

# Teenage garment worker gang raped in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four miscreants raped a teenage garment worker in Mohammadpur Beri Bandh area where she was strolling with her male co-worker Saturday evening.

Police arrested one Rakib, 22, Officer-in-Charge (OC) Jamaluddin Mir of Mohammadpur Police Station said.

The victim's father said his 16-year-old girl was walking with a co-worker in Ekota Housing area when five miscreants, including Rakib, held the youth and forcibly took her into a nearby bush. Then, four of them raped her.

The girl's mother filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station on Sunday accusing Rakib and four others.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# SANTAL REPORT

## DC apologises for derogatory term

### Now HC seeks explanation from SP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday exempted the Gaibandha deputy commissioner from personal appearance before it after he apologised to the court for a derogatory term he used in a report over a November 6 attack on the Santals in the district's Gobindaganj upazila.

In the report submitted to the HC on November 30, Deputy Commissioner Md Abdus Samad had stated that Santals and "Bangalee miscreants" locked in a clash with workers of a sugar mill.

Hearing a petition on December 6, the HC said the Pakistani occupation forces used such words as "Bangalee dushkritikari" (Bangalee miscreants).

Accepting the apology made by DC Md Abdus Samad as per the court's December 6 order, the HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice Krishna Debnath yesterday summoned the district's

SEE PAGE 5 COL 7



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Pedestrians, including a woman with a child on her lap, cross the Jatrabari and Sayedabad Bridge intersection in the capital amid oncoming traffic. Lack of underpass, streetlights and zebra crossing continue to expose them to accidents in the area. The photo was taken recently.

## JATRABARI-SAYEDABAD BRIDGE INTERSECTION

# Risky crossing puts lives in peril

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Some of the buses are turning around while many buses, cars, auto-rickshaws and rickshaws move back and forth haphazardly -- this has become a common scene at Jatrabari and Sayedabad Bridge intersection where risking lives hundreds of pedestrians cross these roads every day.

"I wish I had two more eyes on my back to check everywhere at the same time," said Moniruzzaman, a ninth-grader of Jatrabari Ideal School and College, after crossing the Sayedabad Bridge road.

It worsens after sunset as there is no streetlight between Rajdhani Super Market and Jatrabari intersection. At night, pedestrians have to depend on the headlights of the vehicles, moving hastily.

Shahana Khatun, who lives in Brahmanchiran, faces trouble everyday in accompanying her daughter Sumaiya, a sixth-grader, to the same school.

"Vehicles move so chaotically that often my heart beats faster while crossing the road," she said. "You're finished, if you remain absent-minded even for a second."

Once it used to be a two-way road but after the construction of the Hanif flyover the road at some points from Rajdhani Super

Market to Jatrabari got divided into three parts. Now it is difficult for the passers-by to know for sure which lanes are vacant, said locals.

Also, after the flyover's construction, the adjacent footpaths became unusable since the com-

versity student.

Earlier, there used to be an underpass near Sayedabad Bridge and a foot-over bridge at the Jatrabari intersection but those were demolished for the construction of the flyover.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

City and long-route buses move haphazardly under Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover at Sayedabad Bridge intersection, posing risk to pedestrians.

muters now wait in the middle of the road next to the pillars of the flyover to get on the buses, they added. Moreover, the pillars shortened the pedestrians' view.

"It's quite difficult to spot vehicles in advance...", said Saymun Hassan, a private uni-

Kulsum Aktar, a housewife, had to run across the Jatrabari intersection with a two-year-old child on her lap to catch a Demra-bound Leguna (locally made passenger vehicle).

"Once it was lot easier to cross the Chourasta [Jatrabari intersec-

tion] using the foot-over bridge, now it has not only become difficult but also dangerous," panting, she told this correspondent.

Around 20-25 traffic police officers carry out duties in Jatrabari while four to five in Sayedabad Bridge area in each shift.

Admitting that people cross the road amid risk, Tariqul Islam, a traffic inspector (TI) at Jatrabari intersection, said if the road engineering was done in a planned way, such chaotic situation might not have arisen.

TI of Sayedabad Mustafizur Rahman emphasised fencing and zebra crossing to minimise the risk factor.

