

# Main accused arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police yesterday arrested the key accused in a case filed for raping a mentally challenged woman inside a bus in Tangail on August 30.

The arrestee is the bus driver, Alam Khandakar alias Bishu Miah, 45, of Punorbason area in Bhuapur upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, police detained Alam from a market in the upazila in the morning and produced him before a Tangail court in the afternoon, said Mosharraf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station.

Shamsul Alam, senior judicial magistrate in Tangail, sent Alam to jail after recording his confessional statement under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

The woman was raped on a bus near Bangabandhu bridge eastern end in Bhuapur upazila on August 30 night.

Mosharraf had at the time said the 28-year-old woman, who could only remember her name and that she was from Kushtia, boarded a local bus at Tangail bus stand around 10:00pm.

When the vehicle reached its last stop in Pathaikandi on the eastern side of Bangabandhu bridge, all the passengers, except the woman, got off the bus.

Around 11:45pm, Alam stopped the bus in the area and raped the woman inside the vehicle, the OC said.

Police arrested the bus helper, Nazmul Hossain, after the incident, but its driver and conductor managed to flee.

The same day, Sub-inspector Nure Alam filed a case with the police station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

According to the case statement, driver Alam and conductor Ershad raped the woman and Nazmul abetted them.

Nazmul was produced before a Tangail court on the same day where he gave a confessional statement. After recording his statement under section 164 of the CrPC, Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Ashikuzzaman sent him to jail, OC Mosharraf said.

On September 2, police held Ershad from Kalihati upazila and the same court sent him to jail.

## The Saudis

FROM PAGE 20  
murder of Mr Khashoggi," Graham told reporters.

"I'm not going to be denied the ability to be briefed by the CIA."

Both Mattis and Pompeo said that, after carefully reviewing the intelligence, they could find no direct evidence linking Khashoggi's murder to the crown prince, who is also known as MBS.

"There is no smoking gun," Mattis told Pentagon reporters, stressing he still believes those responsible should be punished.

"We have not changed, (in) that accountability for the murder is our expectation of everyone involved in the murder."

Saudi Arabia has acknowledged the Washington Post columnist, a US resident, was killed inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate in October but has blamed his death on a "rogue" operation.

Trump last week called Saudi Arabia a "steadfast partner" and said it was unclear whether MBS was aware of the plan to kill Khashoggi.

He has also cast doubt on the CIA's reported conclusion that MBS was behind the killing.

Further debate and votes on the measure are expected next week.

Should it ultimately pass the Senate it would have little chance of clearing the House this year. But extended debate could serve as a powerful symbolic step -- and allow lawmakers to address alternative paths in US-Saudi relations.

Peace talks aimed at ending the war in Yemen have been set for early December in Sweden, between Huthi rebels and the UN-recognized government.

Mattis and Pompeo worry a move to cut US support to the Saudis ahead of the summit is poorly timed and could embolden Huthis not to negotiate.

Senator Murphy, however, said Pompeo and Mattis' testimony may have been counter-productive.

"They lost votes this morning," he said. "They just had no good answers for why Gina Haspel wasn't there. They had no plan to end the war in Yemen."

The Yemen conflict has triggered the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with the country now on the brink of famine.

The UN estimates as many as 10,000 people have died, most of them civilians, since the Saudi-led coalition launched military operations in 2015 in support of embattled Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi's government.

US military support for the coalition includes intelligence sharing and training pilots to avoid strikes that risk civilian casualties.

The Pentagon had also been conducting air-to-air refueling for coalition aircraft, but this month said it was stopping doing so.

Still, a series of high-profile coalition strikes has killed scores of civilians, many of them children, and now many US politicians are balking at America's role in the war.

Aside from the motion to pull US military support, some lawmakers want to impose sanctions beyond those that Washington enacted on 17 Saudis allegedly involved in Khashoggi's killing.

Events have left administration officials publicly grappling with global realpolitik, saying Saudi Arabia's role in countering Iran is too important for the US to turn its back.

"We are seldom free to work with unblemished partners," Mattis told senators.

"Long-standing relationships guide but do not blind us. Saudi Arabia, due to geography and the Iranian threat, is fundamental to maintaining regional and Israeli security, and to our interest in Mideast stability."

Pompeo warned lawmakers that ending US backing would lead to a stronger Iran, while reinvigorating both the Islamic State group and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.



**A gacchi extracts the sap from a date palm tree in the capital's Tejgaon area, right next to the Tejgaon-Bijoy Sarani flyover. The sweet winter delight is a favourite among Bangladeshis. Although the number of such trees is unknown, a 2010 survey shows that up to 15,000 hectares of the country are covered with either wild date or Palmyra palms.**

## 21 years on

FROM PAGE 20  
PCJSS organised the briefing marking the 21st anniversary of the accord signing on December 2, 1997.

