

Rape case accused killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

The main accused in a case filed for raping an eight-year-old girl was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Jessore town early yesterday.

The dead, Al Amin alias Babu, 26, of Kholadanga area in the town, allegedly raped the girl at Chachra Southpara in the town on March 31. A case has been lodged in this connection with Jessore Sadar Police Station, said police.

Major Ziaur Rahman, commander of Rab-6 in Jessore, said around 3:45am, a Rab team raided Kholadanga Mandalgati area on information that some criminals were holding a secret meeting there.

Sensing the Rab members' presence, the criminals opened fire. The Rab members then returned fire, triggering the "gunfight".

After the "gun battle", Rab members found bullet-hit Al Amin lying on the spot. He was rushed to Jessore Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead, the Rab official said.

Rab also claimed to have recovered a homemade gun, one bullet and a sharp weapon from the spot. Besides the rape case, Al Amin stood accused in five criminal cases filed with different police stations, the Rab official added.

US 'will regret it' if it violates nuke deal: Iran

AFP, Tehran

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday that the United States would regret withdrawing from the nuclear deal, and that Iran would respond in "less than a week" if that happened.

"We will not be the first to violate the accord but they should definitely know that they will regret it if they violate it," Rouhani told a conference to mark National Nuclear Technology Day in Tehran.

"We are much more prepared than they think, and they will see that if they violate this accord, within a week, less than a week, they will see the result."

US President Donald Trump has threatened to walk away from the nuclear deal and re-impose sanctions by May 12 unless tough new restrictions are imposed on Iran's nuclear and missile programmes.

Rouhani dismissed the threat, saying: "It's been 15 months since this gentleman who came to power in America has been making claims and there have been many ups and downs in his remarks and his behaviour."

"(But) the foundations of the JCPOA (nuclear deal) have been so strong that during these 15 months of pressure... the structure has remained solid."

The other partners to the agreement -- Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia and the EU -- all agree that Iran has stuck by its commitments, as does the International Atomic Energy Association which is tasked with inspecting Iran's compliance.

"Even if one day (the US) can harm the JCPOA, we will be the winner in the public opinion of the world as the nation that stuck by its commitments," Rouhani said.

Robots replace

FROM PAGE 16

Robotic Complex Breach Concept demonstration, held at the Grafenwoehr Training Area in Germany.

It aimed to test the effectiveness of using unmanned systems for one of the most dangerous assignments: clearing breaches on the battlefield.

In the exercise, M1A2 Abrams tanks provided cover fire and UK Terrier engineering vehicles cleared a simulated minefield and bridged a tank trench.

American officer, Lieutenant Cody Rothschild said: "We did a robotic breach today, which has never been done before. This is a historic moment. This is a great step forward for the Army, and for robotics."

Breaching enemy obstacles can be extremely dangerous and often leaves soldiers exposed to enemy forces.

British Warrant Officer Robert Kemp said: "Any breach like this will have enemy weapons trained in on the area. Roboticising breach operations takes away the risk of life and makes clearing enemy obstacles much safer."

The team fitted existed vehicles them with robotic controls that allowed them to be driven by soldiers from the safety of a nearby vehicle.

"It keeps us safe from being out there like sitting ducks," said private Jonathon Ramirez.

"As an engineer, this means a lot to me," said Lieutenant Felix Derosin, a platoon leader.

"The casualty rate for a breach is expected to be 50 percent. Being able to take our guys away from that, and have some robots go in there, is a very positive thing for us. In the future, this can save engineers' lives."

"Being able to take soldiers out of harm's way and accomplish the mission is very an attractive option to any commander," said US Lieutenant Colonel Jesse Curry.

Digital security bill

FROM PAGE 1

He demanded that the minister withdraw the bill and place it before parliament again after necessary changes.

Fakhrul also said journalists would not be able to perform their duties properly if the law was passed without any changes.

"There must be an inclusion of a sub-clause on safety of journalists in the bill as the law minister had mentioned several times," he said.

In reply, Mustafa said it could be possible to include any necessary clause or section in the draft act while discussion on the proposed law in the parliamentary standing committee.

Different quarters, including Shampadak Parishad, an organisation of editors of the country's national dailies, Newspapers Owners' Association of Bangladesh, senior journalists, rights activists and ambassadors of different countries in Dhaka expressed concern over the proposed law, specially over the inclusion of the controversial section 57 of the ICT Act and some strict provisions in the proposed law.

They also demanded that the Digital Security Bill be finalised following discussions among all stakeholders, saying that the law should not be enacted hastily.

