



Rohingya refugees who fled from Myanmar a day before walk to a relief centre in Teknaf of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SUICIDE OF RAPED GIRL Frustration as case not recorded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Parents and relatives of a school student, who died by suicide on Tuesday in Panchagarh, are frustrated as police have not yet recorded any case against the two youths, who allegedly provoked the 14-year-old girl to do that.

The victim, Rahima Akhter Sonia, daughter of Jahurul Islam of Kalamajodth village in Tentulia Upazila, was allegedly raped by Rajon and Atik around three months ago.

The duo allegedly threatened her to release video clips of the incident on the internet.

"We went Tentulia Police Station first on Tuesday night with a complaint against the rapists including Monsur Alam Rajon and Atikuzzaman Atik. But police did not record any case saying they did not get the autopsy report yet," said her mother.

Three months ago, Rajon, ward boy of Tentulia Upazila Health Complex, offered Sonia a lift on his motorcycle saying he would give her medicines for her ailing mother. Instead, he took her to Atik's house where they allegedly raped her and filmed the incident.

The duo later raped her several times threatening her to release the video, alleged victim's mother Selina Begum.

The girl died by suicide in her room around 11:00am on Tuesday after returning from a coaching centre.

Sonia's parents, relatives and villagers demanded an investigation into the suicide and exemplary punishment of the rapists. They, however, expressed concerns as the criminals were influential and connected to the ruling party.

Officer-in-charge of Tentulia Police Suresh Chandra said an unnatural death case was filed in connection with the incident. He added they might file another case upon receiving the autopsy report.

The OC said they were trying to arrest the duo for interrogation as the victim's family has brought allegation against them of provoking her to kill herself.

Sajeda Chy

FROM PAGE 16 Faridpur-2 (Saltha-Nagarkanda). Sajeda is the incumbent lawmaker in the parliamentary seat.

"We have picked up three people from the spot for interrogation," the police official said.

Local AL sources said Sajeda was on the way to her village home in Saltha on a two-day visit. To welcome the deputy leader of the House, her supporters took position near the Nagarkanda intersection. Some of them reportedly damaged Jamal's posters and vandalised an archway set up in support of Jamal.

Hearing the news, followers of Jamal took position in front of a filling station near Talma intersection in Nagarkanda and hurled brickbats at Sajeda's motorcade.

Contacted, Jamal told this correspondent that locals gathered in the area and staged a protest as Sajeda's supporters vandalised his archway.

Later, Deputy Commissioner of Faridpur Umay Salma Tanjia and Superintendent of Police of the district Subhash Chandra Saha visited Sajeda at her home.

Another eyewash?

FROM PAGE 1 Myanmar is refusing entry to a UN panel that was tasked with investigating allegations of abuses after a smaller offensive was launched in October 2016, reports Reuters.

But domestic investigations, including a previous internal military probe, have largely dismissed refugees' claims of abuses committed during the so-called "clearance operations".

Refugees continue to arrive in Bangladesh fleeing the military crackdown in Rakhine, even though Myanmar insists the operation ceased on September 5. Aid agencies estimate that 5,36,000 Rohingyas have crossed over into Cox's Bazar.

According to Myanmar, the crackdown began on August 25 in response to Rohingya insurgent attacks on security posts.

But a UN report on Wednesday said, "The brutal attacks against the Rohingyas in northern Rakhine State have been well-organised, coordinated and systematic, with the intent of not only driving the population out of Myanmar but preventing them from returning to their homes."

Rohingya survivors have told the UN the security forces began attacking Rohingya townships and villages weeks earlier, in early August.

Meanwhile, the European Union is reportedly set to cut ties with Myanmar over the alleged ethnic cleansing of Rohingyas. The bloc is also considering the use of sanctions if there is no improvement in the crisis.

An agreement, which has been approved by EU ambassadors, has called for the violence to come to an end. However, it still needs to be signed off by the foreign ministers of the member countries, reports the UK-based The Independent.

"In the light of the disproportionate use of force carried out by the security forces, the EU and its member states will suspend invitations to the commander-in-chief of the Myanmar/Burma armed forces and senior military officers and review all practical defence cooperation,"

according to a draft agreement prepared for a meeting of foreign ministers on Monday.