The government and PCJSS, on behalf of the Jumma people living in CHT, signed the accord for restoration of peace in the region, ending a two-decade long insurgency.

Reading out a written statement, Santu said although the Awami League government came to power in 2009, it had not taken any "visible steps" to implement parts of the treaty.

The government claimed that 48 out of 72 sections of the treaty were fully implemented, but Larma said the actual number was only 25.

He said the government did not amend the law related to CHT in line with the peace accord.

The CHT Regional Council and three CHT district councils were established to introduce a special ruling system in the hilly districts but that did not take any organisational shape, he said.

The government did not take any step for the election of the district councils instead recruiting the ruling party and unelected people, he alleged.

The CHT Regional Council Act was not made functional and left as a worthless body, Santu, also the chairman of the council, said.

He said the "controversial" provisions of the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act 2001 were amended in 2016 but rule of procedure was not enacted, thus halting execution of the act.

He added that while the CHT Land Commission was established, it did not have sufficient manpower and funding and thus not a single dispute over land was resolved in the last 21 years.

He said at least 20 communal attacks had taken place since the signing of the accord and 11 of them were carried out during the tenure of the present government.

"The main purpose of all those attacks was to drive away Jumma people from their land and exterminate them," he said.

Larma said the overall situation of CHT had become critical and the extent of the repression of Jumma women had increased to alarming levels recently, with perpetrators enjoying impunity.

More than 500 Jumma people from four upazilas of Bandarban left the country for Myanmar due to lack of security, he added.

He alleged that a negative propaganda had been launched against the democratic movement going on for the implementation of the treaty.

Replying to question, Larma said whoever came to power after the election had to implement the treaty to solve the problems in CHT.

Oikya Nap President Pankaj Bhattacharya alleged that CHT was now being "governed by an anti-treaty force."

"...I think the anti-treaty forces in the government and the state are getting powerful day by day.

"I think a conscious effort is on to make the treaty ineffective, which is regrettable," he added.

Dhaka University Prof Mesbah Kamal said there was a gradual decrease of political will to implement the accord and urged people to be united against the repression against the Jumma people.

Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum and rights activist Numan Ahmed Khan were present at the briefing.

## JU's largest lake neglected

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any space left in Jayapara for them to move around on.

Teachers and students of JU alleged that Jayapara -- that spans around 21.45 acres -- situated near the Botanical Garden and the university's swimming pool, was filled with aquatic plants, algae and garbage and has been neglected.

Earlier, the JU authorities came under severe criticism from bird enthusiasts for leasing out the water bodies, used by birds since 1985, for fish cultivation. A few teachers and students had then taken the initiative to cancel the lease and create a congenial atmosphere for the birds.

According to the JU estate office, the university has 26 small and large wetlands while guest birds sit in the four lakes -- one near Jahanara Imam hall, one near the administrative building, the Wildlife Rescue Centre's lake and Jayapara Lake.

Of the 26, 10 wetlands were leased out for Tk 13, 92,000 yearly. Most of them are leased out for around three years. In 2014, the authorities had also decided to lease out Jayapara and circulated an advertisement, but failed to manage any reliable holder.

Although the university authorities have "unofficially" stopped leasing out this lake for fish cultivation, no effective initiative has been taken yet to renovate the lakes that have been filled up with clumps of dried and dead flowers.

After visiting the lake, this correspondent found that hundreds of guest birds had flocked on the lake but were not able to move to and fro. Some of the bushy areas around the lake were also found burnt and destroyed due to human interference.

A JU estate official, preferring anonymity, said the university's central resource management committee had not been monitoring the internal resources with due diligence, adding that for the past one year, no meeting had been held in this regard.

Contacted, JU's acting chief estate officer Md Nurul Amin alleged that some environmentalists said cleaning the lake and discarding the water hyacinths and other aquatic plants would destroy habitats of small insects and make food for the birds insufficient.

The university's zoology department usually looks after the lake, he added.

Speaking to The Daily Star, ornithologist Kamrul Hasan of the zoology department denied Nurul Amin's allegations and said, "We only urged them to follow the timeframe for cleaning the bushes and aquatic plants. From May to August second week is the period for laying eggs of home birds in the bushy areas.

"This year, guest birds have started arriving early in the winter and most of them have taken position on the rest of the three lakes. The number of guest birds might lessen next year if they are not able to swim or move about, as the largest lake remains unguarded and filled with hyacinths and other plants," he added.

Kamrul further said that around 15 kinds of birds come to the campus grounds every year. "Last year, five species -- Lesser Whistling Duck (Chhota sarali), Greater Whistling Duck (Boro sarali), Pin-tailed duck, Common Pochard, Comb duck, Cotton Pigmy Goose -- were all seen at the lake. This year, so far the Lesser Whistling and Greater Whistling ducks have come."

