



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE
STAR WEEKEND

U-14S DECIMATE NEPAL
 Bangladesh's Under-14 girls blitzed Nepal 9-0 in the AFC Girls' Championship
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WARNING FROM XI
 China will not allow chaos on Korean peninsula
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The dead do not feel anything, but those who survive do. The horrendous experience of the insensitive two-finger test after rape. The courtroom insults during trial because a draconian law permits the accused to question the victim's character. The families suffer no less humiliation as they wait for justice. While nations around the world have overhauled relevant laws with provisions that shield the rape victims, ours still favour the offender instead. Isn't it time we were a little more sensitive towards the victims of a crime now regarded as a crime against society? In the wake of Tonu murder after suspected rape, The Daily Star tries to shed some light on all these aspects. Today, the first two instalments of a three-part series.

A long, insulting walk to justice

Raped, they drown in humiliation while seeking punishment to culprits

Law 144-year-old, favours rapists

Civilised countries across globe toughen up laws against sex offenders



"What can be more unfortunate than this when the accused during trial raise questions about the character of a woman who seeks justice after losing her honour?"

CHIEF JUSTICE SURENDRA KUMAR SINHA

"I didn't want to talk, I felt groggy... screams went through my head and my heart wrenched. I kept on wondering why no one could hear my cries or see my tears." A RAPE VICTIM ABOUT HER STATE OF MIND IN THE AFTERMATH

TAMANNA KHAN

Her dark-circled, deep-set eyes gave her a hollow look. The eyes were full of fear and mistrust. The girl gave sideways glances as she hesitantly walked into the office of the One-stop-Crisis Centre (OCC) at Dhaka Medical College Hospital last month. She looked afraid, and when she noticed a man sitting in the room, she immediately cringed. She is a rape victim. For about a week after her rescue, she hardly spoke, OCC officials recall. Her trauma and fear is shared by another rape survivor, a married woman, who was rescued from a sex racket in India last year. "It's not easy to tell even your closest family members what has happened to you," the woman told The Daily Star recently. Humiliation and shame initially prevented her from telling her husband about the sexual assault when he found

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SHAKHAWAT LITON

For a rape victim, justice in the existing legal system in Bangladesh means further humiliation and unending hassles. As if losing her honour was not enough, everything seems to work against her -- from recording her statement at police stations mostly manned by male officers to the

insensitive two-finger test, violating her privacy to a draconian provision in the Evidence Act of 1872 that allows the rape accused to question her character. For long, it has been an international standard in criminal justice system that the character, morality and sexual history of a victim are largely irrelevant to a sex crime

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Kerry calls PM, seeks justice for Xulhaz

UNB, Dhaka

US Secretary of State John Kerry last night phoned Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and requested her to take necessary steps to bring to book the killers of Xulhaz. According to the prime minister's press wing, Kerry talked to Hasina for 16 minutes from 9:04pm to 9:20pm and exchanged pleasantries. Expressing his concern over the killings, he said, "Xulhaz was our colleague." The PM thanked the US secretary of state for expressing his concern and said, "Our stance is very firm against terrorism. We're following a zero tolerance policy in this regard. Our law enforcement agencies are working

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Top court to rehear 168 settled cases

These include 161 heard by Justice Manik

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court will rehear 161 cases in which former SC judge Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik wrote judgments and orders after his retirement. The apex court will also hear afresh seven other cases, handled by former chief justice Md Muzammel Hossain, as he returned the files of the cases to the SC Registrar Office amid controversy over writing verdict after retirement, sources said. Two benches of the Appellate Division of the apex court will start rehearing the 168 cases from May 5, Anisur Rahman, personal secretary to Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, told The Daily Star last night. Of them, 106 cases have been kept on the Appellate Division's cause list for rehearing by the bench led by the CJ. The rest of the cases will be reheard by another bench led by Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah. Legal experts said justice seekers will be the

ultimate sufferers as they will have to wait more for justice. The decision came about three months after the CJ said that writing any judgments or orders by a judge after retirement is unconstitutional. On the occasion of the first anniversary of his taking office, the CJ in a message on January 19 said some judges made unusual delays in writing verdicts while others continued to do it long after their retirement, "which goes against the law and the constitution". Former chief justice Muzammel retired on January 16 last year and Justice Manik on October 1. Sources said that Justice Manik has already submitted the judgments and orders in the 161 cases that were pending with him after his retirement. Contacted, Manik told The Daily Star last night that he did not hear the cases in question alone and that other Appellate Division judges were part of the bench.

Power situation to improve by today

Assures govt; power minister says sorry to people for outages

STAR REPORT

In a rare move, State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid has apologised to the nation for the disruption in power supply over the last one week and hoped things would be normal by today. "I'm sincerely sorry as common people at different parts of the entire Bangladesh, including Dhaka city, Chittagong and northern region, have been suffering due to the power supply disruptions," he said in a Facebook post on Wednesday night. The supply of fuel oil across the country through waterways was hampered seriously as water vessel workers had been on a strike over the last one week to realise their various demands, he added. "That's why, electricity generation at oil-based power stations had been badly affected and it [power production] has marked a fall by 1,600 megawatts. At the same time, irrigation for cropland has also stagnated due to the crisis of fuel," Nasrul observed. Meanwhile, the power, energy and mineral resources ministry emailed a press release yesterday afternoon which said the disruption was due to some unavoidable reasons. Saying that the situation would improve soon, it urged the people to have patience and use electricity sensibly.

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TOP QUOTE

"There is no place for hatred in Islam. Religious leaders have to be careful about instigation while preaching and giving sermons."

MAULANA FARID UDDIN MASUD
 JAMIATUL ULEMA PARISHAD CHAIRMAN
 AT A CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS HARMONY

Homebound on retirement, man meets tragic end

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR
 TOPIU, Pabna

He got off the train just to get a paan. All his career he must have done it hundreds of times, but this would be his last. A security intelligence official of Railway Nirapotta Bahini, Abu Hasan Afsar Ali was going back home at the end of his 30-year career. Instead he died under the train he was travelling on. The 60-year-old had packed up all his belongings, vacated his government quarters in Ishwardi, and got on the train for Sirajganj yesterday with his family to move permanently back to his ancestral home. Leaving Ishwardi Railway Station, the Sirajganj Express travelled for about an hour before

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The colour of the water in this part of the Louhajang river in Khudirampur area of Tangail clearly says how recklessly toxic waste from local factories is dumped into the river. The authorities concerned have turned a blind eye to it. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

ESCAP forecasts steady growth for Bangladesh

6.8pc this year, 7pc next year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN has predicted a steady economic growth for Bangladesh this year and the next year, but voiced concern over rising inequality and slow rate of poverty reduction. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) projected the country's GDP growth at 6.8 percent in 2016 and 7 percent in 2017. The prediction is based mainly on steady growth in employment, domestic consumption supported by lower inflation, higher remittances from workers and rising public sector wages, said Dr Shuvojit Banerjee, economic affairs officer of the ESCAP. However, concern remains over rising inequality and slow rate of poverty reduction, he said at the launch of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2016 at the capital's IDB Bhawan yesterday. Referring to the survey findings, Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the country's GDP growth is fine, but it may not benefit the poor. One-third of the country's population is poor, given the daily per capita income of \$1.25. But the proportion of the poor might go up to 40 percent if the new measure of daily per capita income of \$1.9 is considered, he said. ESCAP's annual report analysed the region's economic and social status and its link to the changes in the global

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