"The Council will adopt conclusions on Myanmar, in the light of the humanitarian and human rights situation in Rakhine State," reads the agenda.

The EU presently does not allow the export of arms and equipment that will be used for "internal repression" and warned it would consider "additional measures" if the crisis continued.

Apart from the EU, the United States is also considering targeted sanctions against Myanmar military leaders over the offensive against the Rohingya populations.

MUSLIMS DEPARTING CALMLY!

The report on the Myanmar army launching probe comes at a time when its military chief Min Aung Hlaing told US Ambassador Scot Marciel that Rohingyas are not native to that country.

Instead of addressing the accusations of abuses by his army men, he rather said media was complicit in exaggerating the number of refugees fleeing.

Aung Hlaing, referring to Rohingyas by the term "Bengali", which they regard as derogatory, said British colonialists were responsible for the problem.

"The Bengalis were not taken into the country by Myanmar, but by the colonialists," he told Marciel, according to the account of the meeting posted on Thursday.

"They are not the natives."

In comments to Japan's ambassador carried in state media yesterday, Aung Hlaing denied ethnic cleansing was taking place on the grounds that photos showed Muslims "departing calmly rather than fleeing in terror".

While Bangladesh and UN agencies were tackling to cope with the influx, a Myanmar minister, at a meeting in Dhaka on October 2, offered to take back Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh.

Senior officials at Bangladesh for-

eign ministry and former diplomats saw it as a positive development but said there is no reason to trust Myanmar as the country may have an intention to defuse the global outcry over the persecution of Rohingyas.

"The Myanmar's move is absolutely eyewash and they have taken this initiative amid international pressure and condemnation," said a high official of the government. "Bangladesh should not fall into the trap laid by Myanmar."

On Tuesday, Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said Myanmar has been unresponsive to Bangladesh's efforts to improve bilateral ties over the last two years.

Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a televised address on Thursday said her government was holding talks with Bangladesh on the return of "those who are now in Bangladesh."

But she did not use the word "Rohingya" in her speech, although she referred to several other ethnic minorities by name.

UNHCR COLLECTING DATA

UNHCR has been working with the government in Bangladesh in the first stage of a new "family counting" exercise to collect data on the refugees and their needs.

Led by Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC), the exercise has so far counted 17,855 families -- more than 70,000 individuals. At this initial stage, it is being carried out in the Balukhali extension and Kutupalong extension camps, he said.

On new arrivals from Bangladesh, the UNHCR spokesperson said some several hundred people are reported to have arrived overnight Thursday night and so far yesterday by boat.

Tomorrow, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Ahmad Zahid Hamidi will arrive in Bangladesh on a two-day visit to assess the situation of forcible displaced Myanmar nationals.

Zahid is expected to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and travel to Cox's Bazar.

The school of hope

FROM PAGE 16 school she has continued to monitor activities and bear all the expenses.

"Our founder-chairperson has good reason to establish this school," says Shahnaj Parvin, a special educator in child development who works there. "She has a family member with an autistic child. That child was neglected even by close relatives. Our founder saw the pain and agony it caused. She wanted to do something about it."

The school currently has almost 50 students divided into morning and afternoon shifts of specialised learning activities. There are 15 trained teachers and nine other staff to achieve the optimal teacher to student ratio of one to one.

"Our teaching pattern includes several aspects," says a teacher, Raihanul Jannati. "There is academic learning along with music, play, vocational training and physiotherapy." The vocational training includes mastering basic daily activities such as brushing teeth, opening zippers on bags or clothes, washing dishes, using the bathroom and social skills such as getting along with others.

For many of the teachers too, interacting with autistic students has been a learning process. "At first it was uninspiring," admits one teacher, Sohana. "But after we had training in Dhaka our attitudes changed. Now we take care of our students with motherly concern for them."

The school is widely appreciated in Saidpur. "I believe strongly that this

school will go a long way towards bringing our autistic children into mainstream society," says Saidpur Mayor Amzad Hossain Sarker.

"We will cooperate in any way possible with the Unique Gift Foundation," says Rokonul Islam, the local deputy director of the social welfare department. "All they have to do is ask."

