

Supply 7 lakh

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Calcutta today at the Gono Bhaban. SAMAD APPRISES PM OF EASTERN EUROPE TOUR OUTCOME

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad today apprises Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman about the outcome of his tour of six East European countries. Foreign Minister returned to Dhaka yesterday from his tour. Abdus Samad sees the prime minister at the latter's office at Bangladesh Secretariat.

TEACHERS' STRIKE CALLED OFF
Bangladesh Non-government Secondary Teachers Association calls off its proposed strike. The proposed strike which is to begin from tomorrow is called off by the association in view of the prime minister's sympathetic intervention, says an announcement by the association's General Secretary Jainul Abedin after a meeting with the Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS REORGANISED

The government has reorganised the existing financial bodies and set up two new institutions, the Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha and the Bangladesh Shilpa Bank. The reorganisation has been made to streamline the work of the specialised industrial financing institutions and to meet the demand of industrial finance for private as well as the nationalised sectors.

SOURCES: November 16, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Dhaka-Delhi

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have vast issues to discuss," a senior official told UNB confirming the foreign secretary's Delhi visit.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will hold a Summit meeting virtually in the third week of next month, another official said.

There are indications from both sides that PM Modi will also visit Bangladesh in person if the Covid-19 situation improves.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, earlier, indicated the signing of bilateral agreements at that time, but did not elaborate.

The two countries are putting much emphasis on enhancing trade and commerce through utilising river and road communications, exploring opportunities in blue economy and other areas.

'Time will tell'

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in the future - who knows which administration it will be? I guess time will tell."

The hint of doubt in Trump's mind came despite him continuing to push a conspiracy theory that mass fraud -- for which no evidence exists -- robbed him of victory in the November 3 election.

On Friday, Trump tweeted thanks to supporters backing his claim that the "Election was Rigged" and said he might "stop by and say hello" at rallies planned in Washington on Saturday.

A number of groups under the banners of "Stop The Steal", "Million MAGA March" and "Women for America First" have planned rallies for the day.

Speakers are reportedly to include prominent Trump supporters, including US Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who has promoted the far-right QAnon conspiracy theory.

QAnon adherents claim Trump is waging a secret war against a global liberal cult of Satan-worshipping pedophiles.

Trump continues to block Biden's ability to prepare his transition ahead of inauguration on January 20 and he has filed numerous lawsuits -- unsuccessfully -- to challenge vote counts around the country.

On Friday, a judge in Michigan issued another rejection of Republican claims of fraud.

Trump was speaking just after television networks projected results in the final two undeclared states -- Biden winning the former Republican stronghold of Georgia in an extremely close race, and Trump getting North Carolina.

Those last tallies gave Biden a solid overall final win in the state-by-state Electoral College that decides the presidency with 306 votes against Trump's 232.

Throughout the post-election period, Trump has been absent in public at least from normal presidential duties and notably silent about dramatically soaring coronavirus infection rates around the country and steadily rising deaths.

He has only left the White House to play golf twice and to attend a brief Veterans' Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

Earlier Friday, Trump attended a briefing in the Oval Office on the vaccine search -- one of the first times he has had official business on his public schedule since the election.

But Trump did not take questions after his Rose Garden remarks. He hasn't had any sort of press conference since the election and his last public remarks were on November 5, when he falsely claimed to have won.



US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien (C, left screen) and Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc are seen on screen as they attend the 8th Asean-US meeting as part of the 37th Asean Summit in Hanoi, Vietnam, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Blamed, shamed

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He further said, "I later came to know that those people were helping the perpetrator. It was my fault, which I admit."

Though the Nagarpur UNO later stepped in and made the Dhurbria UP chairman hold a press conference to tell the truth, the damage was already done.

As the head of the committee which is meant to prevent repression of women had come out against her and accused her of being a sex worker, her hope for justice faded.

Her alleged rapist is now out on bail, and she is worried about what, if anything, will happen to her case.

Another survivor shared with The Daily Star how she was discouraged from filing a case back in 2004, against her rapist -- the son of her landlord.

She, a minor, also had to endure lewd comments from a police officer to whom she went to report her rape.

