

Girl takes her life

FROM PAGE 1
husband, son, and a relative in Naogaon.

A Faridpur court, the same day, placed stalker Debashish Saha Rony on a three-day remand in connection with the murder of Champa Rani, whose twin daughters Hira and Mukta were his targets.

Against the backdrop of an alarming rise in stalking of women by unruly men in the country recently, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) filed a public interest writ petition with the High Court yesterday, seeking direction for the government to formulate a policy and guidelines for protection of women and girls from stalking.

Petitioner Fahima Nasrin, a BNWLA leader, said under the existing law the highest punishment for stalking is three-year imprisonment, which seems inadequate as a deterrent in the face of increasing instances of the crime. The HC will hear the petition today, she added.

Yesterday's victim Rupali Rani of Bogra bordering Sirajganj, who was a student of class IX at Simabari SR Girls' School, hanged herself from a ceiling beam around 8:30am after stalker Sushil Shil, 18, kidnapped her and kept her confined in a room of his residence in Sirajganj.

Sushil kidnapped Rani around 6:30am on her way to a coaching centre in Sirajganj. He also forcefully put vermilion on her forehead to imply that she was married to him according to the Hindu custom.

Discovering Rani's body hanging from the ceiling, Sushil tried to flee the area, but local residents caught him and handed him over to police, said Amirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Raiganj Police Station.

Locals said Shushil had been harassing Rani with unwelcome advances on her way to and from school and the coaching centre over the

Final Kyrgyzstan polls results announced

BBC ONLINE

Five political parties will be represented in Kyrgyzstan's new parliament, according to the official results of the 10 October election.

The opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, had the most votes but failed to win an outright majority. Parties will now have to form a governing coalition.

The final results were delayed while officials investigated fraud claims.

It follows months of political turmoil after President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted in a mass uprising in April.

The country also witnessed bloody clashes in the south between Kyrgyz majority and ethnic Uzbeks, in which at least 400 died.

In June a new constitution introducing a parliamentary system was approved in a referendum.

Kyrgyzstan is trying to build the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia, which is dominated by post-Soviet strongmen.

Five out of 29 parties passed the 5% threshold to win seats in the new parliament, but none won enough to form a government.

10-truck arms case

FROM PAGE 16
Secretary of BNP Dr Shahadat Hossain in the lead on the court premises demanding release of Babar.

The order came after the investigation officer of the cases Senior ASP Mohammad Moniruzzaman of Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Chittagong filed a petition for a 10-day remand.

Meanwhile, the defence lawyers filed a petition to the court seeking a stay on the order for 15 days stating that Babar was sick. The court fixed today [Tuesday] for hearing on the petition.

Shahadat Hossain, also a physician, said Babar has been suffering from severe gastro intestinal diseases that might have caused the bleeding.

Babar's counsel advocate Sanaulah said though they filed the petition to withhold the hearing to ensure Babar's treatment, the court passed the order ignoring it.

Public Prosecutor (PP) Kamal Uddin told the journalists that both the state and defendant lawyers could hardly place their arguments

last few months.

Rani's brother Kanak Kumar filed a case with Raiganj police in connection with his sister's death.

In another incident, police yesterday arrested stalker of a woman, Nabibur Rahman alias Luku, 35, from Rajshahi, who on Saturday had stabbed his stalking victim's husband Abdul Hannan, her son, and one of her relatives in Khash-Naogaon area of Naogaon.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday visited the residence of murdered Natore College teacher Mizanur Rahman in Chawk Laxmipur village under Charghat upazila of Rajshahi, and also Abdul Hannan and his son in Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Mizannur died in a hospital of the capital on October 24, after being severely injured from an attack by two stalkers of women, for protesting against their harassment of college girls.

COMMENT ON KASHMIR

Arundhati Roy accuses TV over protests

AFP, New Delhi

Award-winning author and activist Arundhati Roy has accused Indian TV channels of whipping up protests against her after her house in New Delhi was attacked over comments she made about Kashmir.

About 100 female protesters from a Hindu nationalist party surrounded her residence on Sunday to demonstrate against a speech last month in which she said the disputed Muslim-majority region had "never been an integral part of India."

Roy said at least three television broadcasting vans were in place before the crowd arrived. The protesters "broke through the gate and vandalised property" as they chanted slogans against her, she said.

"Some TV channels and newspapers are in the process of brazenly inciting mob anger against me," she said in a statement late Sunday.

Roy, winner of the 1997 Booker prize for her novel "The God of Small Things", is a fierce critic of India's tactics in Kashmir, where protests against New Delhi have claimed more than 100 lives since June.

