

There are special laws and special courts to ensure justice for rape survivors. And yet, justice for most of them remains forever illusive. There are at least three guilty parties here -- defective investigation, incompetent prosecution and the law that favours the accused. The result is this: 97pc rape cases in Dhaka alone see no conviction. In this three-part series by Bishakha Debnath, The Daily Star tries to shed some light on all these elements responsible for the failure of the justice system, through some untold yet compelling stories of rape survivors.

An untold rape, life thereafter

At the tender age of 13, when she should be out playing with friends or studying, her life now revolves around tending to a son born out of rape. The crime, which led to her dropping out of school after completion of her primary education in Jafrakhali, Barguna, three years back, would impact every part of her life. While she and the child struggle every day, the accused continues to lead a normal life until a conviction is given.



accepted a request for a DNA test. DNA samples have been collected from the victim and the baby but the accused hasn't come to Dhaka to give his sample yet despite being repeatedly asked by the investigation officer. In the last hearing yesterday, the lower court asked him to give his sample before the next hearing in April, said advocate Salma Sultana of Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights. Frustrated, the victim's brother called The Daily Star after coming back from court. "How could the accused walk away [since he is on HC bail] just like that even after he hadn't complied with the earlier court order [to give DNA sample]. It really hurts.... that he can have a normal life," he said.

How long the trial would take is uncertain; in fact, it has just begun nearly two years after the filing of the rape case. Meanwhile, Abdul Mannan, the accused, was granted bail by the High Court in July last year. He had been imprisoned for eight months after his surrender at the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in November 2016. In the latest development, the special tribunal framed charges against him in January this year and

DAYS OF HORROR
The victim had been enduring the trauma of what
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FUN THAT MAY TURN FATAL

A group of Dhaka College students risk their lives by sitting on the windows though there are empty seats in the bus. The photo was taken in the city's Shahbagh area yesterday. More photos on page 10.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Don't let anti-liberation forces come to power

PM urges people
UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all to remain alert so that the anti-liberation forces can never come to power. "The country's independence was earned at the cost of blood of tens of thousands of people. Those who want to foil our independence should never come to power," she told a discussion in the city's Krishibid Institution auditorium. The Awami League organised the programme marking the 48th Independence and National Day. Hasina said the country shouldn't be of militants, anti-liberation forces and war criminals. It should be built based on the ideals of freedom fighters, she added.

AIRCRAFT SAFETY, MAINTENANCE Regulator under fire

Experts blame CAAB for oversight failure
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former pilots and aviation experts yesterday came down heavily on the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and accused it of irregularities and failing to over-seeing safety measures in private airlines. They also criticised private carriers of the country for over-working their pilots and cutting corners in terms of safety. They alleged that CAAB often compromised with safety and maintenance of aircrafts of private airlines in exchange for undue benefits from them. They made the comments at a programme titled "Safe journey by air: obstacles and doable" organised by State University of Bangladesh at its auditorium. The discussion was organised just over two weeks after a US-Bangla aircraft crashed in Kathmandu airport killing 50 people, including 27 Bangladeshis. Pilots, who knew Capt Abid Sultan of the US-Bangla flight BS211, said Abid was dissatisfied with his job and was fatigued after flying Dhaka-Chittagong-Dhaka. "Why did the airlines management send him to Kathmandu and why was it not noticed by the regulatory authority?" said Squadron Leader (ret'd) Capt Wahid, a former pilot of US-Bangla Airlines.

NEXT JS POLLS BNP demands non-partisan, neutral govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid the presence of a huge number of party men, the BNP yesterday called upon the government to dissolve parliament before the next parliamentary polls for holding the elections under a non-partisan neutral administration. Thousands of BNP leaders and activists brought out a colourful procession in the city marking the country's 48th Independence Day. At the programme, party leaders also vowed to "restore" democracy and people's rights in the country through a peaceful and systematic movement. Since noon, activists of the BNP and its associate bodies, in their hundreds, started gathering in front of the party's Nayapalton central office and its adjacent areas with small processions. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, along with other senior leaders, inaugurated the procession around 2:00pm.

A WAR FOR OIL 7
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