

Frozen in time

FROM PAGE 16
Paintings of animals in an enchanted garden scene are typical of Roman illusionistic style, with a peacock drawn along the bottom of a wall to give the appearance it was walking in the real garden.

One wall painting depicts a man with the head of a dog, which experts suggest could be a Romanised version of the Egyptian god Anubis.

Shrines were common to Roman households, Professor Ingrid Rowland, a historian at the University of Notre Dame, told the New York Times.

"Every house had a lararium of some kind, but only the wealthiest people could have afforded a lararium inside a special chamber with a raised pool and sumptuous decorations," she said.

Beneath the shrine is an altar topped with traces of offerings burnt at the site almost 2,000 years ago.

The altar is decorated with paintings of eggs - a Roman symbol of fertility - and it is possible the burnt remains were food offerings that also represented fertility, such as figs, nuts or more eggs, Osanna said.

He added that the site was "exceptional", citing not only "the incredible decoration of the wall painting" but also the fact that it was "very well preserved."

The paintings scattered across the site were preserved in volcanic ash following the infamous eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD.

This is in part what makes the latest discovery - which has remained untouched since the day of the eruption - an exceptional finding, Osanna said.

EC sits today

FROM PAGE 2
reporters that the schedule for the next parliamentary polls would be announced any day after October 30.

EC sources said 80 percent of the preparation has already been completed and the rest would be done after announcement of the election schedule.

The EC has already completed demarcation of 300 constituencies and prepared the electoral roll of 10.41 crore voters.

Copies of the voter lists have been sent to all districts in CD [compact disc] format, the insiders said.

Besides, the EC has prepared the draft list of around 40,199 polling stations across the country. Names of the polling stations would be published through a gazette notification 25 days before the election.

Around seven lakh polling officials would be required to conduct the election in around 2.6 lakh polling booths, EC secretary had earlier told The Daily Star.

16-yr-old

FROM PAGE 1
ago. However, in the case statement police claimed that he is 19.

Mamun, his father Abdul Majid, 45, and uncle Abdul Latif, 40, were picked up by police from their home in Birganj's Bhogdoma village around 2:45am on September 19, said family members and locals.

In the case statement, Amzad Ali Mondal, sub-inspector of Birganj Police Station, mentioned that 70 to 80 people were holding a "secret meeting" at the compound of Majid's house around 12:30am on September 19 to plot subversive activities.

Police raided the house and arrested Mamun, Majid and Latif while the others managed to flee, he mentioned.

Of the 85 accused in the case, 55 were named. They include the three.

The complainant also claimed to have seized five crude bombs wrapped in a shopping bag and 500 gram gunpowder from Mamun.

But Mamun's family members and villagers have given this newspaper a different version.

Majid's wife Maleka Begum said seven policemen from Birganj cordoned off their house at 2:15am on September 19.

Police entered the house and conducted a search but found nothing. They then arrested Mamun, Majid, Latif, and left around 2.45am.

"My son and husband are innocent," said Maleka, adding that none of her family members are involved in politics.

Latif's wife Rubina Khatun also gave a similar version.

Their neighbours Azahar Ali and Shamsuzzoha said no "secret meeting" had taken place at Majid's house on that day.

Azahar said, "Truth will come out if an independent probe is carried out."

This correspondent talked to the first and the fifth witnesses in the case over the phone on Saturday. Both said police didn't tell them that they had been made witnesses in the case.

The two also said they were not at the scene on that day and were unaware of any "secret meeting" talking place there.

The first witness, Amzad Ali, said, "Several locals told me that I have been made a witness in the case."

The fifth witness, Nur Master, said he was out of Dinajpur on that day.

He mentioned that police didn't tell him that he had been made a witness in the case.

The unsung tale

FROM PAGE 16
Agriculture that includes livestock and poultry farming, fisheries and homestead gardening is how more than two-thirds of rural working women, like Shilpi, contribute to the economy besides sharing the financial burden of their own families.