Her speech led to demands that she should be arrested for sedition, but police declined to press charges.

Kashmir has been beset by anti-India violence, curfews and strikes since early June, when a 17-year-old student was killed by a police tear-gas shell. Since then, a total of 111 protesters and bystanders have died.

Apoll published last month showed that a majority in Indian Kashmir favoured independence for their region.

Political discontent has simmered in Kashmir since the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, when a Hindu ruler took his mostly Muslim subjects into India rather than Pakistan.

The agreement of accession to India gave Kashmir autonomy in many areas, but much of this has been eroded since then.

and the court order came amid the furore.

Babar was brought to Chittagong Central Jail from Dhaka on October 29.

Earlier on October 3, Babar was accused and shown arrested in the country's largest ever arms haul cases. On the same day, CID ASP Moniruzzaman submitted a 10-day remand prayer.

Police seized 10 trucks loaded with weapons and ammunition from the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited (CUFL) jetty on April 1, 2004.

Police and coastguards found submachine-guns, AK-47 rifles, submachine carbines, Chinese pistols, rocket shells and launchers, hand grenades and bullets stuffed in around 1,500 wooden boxes during unloading those from two vessels at the CUFL jetty.

The arms were allegedly destined to reach the Indian insurgent group -- United Liberation Front of Assam.

But Babar said the weapons were smuggled in as part of conspiracy for subversion while being at Chittagong on April 3, 2004.

Fine slapped

FROM PAGE 16
The Daily Star also published follow up stories with photos on this issue.

Following the publication of reports, DoE instructed the industrial units to install fume extraction devices in the chimneys. They were also asked to submit air quality reports.

The authorities of the units remained indifferent to these instructions so far.

Mother jumps

FROM PAGE 16
stood up and started running towards it around 7:30am, giving witnesses the impression that she was a passenger and was trying to catch the train," he said, adding, "When she reached the train she dived under it still holding on to her child."

The police recovered their severed bodies from the rail tracks later in the morning.

Manik, a railway porter and a witness to the incident, said he assumed the woman was sitting on the rail track to console her crying baby as the platform was quite crowded.

"When she started running towards the train, we shouted at her forbidding her to run as it wasn't possible for her to catch it but within moments she jumped onto the tracks with her baby", he said.

Shahana's family sources said she was mentally unstable.

Her husband Azharul Islam, an employee of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, said he went to bed around 2:00am after giving Shahana, her medication and found her and the child missing after he woke up at dawn for his prayers.

"We immediately started looking for them in different places and found the bodies in the railway station," he said.

Shahana's brother Habibur Rahman said she had been mentally sick since she became pregnant with Nishat.

Azharul Islam's brother Abdul Hai said earlier when she was missing for days last Ramadan they found her in Chittagong.

Different drivers

FROM PAGE 1
fined for jaywalking.

While pedestrians yesterday continued to remain oblivious to this poorly enforced drive, it's the motorcar drivers and motorcyclists who have earned applause obeying the rules.

Most of the drivers yesterday voluntarily fastened their seat belts. Many of those who did not, apparently forgot to do it, as it is not a common habit. Majority of motorcycle riders were seen wearing helmet.

"I was driving to the office as usual. On the half way, I noticed a police car and some motor cars parked on the side of roads," said Moni Haque, an executive of a private company, "it suddenly struck me that I should fasten my seat belt and so did I."

Though the spontaneous act of fastening seat belt is an encouraging sign, which indicates that city dwellers have not lost respect for traffic rules, law enforcers however fined a lot of people for not fastening seat belts.

The traffic drive totally left out jaywalkers and pedestrians. According to the traffic department, disciplining the pedestrians of Dhaka was a daunting task and the department was not yet prepared for it.

Motorcar drivers say if the authorities really want drivers and pedestrians to obey the law, they have to demonstrate effective enforcement of the rule.

"If there is no punishment for violating traffic rules, we will revert to the culture of not fastening seat belts," said Mohammad Helal, a professional driver.

Gharial

FROM PAGE 1
Foundation and forest department officials were present during the release of the rare reptile.

Fishermen and other local people had flocked to the scene.

Tapan Kumar Dey gave Tk 1,000 to fisherman Haren Halder in appreciation of keeping the gharial alive.

Haren Halder of Purba Balikanda village along with six others found the gharial while fishing in the Padma.

Tapan urged all the fishermen not to kill any gharial, as it is one of the most endangered reptile species of the world.

Japanese company

FROM PAGE 16
EGCB's playing foul to favour one bidder from the very beginning. Allegations have also been placed with the Japanese government.

