

Largest

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its discovery, the Sleeping Lion was moved by Dutch merchants to Batavia, present-day Jakarta, before being shipped to Europe -- a move believed to have violated the Chinese Emperor Qianlong's ban on the export of large pearls.

The item was first auctioned in 1778 in Amsterdam following the death of its owner, a wealthy merchant from the Dutch East India Company. Advertised on the auction flyer as a "well-known royal cabinet piece, depicting a sleeping lion, created by nature itself," the pearl was purchased on behalf of the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, and moved to St. Petersburg, according to the Venduehuis catalog. The Sleeping Lion resurfaced in Poland in the mid-1800s and was bought by a jeweler working for Victor Emmanuel II, the first king of a united Italy. It was then held by several other European jewelers, only to settle back in the Netherlands when the Russian Revolution of 1917 prevented it from returning to St. Petersburg. In 1979, the pearl was bought by its current owner, the Amsterdam Pearl Society.

"What makes this object even more interesting is that it has traveled a long way since the 18th century," Peter Meefout, director of Venduehuis, said by email. In recent decades, the pearl has been the subject of studies by both historians and gemologists. A 2014 paper, published in the Journal of Gemology, found that while the object's shape and remarkable size are highly irregular, its interior layering is consistent with naturally occurring freshwater pearls. The auction lot includes a copper box built specifically for the pearl upon its discovery centuries ago. Both items will be on display this weekend, before being auctioned off for only the second time in nearly 240 years.

"The Sleeping Lion Pearl will probably not be on sale for the coming 200 years or so," Meefout said. "It's the last chance for the Dutch public to view this wonder of nature."

Five-year-old

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OC was declining to accept a case from them. This was reiterated by Kyaw Sa Prue Marma, a relative of the victim. Marma said, "It is illogical that the OC doesn't take accept a case in this regard. We want to file a case but the OC has declined to accept it and they are offering money."

"We didn't implement this ring well project, a local NGO did," said M. Mujibur Rahman, Ruma upazila engineer of Public Health department. It was not possible to contact the well contractor Ahmed Nobil even after several attempts as he was not receiving any phone calls.

HC order

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the number of freedom fighters. Khaleda made the comment on December 21, 2015 at a meeting at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in Dhaka where she said Sheikh Mujib did not want independence of the country and wanted to be the prime minister of Pakistan instead.

Khaleda also said there is a controversy over the number of deaths of freedom fighters.

The BNP chairperson filed three petitions through her lawyers with the HC on May 20 seeking bail in the cases.

Earlier on May 16, the SC upheld an HC order that granted bail to Khaleda for four months in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case, in which she was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Khaleda, however, was not released from jail following the SC judgement as she was shown arrested in seven other cases, including the three aforementioned ones.

Bank official

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Locals who found the body in the house informed police who recovered the body and sent it to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) for autopsy. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) (Port) Arefin Jewel said, "The couple has a son who lives in Dhaka for studies."

Police are yet to establish a motive behind the grisly murder. They are interrogating his neighbours and relatives.

No one has been arrested in this connection, police said.

Mangoes worth

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ripen, said Dr Sorof Uddin, senior scientific officer of the regional mango research centre in Chapainawabganj. This year the temperature hardly crossed 30 degrees Celsius thus far.

Due to the lack of proper heat during the time when the mangoes are supposed to ripen, the harvest would begin at least one week later, at the end of May instead of the normal practice of harvesting in the third week. In some areas, the harvest may be delayed by two weeks, he said.

Dr Sorof calls the phenomenon a consequence of climate change. He said this year's mango cultivation witnessed a week's delay at the beginning since winter had extended its stay till the second week of February.

Rajshahi's district administration has set up a camp headed by an executive magistrate at the districts Baneswar market, usually abuzz with mangoes by the third week of May, to monitor the trade of the fruit, but it hardly has any job to do due to the lack of harvested mangoes. The situation is similar in other districts.

Waliullah took six mango orchards at Nawdapara of Rajshahi on lease this year. "None of my mangoes have matured except for some of the Guti variety," he said, adding that it would be difficult for him to harvest his mangoes in the first week of June.

