

Two 'raped' in Patuakhali, Jhalakathi

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday arrested an alleged rapist at a launch when he was attempting to flee to Dhaka from Patuakhali.

Khondokar Mostafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Patuakhali Police Station, said they produced accused Syed Maruf Gazi before a district court, which ordered him to be sent to jail.

On Saturday night, Maruf allegedly raped a 16-year-old college girl at a garden in Bahalgachia area when she was returning home on a rickshaw, police sources said quoting the case statement filed by the victim's father.

A relative of the victim said Maruf often used to stalk the girl on her way to college or tuition classes from home.

Around 8:00pm on Saturday, when she was returning home, Maruf, with the help of his friend Rimon, took the victim to the garden.

"While she was being raped, his friend was capturing a video of it," her relatives said, adding that locals rushed to her rescue hearing her screams.

The accused and his cohort managed to flee.

After rescuing her, the locals informed her father of the matter and took her to Patuakhali Police Station where her father filed the case at 11:00pm.

The victim was sent to Patuakhali General Hospital for examination.

In another incident in Jhalakathi, a District and Session Judge's Court yesterday directed officer-in-charge (OC) of Nalchity Police Station to

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Body of AL leader found in wetland

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Syfhet

The body of a local Awami League leader was recovered from a wetland near his house yesterday morning, three days after his disappearance from Sunamganj district.

Deceased Faruk Miah, 45, of Moishapur village of Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj was the organising secretary of Uttar Khurma Union AL of the upazila.

Atiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Chhatak Police Station, said he went missing on Friday night while returning to his house from the local bazaar.

Quoting family members, the OC said his family claimed that he was abducted by rivals on Friday and then killed but that was yet to be confirmed.

After his disappearance, locals recovered his clothes and sandals he was wearing near Haitmara Beal area of the village on Saturday morning.



A man watches over empty ballot boxes to be readied by the Election Commission tonight ahead of tomorrow's Gazipur City Corporation elections. The photo was taken from the office of the returning officer yesterday.

Security high, so is apprehension

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in Gazipur to make sure the polls resembled the one held in Khulna in May.

A three-member delegation of BNP leaders met Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda and demanded withdrawal of the superintendent of police in Gazipur.

After meeting the CEC, BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan told The Daily Star that the SP was biased towards the ruling party and was harassing BNP leaders and activists.

Meanwhile, a group of AL central leaders campaigned in Gazipur defying EC restrictions.

In Khulna City Corporation polls, stuffing of ballots and other irregularities were reportedly rampant. Wearing badges of the AL electoral symbol, activists allegedly intimidated voters at polling centres.

The BNP at the time alleged that their agents were driven out of most of the centres.

In addition to asking outsiders to leave Gazipur city, the EC's code of conduct has restricted campaign activities 32 hours ahead of the polls and vehicles for 24 hours from midnight today.

FEAR IN PUBLIC MIND

Harun-ur-Rashid, a fruit seller in Duet area, said, "If my vote is not cast by others and the environment remains normal, I will cast my vote."

Ibrahim Mia, a three-wheeler driver, said, "I will go to the polling centres in the morning and then decide whether I will cast my vote."

Solaiman Haq, a young voter of Mirer Bazar area, said, "The situation is not ok now. There is no festivity and no

one is talking about the election. If the administration wants, a fair election is possible."

BNP nominee Hasan at a press conference at his house in Tongi yesterday alleged that his party leaders and activists were arrested en masse.

"Our agents are being threatened by police. They are telling our agents to flee the area," he said.

He also alleged that law enforcers arrested BNP activists in Gazipur, but claimed that the arrests took place in Narayanganj, Tangail, Mymensingh and other neighbouring districts.

"Even with minimum level of fairness, I will win by a respectable margin."

He hoped that the government would fully implement the EC rules and regulations.

His opponent Jahangir also held a press conference at his house in Gazipur and said Hasan was making false claims rather than seeking people's vote.

"I have doubt if he [Hasan] even knows all of his agents," Jahangir told reporters.

"He cannot give a single example of me harming the election environment."