FEMALE LABOUR IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

But Shilpi's day-to-day toil in the field remains mostly unacknowledged and unappreciated by her family. In this patriarchal society, the men in the family are the ones who get the credit and ownership over the money earned, since it is her husband's land she is growing crops on, while her son is the one selling the produce at the market. And so, at the end of the day, the decision making and how and where to spend the money earned depend on them.

After all this hard work, as Shilpi put it while tending to pumpkin saplings on Thursday, patriarchal households believe "we are doing our work", meaning playing the role of a woman in a family.

Women like her step into the labour market, as the survey places them in the category of being employed, but fail to reap the benefits.

"They don't get the financial freedom or independence that paid jobs offer," said Sayema Haque Bidisha, associate professor of the economics department, Dhaka University.

Over the years, women's participation in agriculture has increased from 58.90 percent in 1988 to 76.7 percent in 2016.

The present scenario is a result of, among other factors, the migration of men to urban areas for jobs, leaving women to look after their in-laws' familial land, Sayema added.

THE 'UNEMPLOYED HOUSEWIFE'
This restriction on physical mobility and unequal share of household responsibilities between men and women keep the latter away from the mainstream job market, causing them to be financially crippled, Sayema said.

The status of those only engaged in household chores and taking care of children and the elderly is worse since no survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics or any other national agency highlights their contribution to familial and social development.

They are seen as "doing nothing", while their families and communities thrive because of the services they provide-- ones that money cannot buy.

These "unemployed" women account for more than 60 percent of the rural women above the age of 15, as per BBS's latest survey on labour force.

In the latest survey, 80.5 percent of the women excluded from the labour force said family and household work is a setback to their employment. It was 72.4 percent a year ago.

Against this backdrop, women's contribution are being not valued or undervalued irrespective of whether their work brings money, like in the case of Shilpi, or not.

Rights organisations have long been demanding the economic evaluation of women's unpaid work and presenting it in the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) so that their

contribution is valued and their status upgraded.

In one such attempt, Manusher Jonno Foundation commissioned the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) to conduct a research on women's contribution to the economy in 2015.

The study estimated the value of women's unpaid household work at 76.8 percent of GDP in fiscal 2013-14, when another woman would be hired and paid to replace the woman in the family doing unpaid work.

And if the woman in a family went to do the same thing in another family for a negotiated pay, the value of women's unpaid work would be equivalent to 87.2 percent of GDP.

PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMY

If the government carries out such evaluations on a regular basis and publishes them, it will help create awareness among people, said Towfiqul Islam Khan, a senior research fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), who was in the team that conducted the research.

The second step would be to encourage men to take up a higher share of household burden, facilitating women's direct participation in the economy, he said.

The CPD study found that a female member of a household does 12.1 activities a day on an average while a male undertakes only 2.7.

The third step should be increasing women's access to land, other properties and resources to make means of self-employment available to them, Towfiqul added.

The government is yet to act along these line but its policies, for example National Women Development Policy 2011 and National Agricultural Policy 2013 suggest that it fully comprehends the need to value women's unpaid work.

"The direct and indirect labour in agriculture and participation of women is recognised worldwide. So the women labour as farming hands ... need recognition," as said in the women development policy.

It further said the government would ensure correct reflection and evaluation of all women labour including their labour in farming and in the household in the national accounts of development and economic growth.

In the seventh five-year plan, the government acknowledges that the progress in economic equality was not significant as stipulated in the previous plan for the period of 2011-2015.

Women's access to important factors of production such as land and credit is one area where the country is lagging behind.

After all, development will not be sustainable if half of the population doesn't participate in the economy.

It seems true even when the focus is zoomed in on smaller units like a family. A couple, Sukurjan Begum and Abdul Aziz have set an example of success through equal partnership in vegetable gardening on a leased-out land in Manikganj.

When asked who does the farming, Abdul said with a grin, "We both do... Our family depends on this", as both husband and wife plucked bitter gourds from their garden.

Ctg landslide kills 3

FROM PAGE 16
members of the victims' family are beggars.

"They used to return home at midnight. It was raining heavily when they came home [yesterday]. When three of them entered home, a huge chunk of mud fell on their shanty burying them under the mud."