"The school was founded out of a sense of social obligation," explains Touhida, the founder. "We plan to set up a bigger complex for autistic children in the longer term, on nine bighas of land with a park, hospital and other facilities."

Man rented

FROM PAGE 16 firefighters and vets carefully placing the fierce-looking cub in a cage.

"It is important to remind everyone that wild animals are neither domestic animals nor toys," they wrote in a caption accompanying the post.

Their rescue efforts were appreciated by netizens. "Thank you for saving the poor little baby," wrote one person. "Poor baby separated from his mum. Thank you for saving him," wrote another.

This is not the first time a big cat has been found abandoned in the French capital's northern suburbs.

In 2016, a tiger cub was abandoned northeast of Paris, where it was being rented out by drug dealers for a few euros a photo.

11 Indian crew missing after vessel sinks off Philippines: Japan

AFP, Tokyo

Eleven Indian crew members were missing on Friday after their cargo ship sank in the Pacific off the Philippines as a typhoon churned in the region, Japan's coastguard said.

The 33,205-tonne Emerald Star with 26 Indian nationals on board sent a distress signal early Friday as the Hong Kong-registered vessel was sailing some 280 kilometres (174 miles) east of the northern tip of the Philippines, said a statement from the Japanese coastguard, which received the distress signal.

Three other vessels sailing near the area rescued 15 crew members but 11 others were still missing, a Japanese coastguard spokesman said, adding that the cargo ship has sunk.

"We have dispatched two patrol boats and three planes to the site but a typhoon has made a rescue difficult," the spokesman added.

Iran furious

FROM PAGE 16

He added that Trump's decision to decertify the deal would isolate the United States as other signatories of the accord remained committed to it. The deal was not renegotiable, he said.

In Brussels, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said Washington could not unilaterally cancel the agreement.

"We cannot afford as the international community to dismantle a nuclear agreement that is working," said Mogherini, who chaired the final stages of the landmark talks. "This deal is not a bilateral agreement."

The leaders of Britain, France and Germany, reaffirming their commitment to the 2015 deal, issued a joint statement warning the United States against taking decisions that could harm the nuclear deal such as re-imposing sanctions.

The three leaders also said they shared US concerns over Iran's ballistic missile program and regional destabilizing activities and were ready to work with Washington to address those concerns.

In contrast, Russia's foreign ministry said there was no place in international diplomacy for threatening and aggressive rhetoric, and said such methods were doomed to fail in a statement issued after Trump's speech.

European allies have warned of a split with the United States over the nuclear agreement and say that putting it in limbo as Trump has done undermines US credibility abroad, especially as international inspectors say Iran is in compliance with the accord.

The chief of the UN atomic watchdog reiterated yesterday that Iran was under the world's "most robust nuclear verification regime" after Trump's announcement.

US Democrats expressed skepticism at Trump's decision. Senator Ben Cardin said: "At a moment when the United States and its allies face a nuclear crisis with North Korea, the president has manufactured a new crisis that will isolate us from our allies and partners."

While Trump did not pull the United States out of the agreement, aimed at preventing Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, he gave the US Congress 60 days to decide whether to reimpose economic sanctions on Tehran that were lifted under the pact.

If Congress reimposes the sanctions, the United States would in effect be in violation of the terms of the nuclear deal and it would likely fall apart. If lawmakers do nothing, the deal remains in place.

Congress is more likely to take up legislation proposed by two Republican Senators that would set new restrictions on Iran, including reimposing US nuclear sanctions if Tehran were deemed to be within one year of developing a nuclear weapon.

Trump also directed US intelligence agencies to probe whether Iran might be working with North Korea on its weapons programs.

The president, who took office in January, had reluctantly certified the agreement twice before but has repeatedly blasted it as "the worst deal ever." It was negotiated under his predecessor, former president Barack Obama.

Trump warned that if "we are not able to reach a solution working with Congress and our allies, then the agreement will be terminated."

Trump also gave the US Treasury Department authority to impose economic sanctions against people in the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps or entities owned by it in response to what Washington calls its efforts to destabilise and undermine Iran's opponents in the Middle East.

