

India erupts in anger; suspect arrested

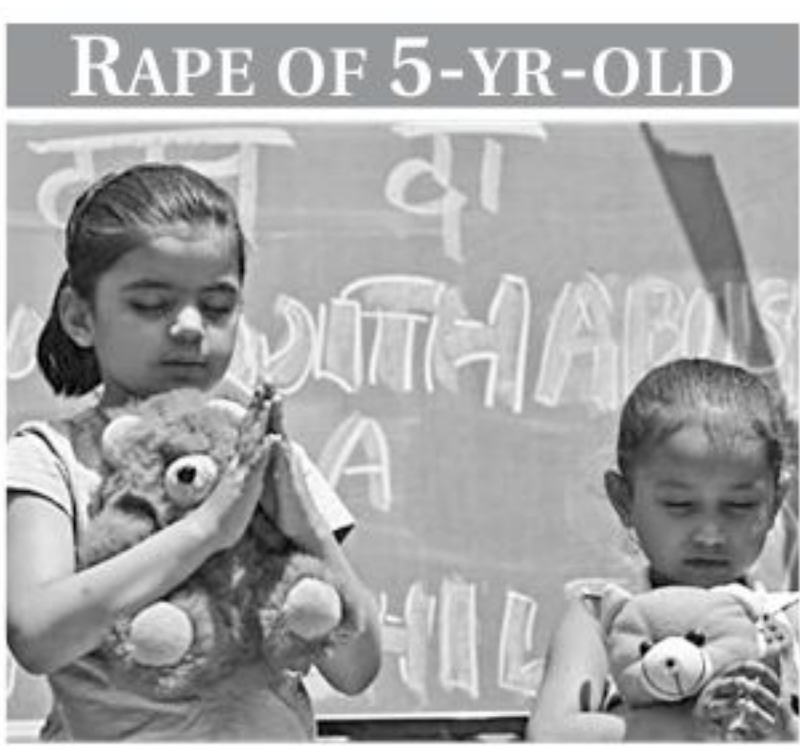
REUTERS, New Delhi

Hundreds of angry protesters gathered outside the headquarters of Delhi police on yesterday after a five year-old girl was allegedly raped and tortured, reviving memories of a brutal December assault on a woman that shook the country.

The child was being treated at a top government hospital in New Delhi and the latest medical bulletin issued late Friday described her as being in a critical condition.

The suspect, 22-year-old Manoj Kumar, was captured in eastern Bihar state after fleeing to his father-in-law's home in a village 70 kilometres (43 miles) from local capital Patna, police said.

Police accused the garment factory worker of repeatedly attacking the child inside a locked room over 48 hours after abducting her Monday in a lower-middle class



Two girls pray during a vigil for the rape victim in Ahmedabad yesterday.

area of New Delhi.

Doctors say the girl suffered severe injuries and bruising all over her body including her neck and genitalia.

Protests that began on Friday grew more intense after video footage showed a policeman slapping a woman protester, and following reports investigators offered the

victim's family 2,000 rupees not to file a case.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's office said in a statement that he was deeply disturbed by the latest incident.

The assault on the girl revived memories of the gang rape by five adult men and a teenaged boy of a 23-year-old physiotherapy student on a bus on December 16 in New Delhi. That woman died of her injuries in a Singapore hospital. The case caused an outpouring of anger in India.

The unprecedented protests by thousands of people across India eventually forced Singh's government to pass tougher laws to fight gender crimes in March.

But activists on Friday said the laws were not enough to deter sex offenders in India's largely patriarchal societies.

Interior minister Sushil Kumar Shinde said the government was conducting an inquiry into allegations of police negligence.

Pakistan court extends Musharraf's custody

AFP, Islamabad

A Pakistani court ordered former military ruler Pervez Musharraf to be remanded in custody for two weeks yesterday, but he will be allowed to stay at his plush villa, officials said.

His arrest Friday ahead of key elections relates to Musharraf's decision to sack judges when he imposed emergency rule in November 2007, a move that hastened his downfall.