Expressing their helplessness, Rahima said they could do nothing with their bare hands. When members of fire service reached the spot, they joined in the rescue effort, she said.

Jashim Uddin, deputy assistant director of fire service and civil defence of Chattogram division, told this correspondent that the hill is complete sandy. It is prone to landslide when it rains heavily.

When the landslide happened around 2:00am yesterday, the victims were in the shanty, while the four others of the family were outside, he said, adding that by 7:00 in the morning, they were able to pull out the bodies buried under the mud.

Mohammed Delwar Hossen, additional deputy secretary (revenue) of Chattogram district administration, said it was an accident.

"Before the rainfall, we had campaigned through loudspeakers to make aware of the incident [landslide] and we had already relocated 100 families prone to landslide. When the family [whose three mem-

bers died] was shifting to a safer place at night, the incident occurred," he added.

The district administration gave Tk 20,000 each of the four victims, he said, adding that their bodies had been sent to their village homes.

People, living nearby the spot of the landslide, told The Daily Star that the eastern zone of Bangladesh Railway owns the hill.

Kisiner Chakma, divisional estate officer of the eastern zone, told this newspaper that the hill had been leased to Concord Company.

"We will take necessary steps to remove the illegal structures from the hill."

This correspondent yesterday found that around 1,000 shanties had been built by cutting the hill.

A high-powered committee was formed after 127 people were killed in a major landslide in the port city in 2007. Another 161 people died in landslides in Chattogram and Rangamati last year.

The committee made 36 recommendations to relocate people to safer places.

Later, the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) built a seven-storey flat building after taking token money from some slum dwellers, who are living in hill slopes, promising to relocate them to the building in Tigerpass area. But the CCC authorities deviated from their promise as they were mulling over shifting the CCC office there.

Trial to go

FROM PAGE 16
Commission lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan.

On September 27, Kaiser Kamal, a counsel for Khaleda, filed a writ petition on her behalf with the HC challenging a lower court's decision.

On September 20, Judge Md Akhtaruzzaman of the Special Court-5, entrusted with trying the case, decided to continue the trial in the absence of the BNP chief.

Khaleda, who has been in jail since her conviction in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case on February 8, refused to appear before the court during the trial in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case on "security reasons".

Later, the government shifted the court to jail premises to ensure his safety. Yet, she did not appear before the court.

The state counsel appealed to the court to go on the trial in the case in Khaleda's absence. The court accepted their plea.

#MeToo

FROM PAGE 16
unidentified woman accused Johri of assaulting her at his home, while he was working with a different organization, reported AFP yesterday.

The movement appears to have been prompted by allegations late last month by former Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta, who spoke publicly about being a victim of assault allegedly at the hands of a former co-star in 2008.

"He was grabbing me by the arms, pushing me around, then he would ask the choreographers to move and teach me how to dance and the next thing I know he wanted to do an intimate sequence with me. It was ridiculous," Dutta told CNN affiliate News18 about her experience when she worked with veteran actor Nana Patekar.

Speaking to reporters at a hastily arranged news conference on Monday in Mumbai, Patekar dismissed questions, saying, "My lawyers have told me not to speak to the media so I can't say anything. Otherwise, I would have said something in the past four days. This case is ten years old, what was true then is true today."

Dutta's allegations prompted support from numerous leading industry figures, including "Quantic" star Priyanka Chopra, who tweeted agreeing with another actor, Farhan Akhtar, that "the world needs to #BelieveSurvivors."

In the days since, numerous women from all walks of life have taken to social media to narrate their experiences of assault or inappropriate behavior at the hands of prominent Indian men.

"The stories are there so people can be safe," said Sheena Dabholkar, a writer and journalist who has been curating a feed of incidents on Twitter and naming those involved through messages that women have sent her directly.

"People worldwide have issues with boundaries and consent. Even recognising discomfort in people and unwelcome behavior. I want to create an understanding of what people find acceptable and to create a conversation," Dabholkar told CNN.

Many of the allegations have resulted in immediate consequences.