The government on several occasions said it would remove section 57 of the ICT Act that deals with defamation, hurting religious sentiments, causing deterioration of law and order and instigating against any person or organisation through publishing or transmitting any material in websites or in electronic form. It stipulates maximum 14 years in prison for the offences.

The Digital Security Bill-2018 splits these offences into four separate sections (21, 25, 28 and 29) with punishment ranging from three to 10 years' jail term.

Amid growing concern, several ministers had assured the journalist community not to worry about the Digital Security Bill, saying that all stakeholders would be consulted before it was passed.

The cabinet on January 29 approved the draft act.

WHAT IT SAYS

Section 21 of the proposed law says anyone spreading negative propaganda against the Liberation War or the Father of the Nation, using digital devices or instigates to do so, will risk being sentenced up to 14 years in jail or a fine of up to Tk 1 crore or both.

He or she will face up to life sentence or Tk 3 crore in fine or both for committing the offence for the second time, it said.

Section 25 says a person may face up to three years in jail or Tk 3 lakh in fine or both if he or she is found to have deliberately published or broadcast in a website or electronic form -- something which is attacking or intimidating or which can make someone dishonest or disgruntled; knowingly publish or broadcast false and distorted (full or partial) information to annoy or humiliate someone; knowingly publish or broadcast false and distorted (full or partial) information to tarnish the image of the state or to spread rumour.

A person will face up to five years in

jail or Tk 10 lakh or both for committing the offence for the second time, it said.

Section 28 says a person may face up to seven years in jail or Tk 10 lakh in fine or both if he or she is found to have deliberately published or broadcast something in the website or in electronic form or get it done to hurt one's religious sentiment and values.

A person will face up to 10 years in jail or Tk 20 lakh or both for committing the offence for the second time, it said.

Section 29 says a person may face maximum three years in jail or Tk 5 lakh in fine or both if he or she commits offence stipulated in section 499 of the Penal Code through website or in electronic form.

He or she will face up to five years in jail or Tk 10 lakh in fine or both for committing the offence for the second time, it said.

Section 31 says a person may face up to seven years in jail or Tk 5 lakh in fine or both if he or she is found to have deliberately published or broadcast something in the website or in electronic form which can spread hatred and create enmity among different groups and communities and can cause deterioration of law and order.

Punishment will be up to 10 years in jail or Tk 10 lakh in fine or both for committing the offence for the second time, it said.

According to section 32 of the proposed law, a person may face up to 14 years in jail or Tk 25 lakh in fine or both on charges of computer spying or digital spying if he or she illegally enters the offices of government, semi-government, autonomous or statutory bodies and collect or preserve or send any top secret or secret documents through a computer, digital device, computer network, digital network or any electronic form and help others to do that.

He or she will face imprisonment of up to a life sentence or Tk 1 crore in fine or both for committing the crimes for the second time.

A person may face up to 14 years in jail or Tk 1 crore or both for hacking, section 34 of the draft law says.

SOME OTHER PROVISIONS

According to the proposed law, the government will form a Digital Security Agency to ensure national digital security and combating cyber crimes. A director general will lead the body.

To discuss the overall digital security of the country and to take "nationally important decision" over the issue, there will be a National Digital Security Council headed by the prime minister, the draft law reads.

The government, through a gazette notification, will declare some specific computer systems, networks and information infrastructures, as "Essential Information Infrastructures" to serve the purpose of the proposed act.

NO NEED FOR ARREST WARRANT

As per section 43 of the draft law, a police officer can search or arrest anyone without any warrant issued by a court.

If a police officer believes that an offence under the proposed law has been committed in a certain place or is being committed, or there is a possibility of crimes, or there is a possibility of destroying evidence, he or she can search the place or any person present there.

Dhaka, Delhi sign 6 MoUs

FROM PAGE 16

and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on establishment of the ICCR Rabindra Chair for Urdu Language, (v) MoU on establishment of computer and language labs in 509 schools in Bangladesh; and (vi) MoU on Rehabilitation and improvement of different roads in Rangpur City Corporation.

"This is part of our endeavour to undertake projects in Bangladesh in various socioeconomic sectors, including education, culture, health, community welfare, road infrastructure, etc for which we are providing Tk 1,600 crore under grant financing," the Indian diplomat said.

Vijay Gokhale further said India remains a committed development partner of Bangladesh and they have extended lines of credit of over \$8 billion to the neighbour in the last seven years.

"This is the largest amount of credit India has ever committed to any single country. We're confident that this credit will be useful to Bangladesh as it pursues its developmental priorities," he added.