"The court has sent General Musharraf on judicial remand for two weeks," Muhammad Amjad, spokesman for Musharraf's All Pakistan Muslim League party, told reporters.

"We had requested the court to send General Musharraf on judicial remand, so that we can go to higher courts for relief," he added.

Musharraf appeared before the anti-terrorism court amid tight security, as hundreds of lawyers opposing him scuffled with security personnel and shouted slogans against the former ruler.

He had spent the night at police head-



quarters in Islamabad, officials said, and was moved back there after his court appearance.

Musharraf will be allowed to return to his palatial villa, saving him the hardships of a Pakistani prison where police said he would face "security threats".

"Islamabad administration has declared General Musharraf's house a sub-jail and he will be kept there during the remand period and all jail rules will apply to the building," a senior police official told AFP.

Musharraf was taken into police custody after being arrested on Friday, an unprecedented move against a former army chief of staff.

The Supreme Court yesterday named a three-judge panel to resume hearing from Monday petitions seeking Musharraf's trial under the High Treason Act.

He also faces charges of conspiracy to murder opposition leader Benazir Bhutto in 2007 and over the death of a rebel leader during a 2006 military operation.

2-day hartal

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vandalism cases. Police filed the cases with Paltan, Ramna and Shahjahanpur police stations in the capital on December 9 last year, and March 2 and 6 on charges of their involvement in torching vehicles and assaulting police during the opposition's agitation programmes.

Contacted last night, BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the 18-party at a meeting on April 16 decided to announce tougher programmes including hartal if the BNP leaders are not granted bail today. He, however, added that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia would finalise the programmes tonight. **BLASTS NEAR BNP OFFICE**

Unidentified persons exploded at least four cocktails in front of the BNP central office at the capital's Nayapaltan yesterday, causing panic among pedestrians and others there.

Witnesses said a group of people came near the party office around 10:00am, chanting slogans against the newly formed committee of BNP-backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

On April 15, Khaleda Zia approved the 291-member JCD committee.

Asked, BNP chairperson's adviser Shamsuzzaman Dudu declined to say anything about the blasts.

HARTAL IN TWO DIVISIONS

The local units of the BNP will enforce a daylong hartal in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions today, demanding the release of central leaders including acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul, reports UNB.

The shutdown is also meant to press for release of Amar Desh acting editor Mahmudur Rahman.

Iraq holds first polls since US pullout

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi voters yesterday in the country's first polls since US troops departed, a key test of its stability in the face of a spike in attacks that has claimed more than 100 lives.

But the credibility of the provincial elections has come into question, with attacks on candidates leaving 14 dead and a third of Iraq's provinces -- all of them mainly Sunni Arab or Kurdish -- not even voting due to security concerns and political disputes.

The elections for provincial councils, responsible for naming governors who lead local reconstruction, administration and finances, are seen as a key gauge of parties' popularity ahead of general elections next year.

Voters were searched before being allowed to enter polling stations, and soldiers and police set up numerous new checkpoints in Baghdad.

Nine mortar rounds, one roadside bomb and three stun grenades, all outside Baghdad, left a civilian and a policeman wounded, officials said.

The elections, which come a decade after US-led forces ousted now-executed dictator Saddam Hussein, are the first since parliamentary polls in March 2010 and also the first since US troops withdrew in December 2011.

Punish atheists, Hefajat

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At a massive rally at Laldighi Maidan in the port city, the organisation also announced it would hold a grand rally in the capital on May 25.

Thousands of people from different upazilas of Chittagong and adjacent districts gathered at the rally venue since afternoon. Some were holding placards bearing the slogan "Ban Jamaat-e-Islami". The area stretching from Anderkilla to Kotwali and Jail Gate to the Shaheed Minar turned into a human sea.

Speakers at the rally said Hafajat is practising extremism. It was inciting militancy at the Qawmi madrasas in the country to project the country to the international community as a militant one like Afghanistan.

The children from poor

families there are being trained in militant activities, they said.