On October 6, news broke that Phantom Films, the Bollywood studio responsible for Netflix's first original series from India, was to fold.

The announcement, made on Twitter by one of the studio's co-founders and prominent Bollywood director Anurag Kashyap, came after HuffPost India published a story in which a former female employee accused Vikas Bahl, another co-founder and director, of harassment.

In the HuffPost piece, the former female employee accused Bahl of masturbating on her without consent after pretending to pass out on her bed.

The alleged incident took place in May 2015. In October that year, she said she shared her experience with Kashyap but nothing was done and she resigned.

Away from Bollywood, the country's political and media industries have also come under scrutiny, with female journalists sharing incidents of sexual harassment.

The most prominent person to be named so far is MJ Akbar, a former prominent journalist and currently a junior foreign minister in Modi's government.

In an article written for Vogue India in 2017, journalist Priya Ramani described an experience of workplace harassment that happened while during a job interview in a Mumbai hotel room.

Ramani did not name the individual in the original account. However, on October 1, taking to Twitter, she identified the man as Akbar.

"Turns out you were as talented a predator as you were a writer. It was more date, less interview," Ramani said of the encounter in her piece, which she claims took place when "I was 23, you were 43."

BNP replies

FROM PAGE 1
Chairperson Tarique Rahman grew up in the shadow of his mother. What is wrong if a politician mother trains up her son to take politics as a responsibility? But it should be made clear that Tarique Rahman was involved with the election process for 7th Jatiya Sangsad election in 1996 and newspaper reports of those days would bear testimony to this.

The writers observed that Tarique Rahman flung BNP into such an arrogant, repressive, corrupt and aggressive path that it ultimately upended the party in a few years' time. This statement is a sheer travesty of truth and we are sorry to say resonate the words used by the Awami League leaders. Despite ten years of terror and repression unleashed by the Awami League the BNP remains united as a rock and the single biggest political party of the country.

When the writers refer to the activities conducted from Hawa Bhaban it becomes clear that they were frustrated after the election victory of BNP in 2001. Is it wrong to have an election office to conduct a national election?

The analysis questions the attraction of a group of young leaders "educated and energetic" were attracted to Tarique Rahman. If a political party is to accept the prescription of two journalists about what sort of people should rally against a leader then, we are sorry to say, they are living in fool's paradise. Moreover, one cannot deny that fact that globally, whether you like it or not, politics of inheritance or legacy is becoming a norm of the day. Dynastic inheritance has crept into almost all professional discipline. One may dislike it but stems from frustration.

We fail to understand how your writers could discover that senior leaders of BNP accepted Tarique's leadership grudgingly. This is sheer mockery of truth and it should be made clear that he emerged as the leader of the party through his untiring commitment to organize and strengthen the party at the grassroots.

Tarique Rahman visited the grave of Sheikh Mujib at Tungipara to pay

respects. Our chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia also paid respects to Sheikh Mujib at his mausoleum at Tungipara. During speeches before the Jatiya Sangsad both Shaheed President Zia and Begum Khaleda Zia made references to the glorious leadership of Sheikh Mujib and other national leaders. It would have been fair if your writers could make a reference that Awami League had never any magnanimity to speak good things about Zia. Rather, either in the Jatiya Sangsad or outside they did not fail to utter indecent and slang words even for a moment against Shaheed President Zia, Begum Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman.

Your writers have extensively quoted to justify their opinion from US diplomatic reports originating from Dhaka and subsequently exposed by WikiLeaks. We prefer not to discuss the contents of these diplomatic cables as most of us, including you, know the sources of information of these cables. Bangladeshis know well how a cable was manufactured to usurp the power by the army-backed government in 2006.

We fail to understand how your writers blindly accept the allegations of corruption made by the army-backed caretaker government against the politicians. We should not forget that Tarique Rahman was also victim of malicious propaganda by the military backed caretaker government. It would have been proper if they could say how these allegations were made, copies of which were given to newspapers and compelled to print those. So there is no point to contest these concocted allegations and we do not want to hit anybody below the belt.

