful Alam, 22, and one of his associates, Jahangir Alam, 33, had been making unwanted advances towards her for a long time.

Around 12:30am yesterday, Ashraful broke into the victim's home through a ventilator in the toilet. Then he opened a door to let Jahangir in.

The two raped the girl and threatened to kill her if she disclosed the matter. The alleged rapists fled the scene around 3:30am, said police.

In the morning, the victim informed the landlord and some locals about the incident. Locals later caught Ashraful and handed him to police.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Vital law reforms still not done

Death penalty won't resolve rape issue; amendment doesn't address much-needed reforms, say experts, rights activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawyers and women's rights activists all had one common reaction to the cabinet's decision to incorporate death penalty for rape in the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Bill

This was their reaction: the amendment does nothing to address the actual reforms being demanded by gender experts.

The death penalty was demanded by a faction of general public, but legal experts say that it will not solve anything.

Veteran women's rights advocate Salma Ali said, "It is just a rushed act to calm some of the protesters.

"The decision-makers should have taken the time to consult with grassroots lawyers and law practitioners who deal with such cases first-hand," she said.

Just making the law will not achieve anything without a proper guideline and unless the implementation is ensured, she added.

The Rape Law Reform Coalition, a body comprised of 17 rights organisations including Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST) and Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), have 10 demands from the law, and the death penalty is not one of them.

The demands include changing the definition of the law to include victims of all genders, defining "penetration" to include rape using objects, banning the use of character evidence against rape survivors during trial, allowing judges to hand out punishments proportionately and as per their discretion, ensuring that courts and systems are inclusive for survivors with disabilities and enacting the witness protection law.

Currently, "rape" is restrictively defined only as penile-vaginal

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Scrap puffed up power bills: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the electricity supply authorities to cancel inflated bills prepared between February and June this year, and prepare customised bills based on actual meter-reading for each consumer.

In response to a writ petition, the HC also ordered the authorities not to collect late payment surcharge from consumers against the inflated bills, and submit separate reports to the court after complying with the directives in two months.

Chairperson of Power Development Board and Rural Electrification Board and managing directors of Dhaka Power Development Company, Dhaka Electricity Supply Company, West Zone Power Distribution Company Ltd and Northern Electricity Supply Company were asked to prepare the customised bills as per a directive issued by Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) on July 16 this year.

The HC also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government to explain as to why the inaction of BERC chairperson in taking punitive action against

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

IEDCR SURVEY IN DHAKA

45pc carrying coronavirus antibody

People started developing herd immunity, researchers say after surveying 3,227 households

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 45 percent of the people, covered by a survey in the capital, were found to be carrying Covid-19 antibody, according to a study by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research.

The presence of such antibody among slum dwellers was much higher -- about 74 percent, mentions the study based on data collected between April 18 and July 5 this year.

A total of 3,227 households across the capital were surveyed under the study jointly conducted by the IEDCR and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b).

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the USAID supported the first-ever cross-sectional epidemiological survey in Bangladesh. A summary of the survey was published on August 10.

"The encouraging rate of seropositivity among the population surveyed in Dhaka city indicates that we have started developing herd immunity against the novel coronavirus," Dr Ferdousi Qadri, senior scientist at the icddr,b, said at the launch of the study report in the capital.

The findings come at a time when a number of countries have already been hit by the second wave of the novel coronavirus.

Researchers said this information will be helpful in transmission control, treatment of the infected people and also vaccination.

During the survey, samples of 12,699 individuals from 25 wards in Dhaka city were tested through the rt-PCR method, and 9.8 percent or nearly one in 10 people was found positive for Covid-19.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Papia, her husband get 27 years in arms case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Much-talked-about expelled Jubo Mohila League leader Shamima Nur Papia and her husband Mofizur Rahman Sumon have been sentenced to 27 years' rigorous imprisonment in an arms case.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Special Tribunal-1 of Dhaka handed down the sentence in presence of the couple at the courtroom yesterday.

The couple were given 27 years in jail after considering that Papia is a woman. The charges were enough for life in jail, the judge said.

According to the judgement, Papia and her husband Sumon were given 20 years' imprisonment for possessing arms, and seven years' imprisonment for possessing bullets, but their punishment will run concurrently.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



THE POWER OF WILL

Thirty-year-old Sapna pulls a rickshaw to support her 8-year-old twins and her ailing mother. She toils away not only to feed her family, but also to make sure her children get the education they deserve. Her husband died five years ago from cancer and since then she has been struggling to make ends meet. The photo was taken recently at Mohammadpur Bus Stand.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

LIFEBUOY HAND SANITIZER

Does not contain harmful methanol

Manufactured by the world's no. 1* highest selling germ protection soap brand Lifebuoy, Lifebuoy Hand Sanitizer does not contain harmful Methanol and has been tested in recognized laboratory. World class Lifebuoy Hand Sanitizer is completely safe, and it is effective against virus and germs. This is why Lifebuoy Hand Sanitizer is trusted and appreciated worldwide when it comes to protecting ourselves in this pandemic.

*Unilever calculation based on Nielsen volume sales information for the total markets (latest 12 months). Details available on request.