The pipeline would be built from Siliguri Marketing Terminal of the Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) in India to the Parbatipur Depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) for transportation of high-speed diesel.

Earlier, NRL and BPC had signed a Sale-Purchase Agreement which included a joint initiative to construct a 130km-long pipeline with capacity of 1 million tonnes per annum from Siliguri to Parbatipur.

Of the 130km pipeline to be named as Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline, 125km will be inside Bangladesh. Official sources said the Indian government would provide about Rs 303 crore as grant to set up the pipeline in Bangladesh. In return, BPC would import diesel from NRL's Numaligarh refinery for 15 years.

The sources added that the BPC would import 66,000 tonnes of diesel, equivalent to 30 oil-tanker trains, from NRL in the period between May to

December this year. This was decided at a meeting between NRL and BPC in Shillong last month.

A goodwill train containing 2,284 tonnes of diesel from NRL's Siliguri Marketing Terminal to Bangladesh was flagged off in April, 2017, by the two premiers through a remote device in New Delhi.

The deal related to the Inter-Agency Agreement between BAEC and GCNEO envisages cooperation in organising capacity building programmes for BAEC's personnel in areas related to design principles, construction, quality assurance, commissioning, operation, project management and regulatory aspects of nuclear power plants.

Under the two small development projects, India will provide grant assistance of Tk 25 crore for setting up computer and language labs in 509 schools. Another Tk 25 crore grant would be given for rehabilitation and improvement of different streets under Rangpur City Corporation.

The MoU between Prasara Bharati and Bangladesh Betar proposes shared broadcast content and takes up cooperation of programmes of common interest.

RMG worker

FROM PAGE 16

Shohel Rana, 20, and Mokbul Hossen, 40 in this connection.

She told police that the suspects locked the door and closed the windows after all the other passengers got down from the bus.

According to the woman's complaint, four of the arrestees tied her hands first. The driver then gave the wheel to Shohel and raped her, said Rejaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Dhamrai Police station.

The officer added that Abdul Aziz had also raped her before a team of police on patrol heard her screams and started chasing the bus.

Police stopped the bus and caught the suspects around midnight, he said, adding that the woman was sent to a hospital for medical tests.

Deadly strikes

FROM PAGE 16

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump promised quick action in response to the "barbaric" suspected chemical weapons attack in Syria and made clear that all options including military action were on the table.

Speaking at a Cabinet meeting yesterday, Trump said he was meeting with military and other advisers and a decision would be made within 48 hours and might come as soon as the end of the day.

"Nothing is off the table," he said when asked if US military action was a possibility.

The suspected chemical weapons attack late Saturday night killed at least 60 people had been killed and more than 1,000 injured in several sites in Douma, a city near the capital Damascus, according to a Syrian aid organization.

"It was an atrocious attack. Trump said. "This is about humanity. We're talking about humanity. It can't be allowed to happen," he said.

The Syrian government and its ally Russia have denied involvement in the attack.

Trump said he was talking to military leaders and would decide who was responsible for the "barbaric act" - whether it was Russia, Assad's government, Iran, or all of them together.

US forces a year ago fired a volley of cruise missiles at the government's Shayrat air base in retaliation for another suspected chemical attack in April last year.

ROBUST RESPONSE

Syria has been accused multiple times of using toxic weapons including sarin gas in the country's seven-year war, which has killed more than 350,000 people.

Pressure was mounting over the latest accusations that it killed dozens of people on Saturday with a toxic gas attack on Douma.

Rescuers and medics said at least 48 people died after showing symptoms consistent with exposure to "poisonous chlorine gas," including foaming at the mouth and difficulty breathing.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson yesterday called for a "strong and robust international response" to the attack, after similar calls by Paris and Washington.

French President Emmanuel Macron and Trump shared information "confirming" the use of chemical weapons and would coordinate their efforts, according to the French presidency.

The UN's chemical weapons watchdog said it had "made a preliminary analysis of the reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons immediately after they were issued."

Ahmet Uzumcu, who heads the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, said more evidence was being gathered "to establish whether chemical weapons were used."

The OPCW's fact-finding mission for Syria was established in April 2014 to confirm chemical weapons use, but it does not have the mandate to establish who is responsible.

Russia said yesterday it had carried out its own probe and concluded there was no evidence.

"Our military specialists have visited this place... and they did not find any trace of chlorine or any other chemical substance used against civilians," Lavrov said.

Both Syria and Russia have fiercely denounced the allegations of chemical use in Douma as "fabrications," and had warned against using them to justify military action against President Bashar al-Assad.