"I was only 14 and was working as a helper at a garment factory. When I went to Mohammadpur Police Station after the incident, the duty officer ogled my body, from top to bottom," she said.

"He said that since I'm poor, I did this because I wanted to entrap the perpetrator," adding, he refused to take down her case.

Even the case, which she could file with a court later with the help of some rights activists, ended when her father was forced by the perpetrators to sign a document saying his daughter was of "immoral character" and her allegation had been fabricated for financial gain.

Nothing ever happened to her alleged rapist, she added.

Prof Taslima Yasmin, assistant professor at department of law at Dhaka University, said it is disturbingly common that when a survivor comes to file a case, police are reluctant to take down a first information report (FIR) and seem to take it for granted that the victim is lying.

"To counter the victim's statement, they harass them by asking inappropriate and irrelevant questions. There seems to already be an assumption that many cases filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act are fabricated," she said.

Human rights lawyer Salma Ali,

president of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), said gender awareness and sensitivity training for police is crucial. "I strongly recommend that every police station must have at least three women police who will be equipped with such training," she said.

Not just by police, victims are routinely blamed and shamed in the courts too.

A survivor who was raped and brutally beaten by her ex-husband last year was called an "adulterer" by the defence lawyer in a courtroom in Dhaka in August this year.

The couple had divorced in 2018, but the husband used to pester her to come to his house promising to re-marry her. But she said she was cheated and he didn't keep his word.

If she refused to pick up his calls or visit, he would beat her; during the month of Ramadan this year, he beat her so severely in her head that she had to go to India for treatment, she told The Daily Star. She filed a case against him soon after.

"That day in court, the lawyer produced a paper with my signature

forged on it, where it was written that I had married him again, in front of both of our families, in exchange for Tk 2 lakh.

"When I denied that lie, he called me an adulterer for going to my ex-husband's house," she said.

Rights activists and experts have long expressed concern that the survivor's character, social class, attire, past sexual history, and lifestyle details are seen as more relevant to the justice system, rather than her lack of consent.

Nina Goswami, senior deputy director of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), said the manner in which survivors are interrogated under the Evidence Act-1872 is not gender-sensitive at all. "Gender-sensitive behaviour and language matter as it creates further trauma and affects the overall judgment of the case," she said.

Right activists have suggested that gender awareness and sensitivity training be ensured for law enforcers, courts, and relevant government institutions in order to stop a culture of victim-blaming and for them to adopt a neutral perspective when dealing with rape cases.

Akram died due to 'blunt force trauma'

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case it filed with Panchlaish Police Station over the incident.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the postmortem report recently. The report mentions similar injuries marks which were mentioned in the inquest report prepared by an executive magistrate after the death.

The autopsy report, prepared by ANM Manzurul, a lecturer of Chattogram Medical College's forensic medicine department, said bruises were found on the left buttock, left thigh, and foot. Similar bruises were found on the right buttock, said the report.

Manzurul in the report, signed on September 10, said, "Considering postmortem examination findings and result of viscera report, death, in my opinion, was due to combined effect of hemorrhagic and neurogenic shock as a result of massive blunt force trauma [bruises], which were ante mortem in nature.

"The manner of death can be concluded by correlating postmortem findings and with circumstantial evidence."

The report does not mention anything related to chest pain, which was mentioned by Rab officials in the case statements.

Talking to The Daily Star, several experts also said if the victim had been beaten by a mob, there would have been bruise marks on the face.

But Akram's body had no such marks on the face, according to the postmortem report.

Executive Magistrate Ali Hasan of Chattogram District Administration, who had prepared the inquest report, had earlier said, "Black marks were found in the legs -- from foot up to the knee -- and his bottom. There were black marks also on his back.

"The reason behind his death will be known after postmortem," he had mentioned while talking to The Daily Star earlier in August.

After Akram's death, an unnatural death case was filed by Rab-7 with Panchlaish Police Station. Inspector Abdul Haque from Rab-7 lodged the case.

The Daily Star ran a report on the custodial death on August 26. Later, rights body Ain O Salish Kendra

(ASK), in a statement, expressed grave concern over the incident.