In Chapainawabganj, the highest mango producing district that is often called "the capital of mangoes", the growers had been spending sleepless night throughout the past three months to save their fruits. They had set up watching posts in their orchards.

Some of them said the mangoes may be overpriced this year as the nor'wester and hailstorms hit the mangoes twice on April 13 and April 30.

Abu Taleb, a mango farmer of Moheshpur in Sadar upazila, said rain at the end of March and April helped the mangoes grow. "But the rain came with storms and that damaged 25 percent of my mangoes," he said.

"I made some money leasing mango orchards last year, but this year the situation may be different because of the storms," Hasan Al Sadi of Chhatrajitpur village in Shibganj upazila said.

He said he took around 200 trees on lease and invested Tk 7 lakh, but the storms damaged most of his orchards.

Parvez Monsur Ahmed of Shahibag said he was worried about recovering his investment of Tk 6 lakh in mango trade from the damage caused by storms and hail. "The only chance I have now is getting a fair price for the mangoes," he said.

Agriculturists, however, have said that rainfall had helped improve the size and taste of most fruits. They said as storms and hail that came with the rain caused negligible damage, the yield would be higher than expected.

"Mangoes are going to be delicious this season. All you need to do is wait for the harvest," Mustafizur Rahman, additional director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Rajshahi division told The Daily Star.

The DAE is expecting a yield of seven lakh tonnes of mangoes -- 30,000 tonnes higher than last year's production in the division. The division, covering four districts -- Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Natore and Naogaon -- provides 60 percent of the country's total production. They are expecting at least three lakh tonnes of mangoes from Chapainawabganj, two lakh tonnes from Rajshahi, 1.6 lakh tonnes from Naogaon, and 56,000 tonnes from Natore.

To ensure natural ripening of mangoes and helping growers avoid the use of chemicals, the district administrations imposed a ban on harvesting mangoes while at the same time considering that different mangoes ripen at different times.

Other than Gopalbhog mangoes, the harvest of Khirsapat, Himsagar and Lakhna were banned until June 1, Langra until June 6, Amropali and Fazli until June 16 and Ashwina until July 1.

Bangladesh

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and houses burnt and bulldozed -- the events that the UN said have hallmarks of genocide.

The rights groups have demanded that the UN Security Council refer the situation to the ICC. That has not been possible because of objections from China and Russia, who have veto powers at the Security Council.

Against this backdrop, the ICC wrote to Bangladesh. Earlier on April 9, the ICC prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, asked the court to rule whether it has the jurisdiction over deportation of the Myanmar nationals, a possible crime against humanity.

Myanmar was not a member of the court, but the fact that part of the alleged crimes took place in Bangladesh, which is a member of the ICC, means the court could seek powers of jurisdiction, she argued.

The Myanmar government has meanwhile said the ICC prosecutor's move was an attempt to override the principle of national sovereignty that goes against the principle enshrined in the UN Charter.

Bangladesh has not responded to the ICC letter yet.

Prof Mizanur said traditionally if genocide or ethnic cleansing is committed inside a country, that country has the jurisdiction over the particular crime.

However, over the years the territorial principle of state jurisdiction has been broadened and extended through state practice. The idea of "objective territorial principle" has been established.

"That means as the crimes against Rohingyas have been committed in Myanmar, it certainly has territorial jurisdiction, but Bangladesh also has

jurisdiction because the aftereffect of the crime is being felt in Bangladesh. We have been compelled to house almost one million refugees," he said.

So, if someone says Bangladesh is interfering without any lawful authority, it would not be tenable under the existing principle of modern international law, he said, adding that the question now is the state policy of Bangladesh on that matter.

Given the fact that genocide is the greatest form of international crime, Bangladesh now has an international legal obligation to play its role so that the crime is established in the court of law, he observed.

He further said the dilemma for Bangladesh is geopolitics as China and India, two large neighbouring nations, are favouring a bilateral solution to the Rohingya crisis.

"I think our foreign office has to show maturity now... We have to take the risks. There are times when we don't have the time to waste on deliberations. It is a time for action," said Prof Mizanur.

