

# DISPARAGING RAPED WOMEN Tough punishment for cop demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the lower caste Rhishi community yesterday demanded harsh punishment for a police officer who made derogatory comments on the recent rape of two married Hindu women at Hazrail village in Jessore's Monirampur upazila.

While talking to journalists, Mir Rezaul Hossain, suspended officer-in-charge of Monirampur Police Station, had remarked that Rhishi women did not mind such acts (raping), and they often did it (have sex) with other men.

At a human chain in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club organised by Bangladesh Dalit Parishad, the protesters called such comments a humiliation for all women.

They also demanded trial of the rapists in a speedy tribunal and release of a Rhishi youth, Uttam Das, who they claimed was arrested to divert the incident of political repression to a different direction.

A group of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami men allegedly raped the two women at gunpoint in the wee hours of January 8, as the Rhishi community voted in the January 5 election.

Rezaul was suspended after his comments were published in newspapers.

The protesters said the OC not only made disparaging comments about the Rhishi women but tried to project the incident differently. When Rezaul was stationed in Keshabpur, another upazila of Jessore, in 2010-11, he helped some people grab the land of Rhishi people, they alleged.

The community leaders demanded a police camp at Hazrail Rhishi village where people had been passing their days in panic since the incident.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Potholes filled with dirty water have long been covering this road before the Film Development Corporation in the capital, causing sufferings for commuters. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

# Bangladesh sets eyes on Guinness with largest national anthem choir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will again attempt to get Bangladesh listed with the Guinness World Records by gathering the largest choir to sing the national anthem on March 26 at National Parade Ground marking Independence Day.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# Patient dies for 'wrong treatment' in Rajshahi

Relatives ransack clinic; sue owner, doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A patient died Wednesday night in a Rajshahi city clinic due to "wrong treatment", alleged family members, although the autopsy report was yet to come.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

# REPRESSION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN Over 18,000 cases recorded last year

## Says Steps Towards Development report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 18,911 women and children repression cases were recorded last year, according to a report launched by Steps Towards Development yesterday.

The organisation launched the report titled Women's Human Rights 2013, based on police records, at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

The cases were filed between January and November of 2013.

Referring to statistics of Ain o Salish Kendra, the report said at least 812 women and children were raped and gang-raped.

At least 87 women were killed after rape,

and 14 others committed suicide unable to bear what had happened to them, it added.

Women of the country faced challenges last year as religious extremism entered the political arena threatening to upset whatever stride women have made so far, said Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad.

"We are yet to ratify section 16(c) of CEDAW (Convention for Elimination of Discrimination against Women), which promises women the same rights as men during marriage and its dissolution," said Mahfuza Khanam, honorary member of National Human Rights Commission.

# BLOGGER RAJIB MURDER Indictment decision on February 18

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will decide on February 18 whether the charges of killing blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider against Ansarullah Bangla Team Chief Mufti Jasimuddin Rahmani, and seven students of North South University will be accepted.

Metropolitan Magistrate Snigdha Rani Chakrabarty yesterday set the date after DB Inspector Nibarun Chandra Barman, also the investigating officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet against the accused on Tuesday.

The other accused are Redwanul Azad Rana, Md Faisal Bin Nayem alias Dweep, Maksudul Hasan alias Anik, Md Ehsan Reza alias Rumman, Nayem Sikdar alias Iraj, Nafis Intiaz and Sadman Yasir Mahmud.

Of the accused, Rana is on the run while Jasimuddin and six others are in custody. The IO appealed to the court to issue an arrest warrant against Rana.

The charge sheet mentioned Jasimuddin as the "instigator" while Redwanul Azad Rana, as the "planner".

Ahmed Rajib Haider, an activist of Shahbagh movement demanding death penalty for war criminals, was hacked to death in the capital's Pallabi on February 15 last year.

# CLIMATE CHANGE Major crop decline by 30pc within 2050

## Qazi Kholiquzzaman tells media toolkit launching

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yield of some major crops may decline by around 30 percent within 2050, seriously threatening the country's food security, if proper steps are not taken to tackle climate change, said economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad yesterday.

Gradual decline of farmland by one percent per year is enhancing the food security threat while changes in rainfall patterns and drought are giving farmers a hard time, said the chairman of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation.

Kholiquzzaman was addressing as chief guest the launching of a book, "Gonomadhyaam Sohayika: Jolobayu Poriborton Orthayon" (media toolkit:

climate change funding), financed by Oxfam and European Union, in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Society for Media and Suitable Human-Communication Techniques (SoMaSHTE), a group of non-government mass media organisations, organised the programme.

Noted agricultural journalist Shykh Seraj said adequate research was not being conducted although the livestock, poultry and fisheries of Bangladesh, among 10 countries at risk due to their geographical locations, were under threat too.