FAMILY WANTS JUSTICE
Akram's maternal uncle Nasir Uddin Chowdhury said, "Akram was brutally tortured to death. He is neither a mugger nor a drug addict. We want justice."

He said they wanted a fair probe and punishment of the culprits so that no one else has to die like Akram.

Talking about the death of a youth named Raihan in police custody in Sylhet, Akram's another uncle Kashem said, "The killers of Raihan were suspended and arrested. My nephew died in the same fashion but no one protested or looked into it."

"Our son is not a criminal. He had no criminal records. We want that the unnatural death case filed over his death to be turned into a murder case," he added.

This correspondent tried to talk to several senior police officials, including the commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, but none of them agreed to make any comments on the matter.

CMP Commissioner Mahabubor

Rahman had said, "Police are waiting for the postmortem report. The unnatural death case will be turned into a murder case if the report describes it as homicide."

Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col Moshirur Rahman Jewel had earlier said, "He [Akram] was a mugger. He was caught on the flyover during a mugging attempt. After his arrest, Rab members, taking him with them, conducted drives in two places of the city to detain other members of his gang."

"He was admitted to the CMCH after he had complained of chest pains. He died later."

Asked about the marks on Akram's body, Moshirur said, "We heard that he had been beaten up by a mob after his capture. The marks found during inquest were minor, not significant."

It is mentionable that two witnesses out of three whose names were mentioned in the case statement as witnesses had earlier told The Daily Star that there was no incident of mob beating during Akram's arrest.

Several Rab and police officials said Akram had no criminal records.

Bangladeshi teen wins prestigious global prize

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12, who fought water pollution, and help teenagers report cyberbullying and cybercrime in his western district of Narail in Bangladesh.

Previous winners of the prize include Nobel laureate and Pakistani education campaigner Malala Yousafzai and environmental activist Greta Thunberg.

"Serious action needs to be taken right now. Teenagers continue to remain vulnerable to online crime and cyberbullying, particularly in the times we live in," Rahman told AFP in a remote interview.

Rahman was awarded the prize, which is run by the Netherlands-based KidsRights foundation, in a ceremony streamed online due to coronavirus restrictions.

He beat two other finalists - Mexican girl Ivanna Ortega Serret,

who have been sexually harassing children.

The idea started after a 15-year-old girl committed suicide because of online bullying," Rahman.

"I decided that teenagers needed help and that we should take action to try to avoid other children facing the same tragedy."

Rahman said in many cases teenagers were being sexually harassed by adults, including being sent pornographic and sexually explicit images.

Rights groups and law enforcement agencies have been voicing increasing alarm over the rise in online sexual crimes involving minors since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cyberbullying rose by some 70 percent around the world in April and

May this year, said a recent study by the KidsRights Foundation.

Rahman said he planned to use his prize, which includes a 100,000 euro (\$118,000) investment for projects, to further develop the app across Bangladesh "and hopefully to serve as a model for the rest of the world."

KidsRights has awarded the prize annually for the past 16 years "to a child who fights courageously for children's rights."

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the patron of the Dutch-based award praised Rahman's work.

"Even in these strange times when things seem pretty bleak, young people are inspiring all of us with their concern for others and for our life together on this planet," Tutu said in a statement sent to AFP.

Lebanon entered a new two-week lockdown on Saturday after reported infections crossed the 100,000 mark, with hospitals in the crises-wracked country almost at capacity.

Virus restrictions forced Hong Kong's traditionally boisterous and colourful annual gay pride parade online Saturday.

Across India meanwhile, millions ignored social distancing advice and gathered to pray at temples or go shopping for the Diwali, the festival of light.

In his first public address since being declared the loser of the November 3 election, Donald Trump on Friday touted medical breakthroughs that happened under his watch but said he remained firmly against new lockdowns.

He predicted a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, which the companies have said is 90 percent effective in trials so far, would receive emergency approval "extremely soon."

The United States, the country hardest hit by Covid-19, meanwhile saw 188,858 more cases and 1,596 more deaths Friday, according to a tally from Johns Hopkins University.