The sources say a technically qualified company like Sumitomo has been disqualified on technical grounds so that its financial offer remains sealed.

"Because if Sumitomo's offer is opened, it is most likely that its price would be cheaper than that of the competitor," comments an official.

An EGCB member however claimed to The Daily Star that the technical offer of Sumitomo's power plant had "several major flaws". He ruled out the allegations of EGCB's siding with any bidder.

This is not the first time under the current government that allegations are raised against the EGCB in a power tender. A couple of months ago, the government had to scrap a tender for a 300 MW power project in Siddhirganj after 20 months of floating it as the EGCB could not handle it fairly.

When the EGCB floated the tender for Haripur project in October last year, interested bidders were surprised that it had broadened the range of power generation for bidders.

Usually, bidders are asked to offer power generators with a capacity of 10 percent more or less. But in this case, the EGCB increased the range to 15 percent so that only bidders that offer a particular type of power generators could take part in it.

As a result, the tender was confined to only a few bidders like Sumitomo and Marubeni that offered generators manufactured by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) and Siemens.

Then the interested bidders pointed their fingers at the bidders' prequalification (PQ) documents prepared by the EGCB.

They showed that the PQ documents did not match with other standard PQ documents of the country and it allowed

Pabna assault

FROM PAGE 16
commissioner's (DC) office in September.

Senior Judicial Magistrate of Speedy Trial Tribunal of Pabna Md Parvez Shahriar granted them bail considering the time they served in jail.

The court however turned down the bail prayers of 12 other accused in the case filed for attacking and vandalising government officials' cars during the recruitment test on September 17.

Meanwhile, the complainant of the case magistrate Sarwar Alam was not present at the court.

The counsel for the accused called his absence a sign of negligence on the administration's part.

"The complainant of the case and a main prosecution witness has not appeared before the court today yesterday. It seems that the administration is reluctant to continue the case any further", said advocate Abdul Ahad, counsel of the accused.

Those who got bail are former general secretary of Pabna Edward College BCL unit Abdullah Al Mamun, BCL activist Jony and Jubo League workers Abdul Mannan, Mohammad Sarwar and Sujon.

The case was filed with Pabna Sadar Police Station immediately after the incident accusing 31 leaders and workers of Awami League and its front organisations.

Dacoity case

FROM PAGE 16
Syeda Hamid filed the case accusing five persons including gang leader Joyrul Abedin the same day. Four others were included in the charge sheet by the investigation officer of the case.

Of the nine accused, five are on bail and four are absconding.

On August 26 this year, the home ministry decided to withdraw the case and sent a letter asking the district magistrate of Dhaka to take steps for withdrawal of the case.

The letter said the government has decided to withdraw the case considering it "politically motivated" and meant for "harassment".

The district magistrate on September 26 sent the letter to the Dhaka metropolitan public prosecutor (DMPP) for necessary action.

On October 28, DMPP Mohammad Abdullah Abu referred the matter to Special Public Prosecutor Syed Shamsul Haque of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-2 of Dhaka for

its disposal.

Shamsul Haque yesterday submitted to the tribunal a petition, along with a copy of the home ministry's recommendation, seeking withdrawal of the case.

Judge (In-charge) of the tribunal Kaniz Akhter Nasrina Khanam fixed November 9 for hearing on the petition.

Earlier, fourteen prosecution witnesses including complainant of the case had given statements before the tribunal.

Asked whether a murder case could be withdrawn, Abdullah Abu said, "I have nothing else to do if the government asks me to take necessary steps for withdrawal of any case filed against any person -- a dacoit or a political personality."

A brother-in-law of the victim said if a murder case filed against robbers is withdrawn considering it "politically motivated", how they will get justice. He however sought anonymity.

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Palestinian kids face increasing settler attack

AFP, Jerusalem

Palestinian children are coming under increasing attack by a handful of violent, extremist Jewish settlers, a rights group said yesterday in a report on the human cost of settlement expansion.

The study, compiled over two years by Defence for Children International-Palestine (DCI), investigated 38 separate incidents of settler violence towards minors that resulted in the deaths of three children and injuries to 42 others.

Details of the attacks were set out in sworn affidavits and compiled in the report: "Under Attack: Settler violence against Palestinian children in the occupied Palestinian territory."

Such attacks are usually carried out in groups and tend to be characterised by verbal harassment, intimidation, physical assault and the destruction of property, the study found.

In 13 of the cases, settlers opened fire, killing three children and injuring another 10.