To justify the falsehood that Tarique Rahman had support for the militants your writers have quoted a former police officer, whose political loyalty is no secret now. It has become a fashion for a number of retired government functionaries of the country, in most cases, to criticize BNP, Begum Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman.

We would like to request you to print our statement in your paper with proper display and as early as possible."

63 workers deported

FROM PAGE 1
workers arrived in Malaysia. The employer did not go to the airport to pick them up on time," BAIRA Secretary General Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, The Daily Star obtained documents of at least five of the deportees which shows that their visas were issued in August, meaning that the three-month period of visa expiry had not ended.

Asked about it, Shameem Ahmed said "There might be miscommunication. We will look into it."

Deported worker Md Mukhlesur of Meherpur said they arrived in Kuala Lumpur airport around noon on October 11. After checking the passports, they were kept waiting.

"Nobody came to receive us that day. We stayed the whole night there," he told this correspondent over phone yesterday.

The next day, a Malay man from the hiring company went to them and saw their passports before handing those over to the police there, Mukhlesur said.

"The Malay man only said 'problem'. Police then sent us to a room in the airport and the next day we were sent back," Mukhlesur said.

He said the recruiting agency that arranged his job is Catharsis International, one of the ten recruiting agencies accused of monopolising the labour recruitment in Malaysia under the G-to-G Plus arrangement.

It is not clear how Catharsis International is involved in arranging the job visas of the 63.

BAIRA Secretary General Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury also said Catharsis International Managing Director Ruhul Amin flew to Kuala Lumpur as the problem arose. This suggests the very agency's involvement in recruitment of the workers.

However, contradicting Shameem's claim, BMET officials said the recruiting agencies that arranged job visas for the workers were Biplob International and Barakat Dynamic Overseas Employment Agency.

The Daily Star also obtained copies of the immigration clearances of a few deportees, which suggested that the BMET statement is correct.

Asked about it, Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury said, "This is not supposed to be. It is only through the ten agencies through which the workers' visas should be processed.

"We are looking into the matter."

Shameem also said the workers had job visas for a public listed company named Supermax Globe, but according to the deportees' immigration documents, they had different employers including Mesra Buddi Sdn Bhd, Ab Inafnno Sdn Bhd, Nnindo Sdn Bhd and Onnnadnd.

He said this may have given suspicion over how they got immigration clearance and required an investigation.

The BAIRA leader said he already had talks with the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry and the recruiting agencies concerned.

"We are assuring that the workers who were deported are not responsible for what has happened," Shameem said.

"We will arrange travel of the workers to Malaysia in a week or so. If we cannot, we will make sure that they get their compensation."

Catharsis International Managing Director Mohammed Ruhul Amin could not be reached for comments.

Following allegations that a syndicate of 10 recruiting agents monopolised the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia under the G-to-G Plus mechanism since early 2017, the new Malaysian government suspended the online recruitment system, SPPA, since September 1.

Since then, the recruitment of nearly 60,000 workers, who were approved for jobs by Malaysian home ministry, had been halted for nearly a month. The freeze was withdrawn following a meeting between Bangladesh Expatriates' Welfare Minister Nurul Islam and Malaysian Human Resources Minister M Kulesegaran on September 25.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury said none other than the ten agents were yet authorised for the visa processing job.

The BMET is also not supposed to issue immigration clearance if any agencies other than the ten want to process it, he said.

"As there are names of recruiting agents other than the said ten agents, we need to look into the matter seriously."

Sinha granted

FROM PAGE 16
At a press conference in Washington DC, he said, "My heart is bleeding. Coming here as a chief justice and then seeking political asylum raises questions about my country, government and values... But who will ensure my safety?"

An autobiography of Justice Sinha titled "A Broken Dream: Rule of Law, Human Rights and Democracy" came out on September 16.

In his autobiography, Justice Sinha wrote about his early life, his appointment as the chief justice, separation of power and independence of the judiciary, 16th Amendment to the constitution and its aftermath, ethical values of judges of the highest court and politicians, and the circumstances leading to his resignation.