New antiviral measures came into force in Ukraine yesterday, with all non-essential businesses ordered to stay closed for the weekend.

Officials in Kiev pulled back from a nationwide lockdown, admitting the country's already-battered economy could not stand it.

Govt offices

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since taking office last year, it added.

A former member of Aditmari upazila Awami League, Farooq won the upazila chairman election as an independent candidate. He contested the polls independently after being denied nomination by the ruling AL.

The complaint said the upazila chairman during the monthly coordination meeting at the UNO's office on Thursday demanded to be given a part of Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and maternity allowance beyond related rules.

As UNO Muhammad Mansur Uddin mentioned that the list of beneficiaries would be prepared in accordance with the related rules, the upazila chairman became angered and walked out of the meeting, it added.

After the meeting, its participants noticed that the upazila chairman tasked some men with uninstalling a CCTV camera adjacent to the UNO's office. As the UNO wanted to take a photo of the incident and asked Farooq why the camera was being uninstalled, the latter became angry and hurled abuse at the UNO, read the complaint.

Upazila Engineer Sohail Rana said it became difficult for them to continue discharging duties in Aditmari due to the upazila chairman's threats, indecent, and abusive behaviour.

Upazila Women Affairs Officer Rashida Begum said it would be tough for them to carry out their responsibilities if the higher authorities did not take necessary steps in this regard.

UNO Mansur Uddin said, "We believe that the higher authorities will investigate the complaint and take necessary actions in this regard."

Contacted, Chairman Farooq denied all the allegations, saying that the officers of the upazila administration were angry with him as he wanted to know about the progress of all development activities carried out in the last financial year.

If the authorities conduct a proper investigation into the allegations, it will reveal irregularities and corruption by the officers, he claimed.

Lalmominirhat DC Md Abu Jafor said a deputy secretary was asked to investigate the complaint.

Legal actions will be taken in this regard once the investigation is completed, the DC added.

Students build

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220 kilometres when fully charged, the Technical University of Eindhoven said.

"This car is really special, because it's made all out of waste", project manager Lisa van Etten told Reuters.

"Our chassis is made out of flax and recycled PET bottles. For the interior we also used unsorted household waste."

Hard plastics normally found in televisions, toys and kitchen appliances were used for the car's body, while the seat cushions consist of coconut and horse hairs.

The car was designed and built by a group of 22 students in around 18 months, Van Etten said, as an effort to prove the potential of waste.

"We really hope that car companies will start using waste materials", production team member Matthijs van Wijk said.

"It's possible in many applications. More and more companies use waste or biobased materials in the interior, we want to show that it's also possible to build a chassis out of it."

WHO warns

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misinformation and mistrust colouring people's acceptance of scientific advances could hamper its effectiveness.

"We are not going to be successful as a world in controlling the pandemic with the use of vaccines as one of the tools unless people are willing to get vaccinated," Kate O'Brien told AFP.

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Afghan forces capture 'mastermind' of Kabul university attack

AFP, Kabul

Afghan forces have captured the "mastermind" of a brutal attack on Kabul University when militants stormed classrooms and gunned down dozens of students earlier this month, a top official said yesterday.

At least 22 people were killed and another 27 wounded when three gunmen rampaged through the

university on November 2, spraying classrooms with bullets for several hours.

The brazen daylight assault came amid surging violence across the country that has only worsened in recent months despite the government holding peace talks with the Taliban in Qatar.

"The mastermind behind Kabul University attack has been arrested,"

Vice President Amrullah Saleh announced on his Facebook page.

The attack, which had ended after the three attackers were killed in fighting, was planned by a militant called Adil, Saleh said.

Adil was recruited by the Haqqani network, Saleh said giving only one name of the arrested man.

"The attack was carried out to pressure, defame and make the

government look weak in front of the people," Saleh said.

Adil, who had been a student of the Islamic sharia law, hailed from the province of Panjshir but his family lived on the outskirts of Kabul, he said.

"Adil had been missing for three years amid rumours that he had gone to receive training in war and fighting," Saleh said.