"If we want to ensure our food security, we must protect agriculture by taking necessary technological help...protecting our

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



(From left) Russell T Ahmed, CEO of champs21.com; Syed Hammadul Karim, deputy general manager, MetLife Alico Bangladesh; Hafiz Ahmed, managing director, Fast Corporation, Faber-Castell; Ruhi M Ahmed, chief of Corporate Social Responsibility, Public Relations and Communications, BSRM Group; Shykh Seraj, director and head of news, Channel I; and Iqbal Menon, category manager, GlaxoSmithKline Bangladesh Ltd, at the official launching of the third season of The Daily Star Spelling Bee in the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Star Spelling Bee 3rd season launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The third season of The Daily Star Spelling Bee was officially launched in the capital yesterday, to boost the practice of vocabulary among secondary school students.

The spelling competition, comprising a game show on television, is hosted by champs21.com and powered by Horlicks.

Spelling Bee is organised for students from class VI-X of both English and Bangla medium schools from all over the country. SSC examinees and O level candidates are not eligible to participate however.

The contest bearing the message, "Spelling is now a game", includes three stages, of which the television game show is the last.

"We want to promote the idea that spelling expertise is not something requiring intensive study. Rather, it's a fun game," CEO of champs21.com Russell T Ahmed told the launch at The Daily Star Centre.

"A person's mind is a prisoner of the extent of his vocabulary," stated Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam.

In the first round, students will play the spelling game Spellato online on the champs21.com website--www.champs21.com--from February 1 to February 28.

The organisers will also visit 200 schools in all seven divisions where students cannot play the game online to select participants of the second round by hosting spelling tests.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# FF barred from testifying in Sayedee case

## Defence lawyer tells SC on his appeal against death penalty for war crimes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A freedom fighter, Shahidul Islam Selim, whose name was on the list of prosecution witnesses, was barred from testifying at the International Crimes Tribunal-1 as he might have refused to give statement involving Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee, a defence lawyer told the Supreme Court yesterday.

SM Shahjahan said this while placing arguments on the appeal filed by Sayedee challenging the ICT-1 verdict that sentenced him to death for committing crimes against humanity during the country's Liberation War.

The ICT-1 has convicted Sayedee on the charge of torturing Shahidul Islam Selim, son of Nurul Islam Khan, an Awami League leader of village Baduria in Pirojpur sadar,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# Sonali Bank robber remanded

## Officially identified as Yusuf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Kishoreganj judicial court yesterday addressed the man behind the Sonali Bank heist as Yusuf Munshi instead of Habib or Sohel and placed him on a seven-day remand.

After the bank was found looted on Sunday, police filed a case identifying him as Habib alias Sohel, said Abdul Malek, officer-in-charge of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station.

"We have contacted Patuakhali police and came to know that he is known as Yusuf Munshi at his village home there," said the OC, also investigation officer of the case.

Magistrate Hamidul Islam also placed Yusuf's brother Idris on a seven-day remand when police prayed to remand each of them for 10 days, reported our Kishoreganj correspondent.

The siblings were arrested by Rapid Action Battalion in the capital's Shyampur with Tk 16.19 crore on Tuesday and handed them over to Kishoreganj police Wednesday afternoon.

The OC said they were working to recover the rest of the looted amount of Tk 16.40 crore.

Meanwhile, the police officer said Yusuf had a fixed deposit receipt (FDR) account of Tk 2 lakh with the Sonali Bank branch in Kishoreganj town.

Quoting a bank official, he said Yusuf closed the account in 2011 and used the fake name "Habib" when he opened it. Police have asked for the details of the account, he added.

Meanwhile, after primary interrogation, Kishoreganj police yesterday released 12 Sonali Bank officers and owner of the house, which Yusuf rented to rob the bank by digging an underground tunnel to the vault. They were taken to police custody on Monday.

The OC said they were yet to take any decision regarding the eight suspended policemen who were stationed in the bank the night before the looting was exposed.

# Bishwa Sahitya Kendra to award 5,703 students of Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bishwa Sahitya Kendra (BSK) will award 5,703 school students of its book reading programme in Dhaka in a two-day long prize giving ceremony beginning today.

The ceremony will start

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

# Obituary

CITY DESK

Nur Ahmed, sports commentator of radio and television, passed away due to old age complications in a hospital in the capital Wednesday. He was 78.

He left behind his wife, a son and a daughter.

He played football for Calcutta Mohammedan Club and Dhaka league.

Nur was a friend of renowned singer Manna Dey and the character of "Moidul" in Dey's popular song "Coffee House" was based on Nur, said a press release. He was buried at Mirpur graveyard.

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