Govt to slap tax

FROM PAGE 16

from the university owners, not the students.

"We don't know how they [the owners] will deal with the issue but charging students for this will be illegal," he said.

On the newspaper industry, the minister said it would get concessions on newsprint import. The current 5 percent import duty will remain in force but the 12.5 percent VAT and 5 percent advanced income tax will be adjusted, he said.

However, the decision on the amount of the tax waiver was yet to be made.

Later, Muhith said the government would "rationalise" corporate tax in the next budget as the tax rate is very high.

The objective will be to remove so many different rates in the sector, he said.

Earlier at a meeting with senior officials of different ministries, the minister had promised to examine the scope for reducing corporate income tax for the upcoming fiscal. The finance ministry organised the meeting ahead of the budget.

Currently, the revenue authority collects corporate tax in six categories, ranging from 25 percent to 45 percent. Companies listed with the bourse face a 25 percent tax while non-listed ones pay 35 percent. Cigarette and bidi manufacturers have to pay a 45 percent income tax.

Finance Secretary Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, Prothom Alo Editor Matiar Rahman, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, Daily Samakal owner AK Azad, The Financial Express Editor AHM Moazzem Hossain, bdnews24.com editor-in-chief Toufique Imrose Khalidi and National Board of Revenue Chairman Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, among others, attended yesterday's discussion.

Put more pressure

FROM PAGE 1

women and children, during the upcoming monsoon. He assured the PM of India's support to build the hospitals.

He also informed Hasina that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to fulfill all the commitments he made to Bangladesh.

The PM mentioned that Bangladesh and India have resolved many problems successfully through talks. "Now one problem needs to be resolved," Hasina said, adding that she was hopeful of settling the Teesta issue, also.

Gokhale said India would provide a third line of credit (LoC) after monitoring the ongoing projects in Bangladesh and a substantial progress in this regard would be seen by the year-end.

The Indian premier was looking forward to holding a meeting with Hasina on the sidelines of the CHOGM summit in London next week, he added.

The PM recalled with gratitude the contributions of India and its people during the Liberation War in 1971.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Harsh Vardhan Shringla were present. **GOKHALE-SHAHIDUL HOLD TALKS**

In an oblique reference to the signing of Teesta River Water Sharing agreement, the Indian foreign secretary yesterday said his country was "working hard" internally to resolve the issue.

He was making a press statement at the State Guest House Padma in the afternoon after holding around three-hour official talks with his Bangladeshi counterpart Md Shahidul Haque, reports our diplomatic correspondent.

Shahidul said they discussed the Teesta issue in the meeting and the Indian government reiterated its commitment to resolve the matter at the earliest.

However, diplomatic sources said there was no sign of inking the deal in near future as India was yet to take any visible move to reach an internal consensus. India also made it clear that it would not set specific time frame to sign the deal and rather showed several reasons like its federal government system and approval of the state government.

Gokhale said, "I have focused on the tremendous progress we have achieved in our bilateral relationship. We are also aware of a few of the outstanding issues. We assure you we are working hard to resolve them."

About the refugee crisis, the Indian foreign secretary, without mentioning the word "Rohingya", said his country has been supportive of the efforts being made to resolve the crisis, including early repatriation of the people displaced from Myanmar's Rakhine State.

He said Bangladesh's humanitarian gesture in supporting lakhs of displaced people has been truly commendable.

He said India had sent relief materials for 300,000 people in September last year under "Operation Insaniyat" to support the Bangladesh government in its humanitarian efforts.

"We are planning a second tranche of assistance in keeping with the needs projected by the government of Bangladesh.... On the Myanmar side,

More tigers

FROM PAGE 16

larger: 4,832sq km, compared with India's 1,841sq km, according to a recent report on Indo-Bangla tiger estimation.

So, why the lower density on the Bangladeshi side? "The reason is poaching, mainly of prey animals," Jhala said.

"The encounter rate of human sign and sighting was higher in Bangladesh Sundarbans which is further exacerbated by the usage of river channels for transportation of commercial vehicles," says the report 'Status of Tigers in the Sundarbans Landscape of Bangladesh and India'.

Since the tiger-occupied area is higher on the Bangladeshi side, that part of the forest has more tigers despite a lower density. "But I believe the tiger population in the Bangladeshi Sundarbans is much below the actual carrying capacity, while the Indian side has reached carrying capacity," Jhala added.

The exercise, conducted in the last few years, has recorded the highest tiger density in the Sajnekhali range of the Indian Sundarbans; the lowest was recorded in Bangladesh's Khulna range.