Physical assault and intimidation was also reported in 15 cases, and stone throwing in another nine incidents. Cursing and verbal abuse was documented in almost every case.

"Continued settlement expansion and a growing settler population in the occupied territory have severely impacted the security of the Palestinian population, particularly children, whose lives are increasingly threatened by wilful attacks perpetrated by extremist settlers," the report said.

In eight cases, soldiers colluded with the attack by either joining in, turning a blind eye or punishing the victims rather than the perpetrators, it found.

Incidents of violence tended to be concentrated in certain areas, with 21 attacks carried out in and around the southern city of Hebron, and another seven near Nablus in the north, close to the Yitzhar and Bracha settlements -- "areas where settlers adhere to extremist and violent ideologies," the report said.

War crimes

FROM PAGE 1
bars to face charges of genocide and crimes against humanity.

On September 20, prosecutors of the tribunal announced they had documents and evidence against 12 people.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, tribunal's Registrar Shahinur Islam said some minor changes have been brought to 10 sections of the rules of procedure. A gazette notification to that end was issued on October 28.

The tribunal, if necessary, can further amend the rules of procedure, which were issued in July, he added.

Queried if the rules of procedure can be amended now that the trial proceedings are underway, noted jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik said such amendments might be necessary.

Citing examples of former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, he said the tribunals in those countries had amended their rules of procedure several times while trying the war criminals.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said the international crimes tribunal can formulate and amend its rules of procedure as per section 22 of the International Crimes Tribunal Act, 1973.

Registrar Shahinur said the war crimes court can issue warrant for arrest of anyone accused under the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973. But for that to happen, the prosecutors will need to file petitions.

The tribunal can also ask the law enforcers to produce a person accused of crimes against humanity even if he is detained in any other case, according to the new rules.

The amended rules say the senior-most member of the tribunal will act as chief in absence of the tribunal's chairman.

Any member of the war crimes investigation agency can be assigned by the government to supervise investigation.

Crimes against humanity fall under article 3(2) of International Crimes Tribunal Act, which also covers offences like war crimes, genocide, murder, abduction, confinement, torture and rape.

Foreign secys

FROM PAGE 1
Dhaka in 2007.

During the three-hour discussion, the two sides held a detailed overview of the bilateral relations over a range of issues including politics, economy and trade, defence, cultural, educational and consular issues, said a Pakistan foreign ministry press release.

Sources said, the Bangladesh side reiterated the issues of Pakistan's apology for the 1971 genocide, repatriation of stranded Pakistanis and sharing of assets.

However, there was no official statement about Pakistan's position on those demands, the sources added.

Foreign ministry sources told The Daily Star that both sides had agreed to hold a senior official level meeting in next few months to implement the decisions taken in the talks.

Both agreed to initiate substantive preparatory work for leadership level visits and intensify consultation. Decision was also taken to hold foreign minister level meeting in next six months to pave the way for head of government level visit sometime in 2011.

Diplomatic sources said a distance had created in the bilateral relations between the two countries since after the government had taken the initiative to try the war criminals. Since then there had been no such top-level meeting or discussion at different levels.

The foreign secretaries also agreed to hold the next meeting of the Joint Economic Commission and bi-annual consultations at the senior officials' level.

Yesterday, Bangladesh side sought free trade and tariff waiver on Bangladeshi products, said sources.

According to official statistics, the balance of trade has been in favour of Pakistan for more than 19 years in the past.

Bangladesh exported goods and commodities worth \$ 76 million to Pakistan during 2008-09 while Pakistan exported goods worth \$ 288m in the same period to Bangladesh.

Both sides agreed to redouble efforts to promote trade and investments including joint ventures, and cooperation in agriculture, fisheries, livestock, science and technology, education and culture.

Iraq church siege

FROM PAGE 16
specifically mentioned two women in Egypt who radicals believe are being held against their will after converting to Islam.

NEGOTIATIONS ABANDONED
Residents of Baghdad's affluent Karada district, where the attack took place, first heard a loud explosion at about 1700 (1400 GMT) on Sunday, believed to have been a car bomb going off at the scene.

About 100 people were inside Our Lady of Salvation for an evening Mass at the time.

The blast was followed by gunfire as a group of armed men began by attacking the Iraq Stock Exchange building, police said, and then took over the Catholic church just across the road, clashing with guards and killing some of them.

It seems the church was the attackers' real target, says the BBC's Jim Muir in Baghdad.

One eyewitness, who was inside the church, said the gunmen "came into the prayer hall and immediately killed the priest". The witness, who declined to give his name, said worshippers were beaten and herded into an inne hall.