Jahangir said Hasan was elected in 1986 and 1988 in the city corporation by rigging.

RULING PARTY BREACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Senior AL leaders campaigned defying the EC's restriction on outsiders in the city corporation area after Saturday night.

The EC on June 22 issued a circular banning outsiders in the city until the election was over.

Defying the ban, Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Noufel, organising secretary of AL Dhaka division, campaigned in the city and held a meeting with reporters at Jahangir's house yesterday.

When a reporter produced a copy of the EC circular, Noufel said, "I am sorry. I did not know about it. I am leaving immediately."

Talukdar Abdul Khaleque, mayor of Khulna and president of the city AL, also campaigned for Jahangir at Gazipur Chourasta.

Atiqul Islam, mayor aspirant of Dhaka North City Corporation, Sramik League leader Ramesh Chandra and several others attended a meeting at Jahangir's house.

They also left after hearing about the EC ban.

Jahangir said, "I was not aware of the ban as I was very busy campaigning."

SECURITY BLANKET

A huge number of law enforcers have been deployed in the area.

Rakib Uddin Mondal, returning officer of the polls, said at each of the 57 wards of the city, there would be a force combining police and Ansar.

Moreover, 29 platoons of BGB were already deployed.

Of the the 425 polling centres, 337 are most important, he said.

Mohiul Islam, company commander of Rab-1, said 700 Rab members would be deployed.

Didar Ahmed, deputy inspector general of Khulna Range police, said 300 policemen were sent to Gazipur.

A total of 3,000 police personnel from Dhaka, 260 from Rajshahi and 300 from Mymensingh ranges were deployed in the city.

What the big guns

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unmatched spectacle of tension and drama, providing a feel for the knock-out rounds to come, as the final phase of matches in the first round begins.

With only six teams -- Russia, Uruguay, France, Croatia, Belgium and England -- having qualified and the remaining 10 spots in the round of 16 up for grabs, every match from now on is a must-win encounter with three groups still offering a combination of all four teams advancing.

Not even the big guns, including Brazil and Argentina, can secure passage without victory.

Argentina's catastrophic run in their Group D matches -- which featured a draw to Iceland and a thrashing from Croatia -- leaves their last match against Nigeria as a virtual final. Both teams will have everything to play for and, providing that Iceland do not beat Croatia, the winner will advance to the round of 16. If Iceland do pull off a miracle, goal difference will come into play for Argentina. A win under any circumstance would see Nigeria through.

Brazil will simply need a win or draw against Serbia in their final Group E match to advance. However, in the event that Switzerland defeat the so-far winless Costa Ricans, nothing less than a win would give Brazil top spot in their group. A loss would see Serbia exit.

World Cup holders Germany are also far from safety in arguably the most open group -- where any of the four can go through or be eliminated -- although their shock loss to Mexico has been somewhat offset by the Toni Kroos missile that shook Sweden on Saturday night. Die Mannschaft must beat the winless South Koreans in their final Group F game and hope Mexico beat Sweden if they are to advance.

If both Sweden and Germany eke out 1-0 wins then they, along with Mexico, would be equal on points and goal difference. In that case Germany would clinch the top spot and Sweden the second, eliminating Mexico. However, a win for Mexico and a win

by a two-goal margin for South Korea would see both Germany and Sweden eliminated.

In Group B, Portugal are nowhere near safety despite Cristiano Ronaldo's heroics. A loss would eliminate them, so they must win or tie against a plucky Iran to go through. Spain are relatively safe, but must win to ensure progression.

If both Spain and Portugal win or draw, then the top place will be decided by goal difference. Failing that, goals scored and the fair play method (whoever has less yellow/red cards) will be used with the drawing of lots the final alternative. If both Spain and Portugal lose, the same methods would be used to determine who finishes second behind Iran.

As for Group H, the equation became clearer as Poland were eliminated following their loss to Colombia last night. Japan's passage is secure if they beat Poland and Senegal can go through with a draw against Colombia. Colombia must beat Senegal to go through. A defeat would eliminate them while a draw would mean that they would need Japan to lose to Poland.