Both countries have undertaken a camera-trap exercise in 2018 to get a more reliable estimate.

The exercise at Basirhat and National Park (east) in the Indian Sundarbans is over, but it's still on in Bangladesh's

Several

FROM PAGE 2

why I am stepping down as the Chhatra League general secretary at the tourism and hospitality management department of Dhaka University. Enough is enough, no more!"

Osibur posted a copy of his resignation letter in Facebook citing "personal reason" for his decision.

Chhatra League sources said Osibur has been taking part in the ongoing movement.

The demonstration turned violent on Sunday as police fired teargas shells and rubber bullets, used water cannons and charged batons to disperse protesters who blocked the Shahbagh intersection for over five hours. At least 75 people were injured as cops clashed with students.

we are providing socio-economic support under Rakhine State Development Programme, including construction of pre-fabricated housing in order to meet the needs of the returning people."

Gokhale said they also discussed the challenges and opportunities the two countries needed to face together. "One such challenge is that of terrorism, extremism and radicalisation and we will continue to fight this menace together and along with other like-minded countries."

The two countries were satisfied with the progress achieved in areas such as trade and investment, security, connectivity, border management, power, energy, shipping and people-to-people exchange, to name a few, he added.

Terming Bangladesh "Sonar Bangla", the Indian foreign secretary congratulated the country on recently meeting the criteria for graduating from the category of a Least Developed Country to a developing country.

Shahidul said they discussed the Rohingya issue. "We are very happy the way our friend from India is looking at the issue, looking at peacefully resolving the issue."

Bangladesh High Commissioner in New Delhi Syed Muazzem Ali and Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Harsh Vardhan Shringla were present at the meeting.

Before the bilateral meeting, Gokhale met Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali at the same venue.

The Indian foreign secretary arrived here on Sunday afternoon on a two-day visit and is due to leave Dhaka for New Delhi this morning.

'BOOST INDO-BANGLA COOPERATION'

Speaking at a seminar in the capital's Sonargaon Hotel yesterday, the Indian foreign secretary said Bangladesh and India need to enhance cooperation and sustain it to serve the common interests of the two countries.

"India and Bangladesh today host a record number of bilateral institutional mechanisms that monitor and facilitate progress in all areas of cooperation."

The cooperation between the two countries is based on a "win-win" formula, he added.

Addressing the programme as chief guest, Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi said Bangladesh and India should make joint efforts to speed up sub-regional economic cooperation to maximise the benefits for the people of the region.

Noting that the current Indo-Bangla relations are at the best level, he called for strengthening ties between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal and taking the trilateral hydro power projects forward within this sub-regional cooperation.

He said Bangladesh welcomes more Indian investment in infrastructure projects, including joint ventures, to expedite its development efforts.

The Institute for Policy, Advocacy and Governance organised the daylong seminar on "Bangladesh-India Relations: Deepening Cooperation and the Way Ahead".

The Indian high commissioner in Dhaka also spoke on the occasion.

Khulna and Sarankhola ranges.

"Unlike previous years, when we had one camera station for every 4sq km, this time, we have one station per 2sq km. So, we have got more pictures this time, but are yet to conduct an analysis. After the monsoon, the same exercise will be carried out in the National Park (west) and Sajnekhali ranges," said Sundarbans field director Nilanjan Mullick, who also informed that more than 350 pairs of camera traps are being used.

Mahmudul Hasan, divisional forest officer of the Sundarbans east division in Bangladesh, said they had taken several measures to minimise human disturbance. "We are not allowing ships of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority to ply through sensitive zones of the forest. We have also intensified patrolling and research work on the ground," he said.

DFO of wildlife management, Modinul Ahsan, said the first-phase camera trap exercise in Bangladesh had been started in March. "We had to first train our staff here and then undertake the exercise. We will take out the cameras in April. We are using 239 pairs of cameras," he said.

BNP picks 2

FROM PAGE 16

Nazrul Islam Manju was not ready to contest the polls, the board kept asking him to participate.

Even a top BNP leader called him over phone but he did not pick up, said party sources.

On Sunday night, the party's nomination board, comprising BNP standing committee members, interviewed prospective mayoral candidates for the election. The candidates included the incumbent mayors, Mannan and Moniruzzaman Moni.

They shortlisted the names and then consulted with the party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman, now in the UK, to finalise the nominations.

On Sunday night, the ruling Awami League nominated Talukder Abdul Khaleque and Jahangir Alam as the party's mayoral candidates in Khulna and Gazipur city corporation polls respectively.