Unveiling a 12-point demand at the rally, Ahle Sunnat asked the government to bring all Qawmi madrasas under its authority and run them under a single madrasa education policy.

The speakers condemned the violence perpetrated by the Jamaat-e-Islami and Hefajat across the country.

They said Hefajat's attacks on people and their property proved it does not stand for Islam. Hefajat leaders have been misleading people by wrongly interpreting Islam.

The rally was chaired by Moulana MA Matin, chief coordinator of Ahle Sunnat.

Addressing the rally, Tarikat Federation President

Syed Najibul Basar Majbandari urged the government to stop the "militant activities by Qawmis, Wahabis and followers of Moududi".

Sunni Muslims constitute the majority of the Muslims in the country and they all love peace, he added.

Principal Moulana Abul Farah Md Farid Uddin read out the 12-point demand and announced grand rallies also in Narayanganj and Habiganj on May 11 and April 27.

Claiming themselves to be non-political, Moulana Matin urged the government to stop activities of the organisations involved in terrorism in the name of Islam.

Referring to different publications, Moulana Jalauddin Al Kadri said that like Abul Ala Moududi, leaders of Hefajat, including

Moulana Ahmed Shafi, had defamed the Prophet (pbuh) in their write-ups, for which they should be punished.

The other demands of the Ahle Sunnat include restoring the phrase "Absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah" in the constitution, bailing the country out of the present crisis through dialogue among political parties, enacting a law to ban hartal, dropping the National Women Policy provisions that contradict the Quran and Sunnah, and bringing the Tablighi Jamaat movement under government watch.

Others who spoke at the rally included Moulana Nurul Islam Hashemi, Mufti Idris Rajbhi, Obaedul Haque Noimi, Peyar Mohammad, chairman of

Gawsia Committee Bangladesh, and Mosaheb Uddin Bakhtiar, member-secretary of Ahle Sunnat.

Malaysian poll campaign kicks off

AFP, Permatang Pau

Malaysian premier Najib Razak and opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim yesterday kicked off their rival campaigns for May 5 elections likely to be the country's closest ever.

The two competitors joined hundreds of parliamentary candidates across the nation in submitting nomination papers in their respective constituencies, marking the start of a two-week campaign that will be hard-fought.

Second suspect

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strap was cut. He also noticed a small amount of blood on the tarp. He wasted no time and called the police.

A small army of police surrounded the University of Massachusetts student for a final showdown that lasted nearly two hours. Attempts to negotiate with him failed as he was "not communicating," Davis said.

A gunfight ensued, with more than 20 rounds fired. Once captured, Tsarnaev was rushed to a hospital, where he was in serious condition.

"We will determine what happened. We will investigate any associations that these terrorists may have had. And we'll continue to do whatever we have to do to keep our people safe," President Barack Obama said after the capture.

It was not immediately clear when Tsarnaev would be formally charged. US Attorney Carmen Ortiz declined to comment on possible charges he would face.

The arrest ended a dramatic four days after two bombs exploded at the marathon finish line, killing three people and wounding about 180 in the worst attack on the United States since the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and his 26-year-old brother Tamerlan were named as the main suspects. They were also at the center of a violent spree in which one policeman was killed and a second officer wounded.

released photos of the suspects Thursday night, Tsarnaev and his older brother, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, led authorities on a whirlwind manhunt sparking a high-speed police chase to Watertown.

Officials say the brothers, for no obvious reason, killed Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer Sean Collier while he was sitting in his car. The Tsarnaevs then hijacked a vehicle, telling the driver they were the marathon bombers, and hurled explosives at the pursuing officers, authorities said.

Tamerlan died of bullet wounds and injuries from explosives strapped to his body, a hospital doctor said. Dzhokhar managed to flee.

Police launched a huge manhunt on Friday with 9,000 police surrounding Watertown and parts of nearby districts hoping to isolate the teenager, who was believed wounded in the shootout.

Boston ground to a standstill as authorities halted all public transport, ordered schools and universities closed and told people in most of the region to stay in their homes.