In the case of qualified teams, France, who are already through from Group D, will face Denmark in a match where the winner will take top spot. However if Denmark lose, a win for Australia against Peru would see the Socceroos take second at the Danes' expense.

The most crucial place-deciding match will be between England and Belgium in Group G. Both teams are dead even, having scored eight goals and conceded two from two games. The winner will again get top spot, but a draw would see England finish top with a better fair play record, barring some misconduct in their last game.

There will be an equally important match between Russia and Uruguay today in Group A. A draw would see Russia remain first due to their superior goal difference, but a loss would mean that Uruguay usurp them at the top.

Sarwar, Bulbul

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joint secretary of Barisal city unit. Liton and Kamran, both former mayors, were defeated by the BNP-backed candidates in the last polls.

BNP leaders said although they have announced the candidates, the final decision over contesting the polls would be made after observing the Gazipur City Corporation polls' atmosphere.

Contacted, Sarwar thanked the party high-ups for giving him the nomination. "I will devise the election strategy after seeing Gazipur city polls as it is a crucial election for us," he said.

In 2013, the BNP-backed mayoral candidates won all the city corporation polls defeating the AL-backed candi-

dates. Just before the national elections, the city corporation election results were a big blow for the ruling party.

This time, in Khulna city polls, the AL nominated mayoral candidate defeated the BNP candidate.

In the Khulna city polls, allegations of different irregularities, including stuffing of ballots boxes, were rife. Wearing badges of boat, election symbol of the AL, party men were seen roaming in and around many voting centres creating a sense of intimidation among the BNP men and supporters.

In most of the centres, agents of BNP mayoral candidate Nazrul Islam Monju were absent as what the party alleged was AL men ousted them from there.

A typical Germany

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the game and possibly the last German shot at goal when the defending champions won a free kick yards off the left side of the box. The most common tendency would have been to scoop the ball high into the penalty area for a teammate to head home or to create a scoring opportunity from a goalmouth melee.

But Kroos chose not to leave the last shot to chance. He appeared cool, composed and almost mechanical in a nerve-fraying situation. Teammate Marco Reus stopped his light tap on the ball for Kroos to step up and fire in the ball that sailed smoothly over the heads of leaping defenders, curved slightly to evade the outstretched hands of Swedish goalkeeper before slamming into the net at the far post. A

hope that results go in their favour in the Sweden-Mexico game.

Interestingly, scoring match-winning goals in the final minutes goes well with the typical German mentality. In the 1954 World Cup, when Germany was divided and played qualifiers as East and West, West Germany lost a group game 8-3 to the fabled Hungarian side. Against the same side in the final West Germany were 2-0 down within eight minutes of the kick-off, but before 20 minutes had been played the game was 2-2 and Germany took the lead in the end.

England were the victims of West Germany's habit of pulling late surprises in the quarterfinal of 1970 World Cup. Franz Beckenbauer inspired West Germany to equal England's two-goal lead before pulling

So what else are we going to rob?

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away several feet from the top and sold to the brick kilns. As seen in the photos in this newspaper, the multi-crop yielding highly fertile land that gives Bangladesh its enviable landscape is looking more and more like satellite photos of the Moon or Mars.

An organised gang of local political high-ups, criminals, thugs and perhaps brick producers themselves are doing it with possible connivance of the local administration and police.

It's happening in Chittagong's Satkania area and is a daily occurrence when the law says it is illegal to collect top soil from agricultural land, hills, wetlands, etc. In fact, it is illegal to even set up brick kilns near agricultural land.

So we are forced to ask the question, what else are we going to rob our future generations of?

I think it was water that we stole first from our future generations. The incessant, unthinking, reckless and unplanned extraction of groundwater so depleted our underground reservoir that in 62 upazilas water level has fallen below seven metres going down to 11 metres in the dry season.

In agricultural lands in many districts, farmers are unable to draw water with shallow tube wells and have to turn more and more to deep tube wells to water crops. The districts include Sherpur, Jamalpur, Tangail, Natore, Kustia, Pabna, Mymensingh, Manikganj, Dhaka, Narsingdi, Sirajganj, Comilla, Cox's Bazar and their adjoining areas.