"Yes, due to darkness, it is difficult for us to discharge duties. It also creates problems for pedestrians," he said, adding, minor accidents and criminal activities at times take place for not having street lights in the area.

Contacted, Mahtab Uddin, executive engineer of Electrical Department under Dhaka South City Corporation, said it will take one to two months to set up the lights. "Those will be different because of the flyover. Lights of different watts ranging from 40 to 80 will be installed on 20-feet high poles," he said.

# Expat's wife, two kids found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of a Bangladeshi expatriate's wife and two children from their rented residence in Feni town.

Marzina Akter Mukta, 28, her eight-year-old daughter Tasnim Ahmed Mahi and three-year-old son Mohin Ahmed were found dead at noon inside their flat in the town's West Ukilparha area, said police.

Mukta's husband Tarek Ahmed, of the district's Sonagazi upazila, has long been living in Italy, Officer-in-Charge of Feni Sadar Police Station Rashed Khan Chowdhury told The Daily Star, adding, "Mukta might have killed herself along with her two children by taking poisonous ingredients following an altercation with her husband on phone."

The bodies will be sent to Feni Sadar Hospital for autopsies, he said.

Mukta's brother Masum said Tarik informed him of their conjugal feud on phone and requested to visit his [Tarik's] flat to mediate it.

"I went accordingly and found its door locked from inside. I thought that they had gone to our house," Masum mentioned.

He added that he went there again and called them by their names. With none responding, Masum informed the police who recovered the bodies.

The couple got married some 12 years ago, according to Masum.

# Cabinet okays renewal for border haats

Adopts condolence motion at Shakil's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved a draft for renewing and re-signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) and mode of operation (MoO) between Bangladesh and India for setting up border haats and their operations extending the tenure of the haats to five years from three years.

The revised draft proposed for allowing 50 traders from each side to transact their products in a border haat which is now 25, Cabinet Secretary M Shafiqul Alam told reporters after the weekly cabinet meeting at the secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The cabinet also gave a nod to increasing the purchase limit of the customers to US\$ 200 from the existing \$100.

The cabinet also approved in principle the drafts of the "Bangladesh Rice Research Institute Act-2016", the "Seeds Act-2016", and the "Bangladesh Film and Television Institute (Amendment) Act-2016".

It also endorsed the draft of the president's speech to be delivered at the first session of the Jatiya Sangsad in 2017.

The cabinet adopted separate condolence motions at the deaths of noted Indian politician and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Jayalalitha and Prime Minister's Special Assistant Mahbubul Hoque Shakil.

The cabinet recalled Shakil's contributions to the country's student politics as the organising secretary and senior vice president of Bangladesh Chhatra League and subsequently as the assistant secretary in the sub-committee of the Awami League Central Working Committee.

His involvement with media and his popular literary works including two poetry books "Mon kharaper gari" and "Khero khatar pata theke" were also mentioned.

Shakil was an efficient organiser, cultural personality and popular writer, the cabinet said.



PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN

A hawker sells the national flag of Bangladesh in various sizes at the Kuakata sea beach yesterday in the month of victory, oblivious of the approved rules regarding size, design and colour. The basic code is that it will be bottle green and rectangular in the proportion of 10:6, with a red circle in the middle having a radius one-fifth of the flag's length.

# Bangladesh, Palestine ink MoU on trade, power generation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Palestine have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on strengthening bilateral relations to enhance cooperation in the areas of trade and investment and power generation between the two countries.

Before leaving Dhaka on Sunday night, Foreign Minister of Palestine Riad NA Malki signed the MoU along with State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources of Bangladesh Nasrul Hamid. The Palestinian minister was in the capital to attend the ninth GFMD Summit which concluded yesterday.

The MoU highlighted the supply of natural resources to Bangladesh like LPG, LNG, diesel and jet fuel to Bangladesh by Palestine, and the joint work of Bangladesh and Palestine towards planning, assessing and developing natural gas and oil projects in Bangladesh, said a release of Palestine Embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

Head of mission of the Palestinian Embassy in Dhaka Yousef SY Ramdan, Director General of the Palestinian International Cooperation (PICA) Imad MM Zuhairi, Petrobangla Chairman Istiaque Ahmad, Chairman of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation Md Mahmud Reza Khan, and Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary Nazimuddin Chowdhury were present on the occasion.

# KUAKATA-DHAKA TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS

## HC scraps BTCL contract for Telephone Shilpa Sangstha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday declared illegal the process through which Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL) awarded Telephone Shilpa Sangstha Ltd (TSS) a contract to install transmission systems from Kuakata to Dhaka.

The contract has been scrapped, ruled the bench of Justice Quamrul Islam Siddique and Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif.

The judges came up with the order after hearing a writ petition filed by Turkish firm Netas Telekomunikasyon challenging the legality of their tender's cancellation and the contract being awarded to TSS.

The international competitive tender was floated in May to install the equipment of 100 Gbps bandwidth to a second submarine

cable, said the petitioner. The petitioner's counsels argued before the court that TSS does not manufacture the 100 Gbps equipment and would procure it from Tejas India.

Neither TSS nor Tejas participated in the tender, said court sources. According to Central Procurement Technical Unit of the Ministry of Planning, such trading is not allowed in direct procurement.

For such a procurement process to be used, the equipment must be manufactured by a government-owned company, said the sources. BTCL illegally cancelled the whole tender process and, violating the public procurement act and rule, awarded the contract to TSS, said the sources.

Netas Telekomunikasyon, which became technically and financially responsive, was

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

# BRUTAL TORTURE OF WIFE

## Man, his parents sent to jail on surrender

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A man who brutally tortured his wife for dowry was sent to jail along with his parents on surrender yesterday.

Shofiul Islam and his father Hamid Miah and mother Rokeya Begum surrendered to the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in the district and prayed for bail, Court Inspector Anwarul Islam said.

However, Judge Hamidul Alam rejected the bail prayer and sent them to jail, he said. They were later taken to the Tangail District Jail later, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# Recognition must for women's unpaid work

## Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of recognition for women's unpaid work is among the factors that impede their empowerment process, speakers said yesterday.

Ensuring a total development is difficult as the society does not recognise such contributions of women, they said.

The speakers said these when addressing a roundtable on "Women's Unpaid Labour: Evaluation and Recognition" organised by the Bangla daily Ittefaq in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Matra at the newspaper's conference hall in the capital.

Speaking at the roundtable, Banasree Mitra, senior co-coordinator of MJF, said they were conducting a campaign with the theme "Equality through Dignity" for women's development.

There are some necessary things to do to ensure their dignity, which include recognising their work at home and outside, redistributing and reducing the volume of work, she said,

adding that together these could help ensure their proper representation in the society.

If these are ensured, then the women could contribute more to the country's economy, Mitra added.

Gender specialist Tania Haque said women were being deprived of leisure opportunities during their work as their contributions were not evaluated as it should be. And, those women who work outside their homes can only do their jobs but cannot build their careers.

Laying emphasis on ensuring their dignity and participation in all development activities, Pratima Paul-Majumder, an economist and researcher, opined that ensuring equality for women was crucial to help implement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said it was true that the country made a remarkable progress in women's development; still there were many things to do in this regard.

More than 80 percent of women become

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

# I couldn't save anything but my life

## Says elderly woman as Dhaka slum fire guts 120 shanties

MUNTAKIM SAAD

The woman in her 60s was having lunch in the open, in front of the ruins of what used to be her home. It was her only shelter and only source of livelihood. A fire early yesterday destroyed it all, leaving Hashi Rani and her husband Shankar Das, 80, destitute.

Too old to work, the couple owned five shanties in Adarsha Nagar area of Mohakhali's Dakkhin Para and used to make a living by renting them out.

Theirs were among 120 shanties that were gutted. Residents said the fire might have originated from an electric short-circuit at an NGO-run school in the slum area, around 12:30am.

Around 500 people became homeless in the fire, according to the residents.

"My family was dependent on the monthly rent of Tk 9,500. I couldn't save anything but my life," Hashi Rani said, wiping off her tears.