Confirming that no steps had been taken to guard Jayapara, JU Treasurer Sheikh Md Monzurul Huq, chief of internal resource management committee, said, "A meeting will be called soon in this regard."

Like every year, the Zoology department will arrange a bird fair on the campus to raise awareness on migratory birds. The fair is scheduled to be held on January 11.

### INDIA ASSEMBLY POLLS

## Congress cries foul after EVM malfunctions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Around 3.25 percent of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines attached to EVMs used in polling during assembly elections in Indian state of Madhya Pradesh were hit by malfunction and needed to be changed on Wednesday, prompting opposition Congress party to cry foul.

Chief Election Officer of the state V Kantha Rao told the media that 2,126 VVPAT machines, 881 control units and 883 ballot units had to be replaced due to malfunctioning.

The malfunctioning of the VVPATs that disrupted the polling for about three hours drew concern from senior Congress leaders of Madhya Pradesh Kamal Nath and Jyotiraditya Scindia. They demanded fresh polling in all booths where EVMs did not function properly.

Scindia wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Om Prakash Rawat complaining about faulty EVMs and delayed voting.

"The rate at which EVMs are malfunctioning is alarming. Several voters are de-motivated when they experience incomplete arrangements and may lose faith in this exercise if they come across allegations of tampering with EVMs," the letter said.

It said most of the complaints about EVMs malfunctioning came from rural areas where voters do not have adequate awareness about how to seek redressal.

What the Congress is concerned about is that the EVMs malfunctioned in an election which is seen to be a closely-fought one between a ruling BJP and Congress and drew a high turnout of over 73 percent, a record for Madhya Pradesh in the assembly polls.

Both BJP, which has been ruling the state for 15 years having won three successive elections, and Congress have claimed that the high turnout of voters would go in their favour.

## Accused

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Ashulia Police Station.

Sensing the presence of the law enforcers, Babul and his accomplices opened fire, prompting police to retaliate which triggered a "gunfight", the OC said, adding that Babul was hit by bullets.

But his associates managed to flee, the police official said.

Babul was taken to Savar Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, the OC said, adding that the body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Four policemen were injured during the incident, while three bullets and a pistol were recovered from the spot, he claimed.

The OC said police had arrested two accused after a murder case was filed by Mehedi's wife.

The arrestees gave confessional statements before the court and the raid was carried out based on their information, said Javed.

Meanwhile in Cox's Bazar, police recovered the bullet-hit body of Mohammad Hanif, who had been missing for the last eight days, from a beach in Teknaf upazila yesterday morning.

Locals found the body on Baharchhara Noakhalipara beach in the morning and informed police, said Anwar Hossain, in-charge of Baharchhara police investigation camp. Later, police recovered the body.

There was a bullet injury mark on his chest, police said.

Victim's family told The Daily Star that Hanif's phone was found switched off after he went missing.

## What we're eating

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The report is an independently produced annual analysis of the state of the world's nutrition.

"Diets are one of the top risk factors of morbidity and mortality in the world - more than air pollution, more than smoking," said Jessica Fanzo, a professor at Johns Hopkins University and a lead author.

"What we're eating is killing us. So something needs to get us back on track with our food system," she said on the sidelines of a global food conference in Thailand's capital, Bangkok.

She said a lack of knowledge and affordability of nutritious food, as well as ineffective supply chains, are among the factors that contribute to poor diets.

The researchers analysed 194 countries and found that malnutrition could cost the world \$3.5 trillion per year, while overweight and obesity could cost US\$500 billion annually.

Every country is battling some form of malnutrition - be it children who are anemic or too short for their age, or women who are overweight but undernourished due to unhealthy diets - and adolescence obesity rates are rising, the report said.

Most countries are unlikely to meet nine global targets on nutrition that they have signed up to achieve by 2025 including adult obesity and diabetes, anemia and child health.

Progress has been "unacceptably slow", the authors warned.

However, there is now better and more detailed data, which has created an unprecedented opportunity to craft effective responses, according to the report.

It cited Amsterdam, which faced a weight crisis among young people and set up programmes in 2012 to prevent and treat obesity, as well as facilitate learning and research on the issue.

Initiatives included public drinking fountains, restrictions on food advertising and guidance for healthy snacks in schools. Today, the prevalence of overweight and obesity in Amsterdam is leveling off, the report said.

Reducing food waste could also improve nutrition, said Sir John Beddington, co-chair of the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, an independent group of experts.

"Each year more than half of all the fruits and vegetables produced globally are lost or wasted," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by email.

Fanzo noted that nutrition is crucial to building up immunity against disease, as well as mental cognition.

"You have to care about what people are eating if you want to build the intellect of your country," she said.

## Ancient Ninja

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broke the promises even by a little, he'd be punished by "big and small gods in more than 60 provinces across Japan" for generations.