He suggested that the foreign office's task should be documenting evidence of the atrocities against the Rohingyas, including verbal and physical ones. A number of aid agencies that are working on the matter can be helpful in this regard, he added.

The foreign ministry can form a committee with experts of international law, crimes and the ICC operations, he added.

"There are Bangladeshi experts not only in Bangladesh but also overseas. They can help in this regard best. This should be done immediately... A lot of time has already elapsed," Prof Mizanur noted.

Rohingyas brace

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The camps' makeshift homes are predicted to receive more than 2.5 metres (eight feet) of rainfall over three months starting June -- roughly triple what Britain gets in a year.

Cox's Bazar has been battered by cyclones for three years running, having already suffered astonishing devastation in the past.

Cyclones have killed tens of thousands along the Bangladesh coast in recent decades and countless more have been swept to their deaths in floods and landslides.

This time, nature is on a collision course with refugees who have nowhere to run -- no higher ground and no cyclone shelters.

The first storms underscored the fragility of the camps: the brief rains turned roads into quagmires, crumbled hillsides and flooded low-lying areas.

The huge endeavour to prevent disaster has seen slopes vulnerable to collapse flattened and extensive canal systems carved throughout the camps.

Toilets are being fortified with sandbags to prevent a major disease outbreak should floodwater meet overflowing latrines.

But there are limits to how much can be done.

Bangladesh has restricted the use of sturdier materials for shelters because it may suggest the Rohingyas plan to stay, contrary to Dhaka's desire to return them to Myanmar.

The roof was blown clean off Noor Mohammad's shack in a recent squall. He had gathered chunks of wood and rocks to weigh it down but was "scared of what could pass" when Bangladesh's wild weather barrels through.

The Rohingyas are no strangers to the monsoon, he said. But in Myanmar, villages were built to withstand its ferocity and trees provided a bulwark against the elements.

"Here, there is nothing to stop the wind," he said, gesturing to the deforested hills stretching for miles.

Bangladesh has freed up hundreds of hectares (acres) but most is hilly and was prone to landslides even before the Rohingyas uprooted trees for shelters and firewood.

Mosques and community centres could shelter 150,000 people if needed, said Kazi Abdur Rahman, acting district administrator of Cox's Bazar.



WHAT THEY THINK

SULTANA KAMAL
Human Rights activist

"They [law enforcement agencies] have started killing drug peddlers and drug users. If they think that they will resolve the problems in that way then they will have to kill millions of people who use drugs."

She also said people could clearly see that law enforcement agencies were not taking any actions against those who were godfathers and patrons of drug peddlers.

"Besides, we see absence of transparency in the anti-narcotics drive." About the "killings in crossfire," she said people would not buy the same old story.

"We can never support killing of people in the name of drive against drugs as it is against the law and the constitution," she said.

"We will have to eliminate drugs from the society upholding the existing laws of the country."

KAZI REAZUL HOQUE

Chairman, NHRC

Rights Commission (NHRC) Kazi Reazul Hoque.

"We want to say unequivocally that the criminals, whoever she or he is, must face actions through due legal procedure."

The NHRC boss also said they would formally write to the government expressing their grave concerns over the ongoing extra-judicial killings in the anti-narcotics drive.

"We, as well as the whole nation, support the drive against illegal drugs, but not at the cost of any lives."

Reazul said the law enforcement agencies should primarily ensure illegal drugs do not enter Bangladesh from neighbouring countries.

"The illegal drug problems will not be resolved through killing people. The government will have to take a holistic approach and comprehensive actions to fight illegal drugs." About the killing of "drug peddlers" in the name of crossfire, he said the responsible members of law enforcement agencies must be brought to book for killing anyone, whether that person was involved in drug dealing or not.

He said that the continuation of such killings could create a dreadful situation in society, adding that law enforcement agencies must ensure accountability and transparency in their ongoing drive, so that no one gets punishment without trial.

"Killing people in the name of fight against drugs cannot be acceptable in anyway. We strongly protest against this."

The law enforcement agencies would have to stop illegal drugs without violating laws and human rights.