The US Treasury said it had taken action against the Guards under a 2001 executive order to hit sources of terror funding and added four companies that allegedly support the group to its sanctions list, reported AFP.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that rather than reimposing sanctions, Trump wants the Republican-controlled Congress to fix what he considers flaws in the agreement.

Lawmakers would do this by amending the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act law to strengthen nuclear inspections, cover Iran's ballistic missile program and eliminate the deal's "sunset clause" under which some of the restrictions on Iran's nuclear program expire over time.

And the US military yesterday said it was reviewing the "entire breadth" of its security cooperation activities, force posture and plans to support Trump's new strategy on Iran.

A spokesman said the Pentagon was assessing the positioning of its forces as well as planning but offered few details.

Elderly couple

FROM PAGE 16

son Sumon Biswas worked in Dhaka and only daughter Susmita Biswas lived at her in-laws' house in Sylhet.

As the neighbours sensed something was rotting in the house, they informed police around 1:00pm yesterday.

The police broke into the house and found Mihir lying on the bed and Tulika on the floor, said the OC.

The law enforcers sent the bodies to Netrakona General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The body bore no injury marks, the police said, adding, "They might have been died two to three days ago."

The police are clueless about the motive.

Joydev Chowdhury, superintendent of Netrakona police, and other officials visited the spot.

Scramble, chaos

FROM PAGE 2

But I haven't seen a single egg so far, let alone buying one," he told this correspondent around 11:00am.

Sohel Haque from Gulshan said he came to know about the fair via social media.

"It's just a total chaos here. If they were not prepared, why they had given us the message and did publicity about it?"

Students too came to buy eggs. "For bachelors, eggs are like national food. I came here at 8:00am hearing that eggs would be sold at Tk 3 each. But after waiting for such a long time, we are driven out by police," said Rimon, a private university student from Shukrabad.

The few who luckily bought eggs also expressed frustration.

"I wanted 90 eggs, but could buy only 40 after waiting in this scorching heat," said Salman, a resident of Raza Bazar.

Some people alleged that the organisers sold eggs to their acquaintances. Traffic was disrupted on the road in front of the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh for several hours due to the chaos.

In a statement, BPICC President Mosiur Rahman said on the World Egg Day they attempted to give people a message that egg is a nutrition-enriched food and everyone should have it.

The BPICC kept the price low to enable low income people to buy eggs. That's why it decided to sell a maximum of 90 eggs to each person, added the statement.

"Due to a chaos, we couldn't do it today [yesterday]," said Mosiur Rahman, adding they would take steps again to sell eggs on reduced price in future.

Regarding the BPICC statement, Shanta Rahman, a small trader, said, "If it was meant for the poor, then why they didn't mention it in advertisements?"

MISMANAGEMENT IN CHITTAGONG

People in Chittagong had a similar experience. The District Livestock Office selected three spots to sell 25,000 eggs at Tk 4 each among city residents.

The sale began at 11:00am at the

Wasa intersection, Andarkilla intersection and Chittagong Press Club premises, but mismanagement was there as well.

Babu Sen of Jamal Khan area returned home empty handed after waiting in a queue on the press club premises since 10:00am.

"All they did is making a declaration of the programme, but they didn't have a proper preparation," he said.

Chittagong District Livestock Officer Reajul Huq said the overwhelming response from city dwellers to buy eggs was beyond their expectation.

"We never thought that we have to face such a huge crowd. In future we will sell eggs a Taka less than the market price," he told The Daily Star.

Arrested US consulate staffer meets lawyers

AFP, Istanbul

A US consulate employee held by Turkish authorities met his lawyers on Friday for the first time since his arrest sparked a major diplomatic row between Ankara and Washington.

Metin Topuz's lawyer Halit Akalp told reporters waiting outside Silivri prison on the outskirts of Istanbul that he had met his client.

"We had the necessary meeting my client. There are no restrictions regarding this issue," Akalp said in televised comments.

The meeting lasted for two hours with Akalp and another lawyer, Selman Alibas, according to state-run news agency Anadolu.

Topuz, a Turkish citizen, is accused of links to the group led by Pennsylvania-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara suspects of ordering last year's failed coup.

He has been formally charged with espionage and seeking to overthrow the Turkish government, accusations the US embassy in Ankara said were "wholly without merit".