The rare document shows how strict Ninjas were about keeping their skills and techniques secret, said Yoshiaki Takao, associate professor at the state-run Mie University's International Ninja Research Center.

"Thieves and Ninjas did the same thing -- sneaking into other people's houses -- but Ninjas prized morality highly," Takao said.

"Ninjas were 'public servants' in today's terms, providing security services and collecting information," added the expert.

Also of interest to scholars was a vow in the oath to report to his superiors any new skills, tools or firearms that were not in the "Bansenshukai", a secretive 17th-century text considered to be somewhat of a Ninja encyclopaedia.

Kizu noted he could show only three chapters of the "Bansenshukai" to top-

ranking samurais who employed ninjas and vowed not to disclose the book's contents in other writings.

This interests scholars because "it shows that Bansenshukai was actually becoming used as a textbook," Takao said, even though it left crucial points vague.

The contents of the multi-volume book are now known to the public but many Ninja traditions remain hidden as important secrets were passed on by word of mouth.

The oath was among some 130 ancient documents left to the university by the 16th head of the Kizu family.

The existence of the oath was unveiled five decades ago in Japan but its whereabouts were unknown until now, according to Takao.

Inosuke, who submitted the oath was the fifth head and last Ninja from the Kizu family. The oath document was believed to have been returned to his family after his death, Takao said.

## Spin on the cards

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unlikely that the Tigers will change tack in the second Test.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan also said that the Tigers would go in with an attacking mindset and urged his charges to play their natural game.

It will be interesting to see the team combination after Mushfiquur Rahim, a double-centurion in the last Test played in Mirpur earlier this month, injured his right thumb while batting on Wednesday. The wicketkeeper-batsman, who was still experiencing pain yesterday, is however expected to play.

The team management will assess his condition just before the start of the game today and it was learned that Mushfiquur may not keep wicket, with late inclusion Liton Das expected to stand behind the stumps.

Liton's inclusion means Mohammad Mithun might have to make way while uncapped opening batsman Shadman Islam is all set to make his debut and open the innings with Soumya Sarkar.

Bangladesh are expected to go in

## 13 lives lost on roads

FROM PAGE 1  
collision between an ambulance and a lorry in Daribaushia area of Gazaria upazila.

Lucky Akhter, Razzak's daughter, was injured in the collision and undergoing treatment at Gazaria Health Complex.

The ambulance was carrying Razzak and his daughter to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Md Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Gazaria Highway Police Station.

In Pabna, a mother and her eight-year-old daughter died when two engine-run three-wheelers collided in Hemayetpur Bangabaria area of the district around 9:00am yesterday.

The dead are Rimil Begum, 40, and her daughter Borsha Khatun.

In Faridpur, a 54-year-old man died on the spot as a Dhaka-bound bus of Sakura Paribahan run him over around 2:00pm in Dhuldi Bazar area.

The dead was identified as Ashrafur Alam, resident of Gholabari Chandpur village in Chapainawabganj.

Aladipur Highway Police later seized the bus from Basantapur area under Sadar upazila in Rajbari.

with four spinners once again, with Shakib leading the attack alongside Taijul Islam, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and young Nayeem Hasan, who broke into the record books by being the youngest bowler to pick five wickets on debut in Chattogram.

According to sources close to the team, left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman -- who bowled just four overs in the first Test as the lone pacer -- is likely to be replaced by seam-bowling all-rounder Ariful Haque.

If picked, Ariful -- who made his debut against Zimbabwe earlier this month -- is also expected to perform the seamer's role and it is expected that the Mirpur pitch will offer a lot of purchase for the spinners.

West Indies, on the other hand, will be looking to bounce back but will be hampered by the absence of feared pacer Shannon Gabriel, who was suspended because of a collision with dropped Bangladesh opener Imrul Kayes. They too will have to rely on their spinners to deny what could be Bangladesh's fourth series win in 18 years of playing Tests.

In Tangail, a college student was killed on the spot when an unidentified vehicle crushed his motorcycle on Dhaka-Tangail highway around 12:00pm yesterday.

The dead was identified as Anwar Khan, 18, resident of Dubail Uttorpara village in Delduar upazila in Tangail.

Motiuur Rahman, a sub-inspector of Gorai Highway Police Station, said the victim was a student of Government Saadat College in Karatia.

In Manikganj, a three-wheeler driver died in a head-on collision between his vehicle and a private car on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Shiblalaya upazila yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Omar Ali, 55.

Amir Hossain, sub-inspector of Barangail Highway Police outpost, said that the private car was seized but the driver managed to flee.

Besides, two school teachers died at Khulna Medical College Hospital on Wednesday after being critically injured in a collision between a motor-bike and a truck.

The dead are Rafiquil Islam Dulal, 45, and Baharul Alam Molla, 43.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS