

New rape law may be abused, says GM Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Appreciating the government for introducing capital punishment for rape, Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday said special attention is needed to check the abuse of the new law.

“The government should pay special attention so that the new rape law is not abused. All those involved in the investigation and judicial process should remain careful about making sure no innocent person is harmed by the law,” he said.

GM Quader made the remarks at a programme at Jatiya Party Chairman’s Banani office. Some ruling party leaders and activists from Lalmonirhat joined Jatiya Party at the programme.

He said rape victims’ access to justice must be made easier by removing legal complexities.

GM Quader said perpetrators must be brought to justice within a specific time to get rid of social disease like rape. “Effective steps by the state must be taken to ensure legal assistance for rape victims.”

The JP chief thanked the president for promulgating an ordinance toughening the punishment in rape cases to death from life-term imprisonment.

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‘Sur Saptak’, a swanky new underpass, awaits opening on the capital’s Airport Road near the MES intersection. This is the very spot where college students Dia and Rajib were crushed under the wheels of a bus in July 2018, sparking nationwide student demonstrations demanding road safety. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

‘Death penalty won’t end rape culture’

Protesters call for easier path to justice for victims; announce long march to Noakhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following the government’s decision to incorporate the provision of capital punishment for rape in the draft of the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Bill, anti-rape protesters have termed it an “irresponsible decision” to suppress the ongoing anti-rape movement and vowed to continue their activities.

The protesters -- comprising of some left-leaning parties, students, youths and rights activists -- said they will continue to press home their nine-point demand.

At a press briefing in front of National Museum yesterday afternoon, protesters under the banner of “Bangladesh against Rape and Impunity” announced the route of their long-march from Dhaka to Noakhali on October 16.

The march will start from Shahbagh and go through Gulistan, Chashara, Sonargaon, Chandina, Cumilla, Feni, Daganbhuiyan, Chaumuhani and Ekasapur. On October 17, they will hold a rally in Maizdi.

Anik Roy, general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, read out the press statement. Among others, Arif Noor of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosthi, Khan Asaduzzaman Masum of Jubo Union, Nasir Uddin Prince of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, were also present.

They alleged that the prime minister stood in the cabinet and tried to extinguish the movement just when it reached its peak. Death penalty for rapists is not a solution, but in many cases the law can be a threat to the victim’s own life if it is enforced, they said.

The rapist will want to remove the signs of rape, even resorting to killing the victim, they feared.

Rather than increasing the level of punishment, the law should aim to

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Feasibility of amending the anti-trafficking law

LAW DESK

Recently, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen wrote to Law Minister Anisul Huq regarding the alleged abuse of certain provisions of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012.

The 2012 Act confers upon law enforcement agents the power to “conduct preventive search, to enter into any premises and to seize any equipment or proof or document used or likely to be used in the commission of any offence”. The Act also states that such search may be conducted without a warrant if the officers have reasonable grounds to believe that there are equipment or materials in any place which can be used for the commission of offences.

In his letter, the Foreign Minister raised concerns regarding “conflicting provision” between the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012 and the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, and opined that such conflict creates obstacles in the lawful export of manpower.

The minister also stated that legal recruiting agencies are “not at all involved in human trafficking or fraudulent activities”. He further requested the law minister to “partially amend” section 20(1) and (2) of the 2012 Act.

However, global reports have found that there is a close link between recruitment practices and human trafficking. Apart from illegal recruitment agencies, legal and licensed recruitment agencies may also be involved in illegal practices and may engage in fraudulent practices such as lying about the nature of the job and salaries, charging extortionately high recruitment fees etc.

In fact, recruitment practices may fall within the definition of trafficking in persons as laid out by the UN in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

The Protocol defines trafficking using three elements -- an act, a means and a purpose.

So, if recruitment (an act) is done through fraudulent or deceptive means (retention of passports, charging high fees, misrepresenting nature or work or wages) for the purposes of exploitation, it shall qualify as trafficking by international standards.

Due to the complexity in the system, it is difficult to identify trafficking at the recruitment stage. Although Bangladeshi embassies did not identify the cases as trafficking, NGOs involved in repatriation of the 1,250 female migrant workers returning to Bangladesh in 2019 identified indicators of trafficking.

In Bangladesh, trafficking for labour exploitation is a pressing concern. The US Department of Justice’s 2020 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons highlighted past instances where foreign and Bangladeshi recruitment agencies bribed government officials and politicians to maintain monopoly over the labour market and stated that government officials may not be fully committed to implementing migrant-friendly practices due to conflict of interests.

Earlier this year, Kazi Shahid, a Bangladeshi member of parliament was arrested in Kuwait on charges of human trafficking and bribing Kuwaiti officials.

Corruption is addressed by Articles 8 and 9 of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, which requires States to adopt legislative measures to establish as crime, offences of corruption involving foreign public officials.

The government has shown increased implementation of the anti-trafficking law and has received praise for establishing seven tribunals for the prosecution of human trafficking offences.

However, concerns regarding the plight of migrant workers persist. It is important to identify the aspects of recruitment practices that result in the increased vulnerability of workers.

Cooperation, strategies must to combat human trafficking: law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday underscored the need for cooperation, and proper legal, social and economic strategies to combat human trafficking

“We feel cooperation is fundamental to combating the exploitation of women, children and men by human traffickers. But, cooperation is only the start! We need legal, social and economic anti-trafficking strategies,” the law minister said while speaking at a webinar on “Bangladesh E-Judicial Colloquium to prevent and address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants”.

The minister said human trafficking is a rapidly evolving crime requiring a comprehensive and well-coordinated response.

“The country is implementing a National Plan of Action for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (2018-2022),” he said.

The law minister said the Covid-19 crisis and economic downturn are leaving more women, men and children at risk of being trafficked.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been at the forefront of global policy debate, articulating the idea for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, he said.

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Bangladeshi vessel runs aground amid storm in India

All crew members safe

STAR REPORT

A Bangladeshi cargo vessel, MV Maa, drifted from the anchorage point and ran aground, due to a storm amid deep depression, near Tenneti Park of India’s Andhra Pradesh early yesterday.

The 3,000-tonne ship had gone to Visakhapatnam Port to load some cargo and was waiting near the anchorage point for the last three days for the berthing itinerary, reported The Hindu newspaper.

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We’re ever-ready to face natural calamities: PM

UNB, Dhaka

As a delta land, Bangladesh has to be ever ready to face natural calamities like cyclone, tidal waves, flood, earthquake, river erosion and drought, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday.

“These natural calamities will come regularly... we have to remain ever ready to face these and we are doing that,” she said while addressing a programme marking the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief arranged the event at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium, which the PM attended from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The theme of this year’s International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction is “Disaster risk governance” while the theme for Bangladesh has been set as “Good Governance in Reduce Disaster Risk, Ensure Sustainable Development”.

State Minister for Ministry of Disaster Management

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Momen new chair of C’wealth Ministerial Group on Guyana

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has been appointed Chair of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Guyana, which works for settlement of Guyana-Venezuela territorial dispute.

He received unanimous support of the seven-member group comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Britain, Canada, Guyana, Jamaica, and South Africa, said Bangladesh High Commission in UK in a statement on Monday.

Upon the appointment, Momen said, “Bangladesh looks forward to steering the group on Guyana-Venezuela territorial dispute in line with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s visionary foreign policy doctrine of peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue and international adjudication.”

Chairing the first online meeting of the group under Bangladesh’s chairmanship, he recalled Bangladesh’s peaceful maritime boundary settlement with its neighbours taking recourse of international arbitration and international law.



A streetside vegetable vendor continues his business well into the evening at Dhupkhola in Old Dhaka. Prices of produce have soared in the last few days, putting pressure on the wallets of middle and low-income people in the capital.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



A worker of Bangladesh Power Development Board attempts to dislocate an electrical cable that had caught on fire on the Sonargaon-Rampura link road near the Hatirjheel entrance yesterday. Locals contacted the BPDB office upon spotting the sparks on the pole, and technicians rushed to the spot and averted any danger.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CID rescues 2 children thru’ SMS tracking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaving her two children under her sister’s care, Beauty Begum left for Jordan around one and half years back.

Since then, Mahia Akter Pinky (13), and Md Biplob Bepari (10) have been living with their aunt Saleha Begum in Faridpur. In absence of their parents, who are separated, Saleha often “rebuked” them. So, the children decided to go to Dhaka to stay with their grandfather.

On September 9, the siblings left Saleha’s residence, saying that they were going to a madrasa.

They managed to reach Dhaka. But there was a problem. They did not have the exact address of their grandfather.

Their search eventually took them to Gulshan, where a rickshaw-puller after hearing about their plight offered them shelter.

He also send an SMS on their father’s phone, asking about the location and switched off his phone immediately afterwards.

Meanwhile, Saleha filed a general diary with Kotwali Police Station of Faridpur, fearing that the children may have been

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No compromise on security, safety at airports: Mahbub Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahbub Ali yesterday said there will be no compromise in ensuring safety of airports and passengers.

He said everyone working at airports should always be ready to prevent and deal with any kind of accident. Those who will try to disrupt the security at airports will not be spared.

The junior minister was speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of “full scale airport emergency exercise-2020” and the expanded section of the international lounge at Osmani International Airport in Sylhet.

Mahbul Ali said effective steps have been taken to improve the quality of passenger services at airports and prevent accidents.

He also said security has been beefed up at all airports across the country.

The state minister said major development works are underway at all international and domestic airports in the country.

All modern security equipment including fire alarm, dual view scanning machine, ETD, vehicle scanning system have already been installed at Sylhet airport, he said.

Expansion of Osmani airport has also been started, which will be completed at a total cost of Tk 2,760 crore, he added. Mahbub Ali said the international lounge of the airport has been expanded at a cost of around Tk 8 crore, keeping in mind the needs of passengers.

Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, Member (Management and Planning) Air Commodore Md Khalid Hossain, DIG of Sylhet Range Mofiz Uddin Ahmed and President of Sylhet Metropolitan unit of Awami League Masuk Uddin Ahmed, among others, spoke at the programme.