Here we must mention that the problem of arsenic in underground water emerged only after extraction hit a certain acute level.

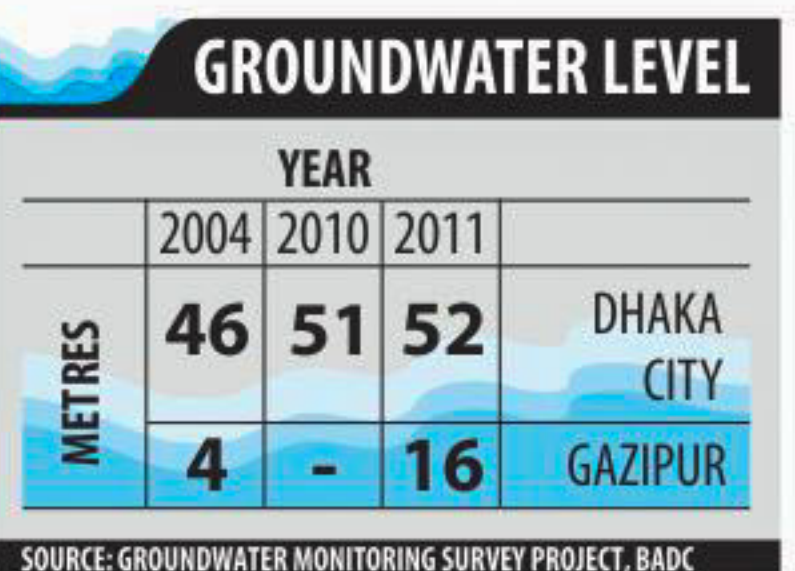
All this was done mainly to achieve self-sufficiency in food production. We did, but in the process we have created a fresh water crisis that may jeopardise the very success we are so boastful about today.

Then we stole air -- literally their right to breath -- from our children by

poisoning our urban air with all sorts of pollutant.

Dhaka today is the third most polluted city in the world, after Delhi and Cairo, respectively the most and second most polluted cities in the world.

To take comfort that the Indian capital is worse than ours is also to ignore that Kolkata, which just the other day was among the dirtiest cities



in the world, has done a far better job than Dhaka, leading to the question as to why we are not learning from the latter.

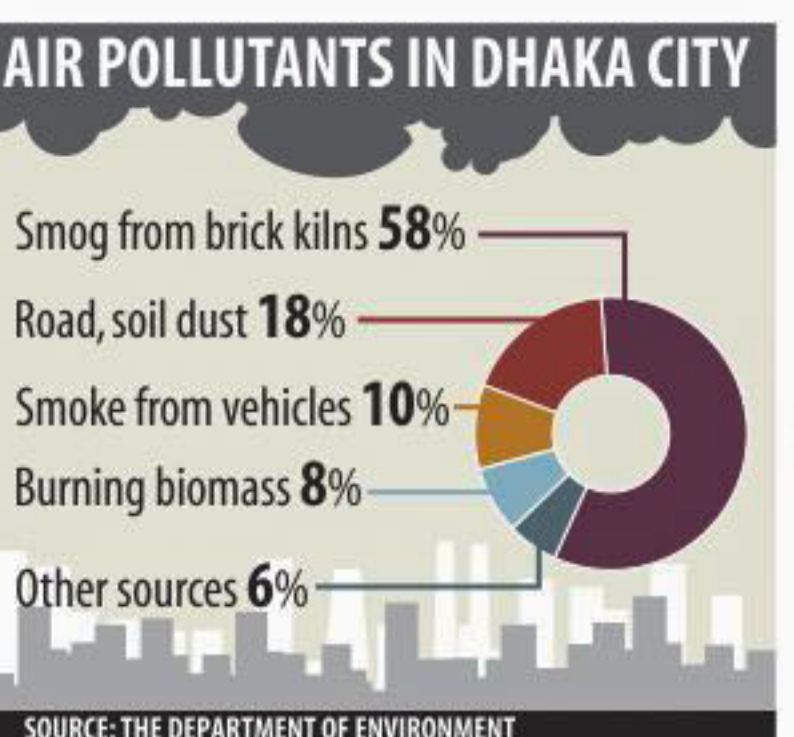
Air pollution is a global problem with, according to the World Health Organisation, 90 percent of the world's population being exposed to polluted air -- the blame for this can be passed off as a civilisational folly. Yet there is no denying the fact that we could have taken many measures to improve our situation but we didn't.