NURUL HUDA

Former Inspector General of Police

would decrease in different parts of the country. In this context, it could be said that the ongoing anti-narcotics drive may bring partial success to the fight against illegal drugs.

"But in a bid to gain success in the long term, the law enforcement agencies should take decisive actions to combat illegal drugs," added the former IGP.

For instance, Nurul Huda said they should prepare a more authentic list of drug peddlers, their patrons and financiers and bring them to book.

He also stressed the need for cutting the flow of illegal drugs at the source.

For example, he said, yaba pills generally come from Myanmar through Cox's Bazar; steps should be taken to ensure that yaba did not enter the country from the source point.

He also said law enforcement agencies would have to file cases against the kingpins involved in the drug business and send them behind bars.

"If necessary, drug lords or patrons of drug peddlers will have to be kept behind bars under the preventive detention law."

About the controversial killings of alleged drug peddlers, the former police boss said it was only acceptable if a gunfight ensued between cops and a criminal gang and someone was killed as a consequence of that.

"The law enforcement agencies should investigate on a case by case basis [and find] whether any police or Rab members have violated laws during the drive," he added.

JYOTIRMOY BARUA

Supreme Court lawyer

some drug peddlers was "certainly an unrealistic fantasy".

"I think members of the law enforcement agencies who believe in eliminating drugs through killing drug peddlers are mentally ill," he said.

The illegal drug business didn't develop in a day or two. It flourished with the patronisation of a section of law enforcement agencies and politicians. The size of the economy of illegal drugs was high. Therefore, killing of some drug peddlers wouldn't bring an end to the menace.

Drug lords had developed a system in which new people would replace those killed.

"Fight against narcotics in any country, including the USA, Canada, and the Philippines, weren't successful through killing drug peddlers or through enacting laws. The ongoing drive against drugs also won't be successful in Bangladesh if the government does not address the root cause of the problem."

He also raised questions regarding whether the government had any policy on how to save the country's youth from this menace.

"We have failed to set any hope before the youth. They are not interested in politics due to its confrontational nature. There are many youths in the country without jobs. That's why they are lured towards drugs. With so much going on to remove drugs from the country, does the government have any real policy on how to save the youth from drug abuse?" he asked.

Rejoinder, our reply

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Police had to wait until the woman, who was pregnant at the time, delivered her baby, to be able to verify the allegation against Paritosh. Police later took DNA samples of the woman, the infant, and Paritosh. It was confirmed from the DNA test that Paritosh was not the biological father.

During investigation, Abu Taleb, the investigation officer "unearthed circumstantial evidence" and got concrete information that proved involvement of the woman's brother in the act.

"Accordingly, we had no other way but to follow the new line of investigation by trumping up, the charge against the victim's brother. We duly followed every step in lawful directions. We then talked to the new accused, who came up with his admission in this rape case. On the following

day, Pradip confessed his role in the court admitting his guilt," the rejoinder reads.

Before coming to a conclusion, police again resorted to DNA test of the new accused, which confirmed him as the biological father of the child.

The rejoinder said police pressed charges against the brother of the woman and recommended the acquittal of Paritosh.

The rejoinder added that police neither put any pressure on the victim to withdraw the case, nor did they suggest an out-of-court settlement.

Our reply

This newspaper published the report based on a press conference held at Dinajpur Press Club on February 4 organised by the victim's family.

The victim herself read out the statement at the press conference. She

said her brother was innocent and her neighbour Paritosh had raped her.

The woman said police arrested her brother Pradip Chandra Devsharma although she accused her neighbour Paritosh Chandra Devsharma.

Before publishing the report, The Daily Star correspondent contacted Abdur Rouf, officer-in-charge of Bochaganj Police Station and Abu Taleb, investigation officer. Both the officers said they would not talk in details about the allegations against them.

The Daily Star correspondent also tried to talk with Abu Taleb about the DNA report, but he did not comment on either.

Police also did not provide any documents to prove that victim's brother was indeed the biological father of victim's baby, who died last October.

Chemical or DNA tests mandatory

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to record complaints of rape or sexual assault of women and children without any delay and discrimination.