The Tsarnaev brothers are ethnic Chechen Muslims who moved to the United States about a decade ago. Their social media pages appeared to express sympathy with the struggle of Chechnya, which has been ravaged by two wars since 1994 between Russia and increasingly Islamist-leaning separatist rebels.

Govt won't stand terror

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[Khaleda] and your ally Jamaat-e-Islami will have to shoulder the responsibility for these violent acts," she noted.

The prime minister was addressing a mammoth rally at Comilla Zilla School ground in the afternoon, reports BSS.

"For what offence you [Khaleda] are killing the innocent people, policemen, rickshaw pullers and drivers by pouring petrol on

them or hitting them with brickbats," questioned Hasina, also the president of Awami League.

She called upon all to put up a strong resistance against the destructive activities of the opposition.

Urging the opposition leader to stop terrorist activities, she said BNP had tried to save the killers of Bangabandhu, but could not succeed. And this time also it will not be successful to save war criminals.

Reiterating her commitment to hold the trial of war criminals, she said there is no room on this soil for the war criminals who had committed crimes against humanity. "They must be tried to free the nation from stigma," she added.

Mentioning that the opposition has been enforcing hartals to protect the war criminals, the premier urged people to remain alert so that BNP-Jamaat cannot make light

of the lives of people.

Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, Railway Minister Mujibul Haque, Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad, AL advisory council member Fakhrul Islam Munshi, its law affairs secretary Abdul Matin Khasru, Nasimul Alam Chowdhury, MP, AKM Bahauddin Bahar, MP, also spoke at the rally, chaired by AHM Mostafa Kamal, MP.

PM's AFFECTION TO FEMALE COP

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday showed a rare example of affection while addressing a rally at Muradnagar as an on-duty policewoman fell unconscious amid unbearable heat, reports UNB.

The premier was speaking at the rally after inaugurating the Srikail Gas Field and Transmission Pipeline.

In the middle of her

speech, Hasina noticed that a woman police constable was fainting. Stopping her speech, she directed her personal physician to go forward for the cop's treatment.

PM's Defence Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddiqui, the personal physician and others rushed to the scene and provided first aid to the policewoman Papiya aged about 30.

The cop was later taken to a hospital for treatment.

N-plant the need

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agreement with Russia to build a 2,000-MW nuclear power plant.

Matin, who presented a paper at the discussion, said he wondered why a feasibility study on the project in Rooppur had not been done in the last four years. How did the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) approve Tk 5,242 crore for the first phase of the project, without knowing its total cost?

The area around Rooppur is densely populated, Matin said, adding, "In case of a nuclear accident, it will be necessary to evacuate three million people residing within a radius of 30 km of the plant, to a safe zone."

Mohammad Shawkat Akbar, project director of Rooppur plant and also director of BAEC, said everything was being done as per the guidelines of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"We cannot eliminate the possibility of accidents,

but we can reduce the probability," said former IAEA director Jasim Uddin Ahmed.

Nuclear plants were not being discouraged around the world despite concerns over safety issues, said former BAEC chairman Muzammel Haque.

BAEC Chairman ASM Firoz said the commission was planning to recruit 1,660 people, including some 500 scientists and engineers.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said safety issues came to the forefront after the Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011.

"In one side, we need energy. On the other side, we have to ensure safety. We need to know the level of safety the Russian technology will provide. If it is good for the country, we must go for it."

State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman requested the country's senior nuclear energy experts to

inspire juniors and pass on their knowledge to them to materialise the dream of a nuclear plant.

He gave an assurance that the IAEA was very much involved in the project.

"We will do nothing bypassing the world body," he said at the roundtable.

Prof MA Quaiyum, a former BAEC chairman; AAZ Ahmed of Brac University, Mizanur Rahman of the Power Development Board, Prof Khorshed Kabir and Prof Azizur Rahman of Dhaka University, Samina Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority; Md Zahedul Islam, chief scientific officer of BAEC; Kazi Obaidul Awal, former BAEC chief engineer and Syed Fattahul Alim of The Daily Star also spoke. The roundtable was chaired by Nooruddin Ahmed, former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

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