The Detailed Area Plan (DAP) for Dhaka and its outskirts is a clear example of the utter disdain of our policy makers towards issues of ecology, environment and sustainability.

The plan that took millions of dollars of donor money and years in making has been repeatedly amended to make way for the land grabbers and greedy developers who, collectively, now pose the greatest of threats to Dhaka's sustainability.

We also stole our forests from our future generations.

Many countries have had to trim their forest reserves to make roads, set up industries and expand cities. But



Mahathir did not give sufficient space to the opposition and the press.

Perhaps our greatest theft from the future generations has been the systematic destruction of our rivers.

As a deltaic plain, Bangladesh is a direct product of its rivers. There are very few countries in the world whose creation is so directly linked to the sedimentation by its rivers -- a fact that explains both the enviable fertility of our soil and our vulnerability to flooding.

To put it differently, there is no existence of Bangladesh without its rivers, and relationship between the

two is the fundamental reality of our very existence.

Yet we have been so cavalier in dealing with this simple, clearly understandable, obviously visible but existential reality. If there is one single fact for which our future generations would hold us responsible for destroying their prospect of a healthy, balanced and prosperous future, it will be for the fact that we have killed the very rivers that gave us and would have given them the sustenance of life.

The destruction has been of two types -- quantitative and qualitative, one dealing with the physical destruction of the rivers by occupying the land that "belonged" to them and the other is damaging its water quality including the killing of most if not all marine lives that it supports.

According to the Department of Environment, all rivers around Dhaka city are biologically dead, meaning that a minimum presence of oxygen level of five is needed for a river to be "alive" whereas it is between 0 and 1 in cases of all the four rivers that surround Dhaka.


This newspaper has followed this destruction and carried hundreds of reports, articles and editorials to save our rivers. But all our efforts bore no result.

Throughout the country, river banks are being taken over by local power and financial elites in connivance with land grabbers and developers, and the local administration.

The water quality of rivers outside Dhaka is not as dire as that of those within, but the former's shrinking flow area and floodplain threaten their very existence as has already happened with most of the tributaries, canals and other water bodies linked with them.

So on the one hand, we are proudly marching towards middle-income country status, and on the other hand, destroying the very nature that gives us "life".

Is it not possible to do both?



ISPAHANI

Premium Green Tea
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Blender's
Choice

perfectly guided Kroos missile numbed the Swedish into disbelief and sent German fans into frenzy.

The margin of error was minuscule and more often than not that shot by most players would have sailed wide and high. But Kroos got everything right in this exquisite shot, executed with machine-like precision to deny Sweden a well-deserved draw and prove how prophetic was the quote of former England captain Gary Lineker.

"Football is a simple game; 22 men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans win," lamented Lineker following defeat at the hands of the Germans in the World Cup semifinal in 1990.

The goal means Germany still need a win in their final World Cup game against South Korea, and will have to

off a 3-2 win in stoppage time. Four years later in the next World Cup, West Germany upset tournament favourites Netherlands by winning a late spot-kick and scoring from it.

However, the late German revival of June 23 seized the spotlight from a brilliant Belgium performance. Belgium threw a grim warning once again to other title aspirants by routing Tunisia 5-2, with each of their two superstars -- Eden Hazard and Romelu Lukaku -- scoring twice.

This Belgian side is certainly blessed with an abundance of talent, and has the ability to go all the way, shocking lots of heavyweights in the process. Trust me, Belgium are the tournament's dark horses.

The writer is former Sports Editor of The Daily Star