These are among the 18 guidelines that the High Court has come up with for ensuring protection and justice for the victims.

"In all rape cases or cases of sexual assault, chemical/DNA tests are required to be conducted mandatorily. The DNA and other samples should be sent to the forensic science lab concerned or DNA profiling centres within 48 hours of the alleged occurrence", the HC said.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo came up with the guidelines in the full text of its verdict on a 2015 writ petition that challenged the delay in recording a case following the gang rape of a Garo woman in the capital.

It also said any information relating to the cognisable offence like rape or sexual assault has to be recorded by the officer-in-charge of the police station concerned irrespective of the place of occurrence. And a designated website should be opened to register his/her complaint online.

"The statute should contain specific provision dealing with refusal or failure of the officer concerned of the respective police station without sufficient cause to register such cases," the court added.

On May 21, 2015, the Garo woman was forced into a microbus near Jamuna Future Park and was gang-raped at Kuril in Dhaka. The 21-year-old was then dropped off at Jasimuddin Road in Uttara.

According to media reports, police wasted time in recording her complaint and sending her to a victim support centre.

Rights organisations Naripokkho, Mahila Parishad, Jatiya Adibasi Parishad, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust and Ain o Salish Kendra jointly filed the writ petition with the HC on May 24, 2015, seeking necessary orders over the gang rape.

The petition said failure of the police to take prompt and effective measures to ensure treatment and

referral services for the victim amounts to negligence by the state in protecting every person's right to physical health including sexual, reproductive and mental.

The HC bench on February 18, 2016 disposed of the writ petition and released the full text of its verdict in April this year.

"Every police station must have round the clock a female police official not below the rank of a constable. On receipt of the information of the offence or rape or sexual assault, the duty officer recording the information shall call the female police officer present at the police station and make the victim and her family members comfortable," the verdict read.

Throughout all the phases, the identity of the victim should be confidential, the HC said, also suggesting keeping a list of female social workers who may be of assistance at all police stations.

The HC said the statements of the victim should be recorded in the presence of a lawyer or a friend nominated by her, or a social worker or protection officer.

"The victim should be made aware of her right to protection from the state and given any information she requests on the matter. The duty officer immediately upon receipt of the information shall inform the victim support centre," said the verdict.

The HC judges said interpretation services should be provided where it is necessary, especially for women or girls with disabilities who are victims of rape or sexual assault.

"After reducing the information into writing, the investigation officer along with the female police official available, shall escort the victim for medical examination without causing delay", the court said in the judgement.

The judges said, "The victim support centre should be discreet and should at all times have all the facilities required for the recovery of the victim."

"Any failure in duty on the part of the investigation agency in collecting the report or causing the victim to be taken to the nearest hospital for medical examination would be punishable

offence."

They added that the investigation officer shall try to complete the investigation as early as possible.

There should be wider dissemination of the hotline for complaints on violence against women -- 10921 -- through electronic and print media and designated websites.

In addition to all this, an office has to be established in every metropolitan city for providing necessary security, medical, chemical and counselling assistance to victims.

The HC ordered the offices concerned of the government to strictly follow and observe the guidelines until required legislation is formulated on the matter.

It also directed the office of Supreme Court registrar general to communicate the verdict to the ministries of law, home and children and women affairs and the inspector general of police for taking necessary steps for the enforcement of the guidelines.

THE GARO WOMAN'S CASE

The Rapid Action Battalion arrested two persons -- Ashraf Khan alias Tushar and Jahidul Islam Lavlu -- on May 28, 2015 in connection with the case filed for the gang rape of the indigenous woman.

It submitted charge sheet against them to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on August 23 the same year. A Dhaka court is now holding the trial.

N Korea

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"Chairman Kim and I have agreed that the June 12 summit should be held successfully, and that our quest for the Korean peninsula's denuclearisation and a perpetual peace regime should not be halted," Moon said.

The meeting was the latest dramatic turn in a week of diplomatic ups and downs surrounding the prospects for an unprecedented summit between the United States and North Korea, and the strongest sign yet that the leaders of the two Koreas are trying to keep the on-again off-again meeting on track.