In the afternoon, the homeless residents of the shanties were seen sitting under the open sky with vacant

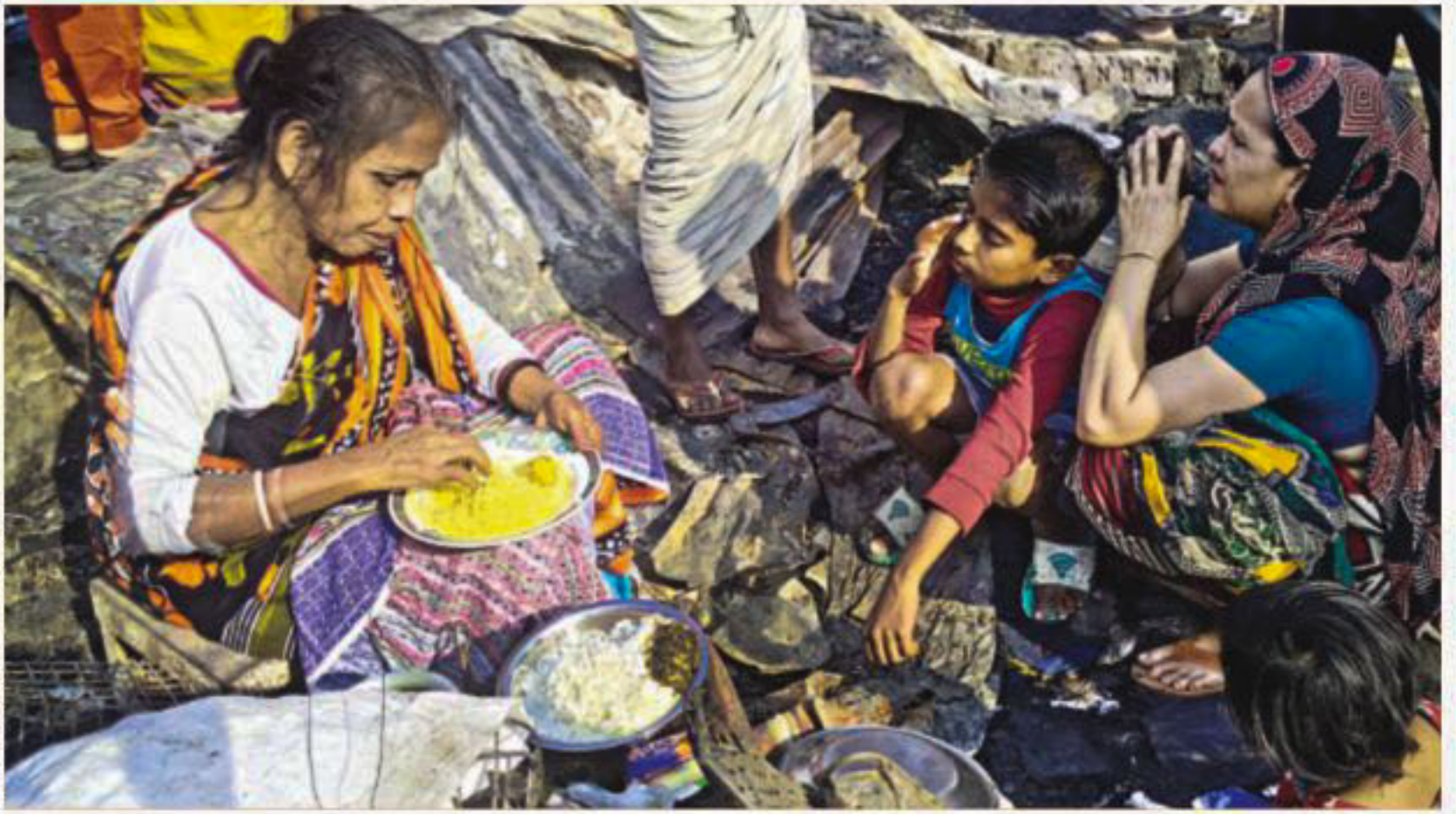


PHOTO: COLLECTED

Life trudges on amidst smoldering ruins in Adarsha Nagar of Mohakhali's Dakkhin Para in Dhaka after a devastating fire gutted some 120 shanties early yesterday.

looks and no belongings. One of them, called Yasin, said, "We had khichuri in the morning, but don't have anything for lunch." "However, the local commissioner visited the place in the morning and promised some assistance," he said.

Residents said that after the fire,

many came to the rescue while many came to loot.

Talking about the source of the fire, locals said they first saw the fire break out in the NGO school that used to teach the poor children of the shanties.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1