

## 2 held

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from the farm around 1:00pm. The victim filed a case with Hijla Police Station on Friday night, citing four names including local youth Saiful and 10-12 unidentified people.

Police suspect that auto-rickshaw driver Zakir was involved in the crime, but the case statement does not mention his name as an accused. When asked about the three other accused, police declined to give their names but said all three were local youths, and they were trying to arrest them.

The woman was sent to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for medical examination.

Police could not give her personal and family details immediately.

## Immigration

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Finland and Saudi Arabia. "The immigration official [in Dhaka] had asked the pilot to show his passport. In response, the pilot said his passport was in his luggage. Since he was a senior pilot and operated flights regularly, the official gave him clearance after checking his general declaration," Ismail said. "Usually, immigration procedures of pilots are completed with their general declaration [GD-Crew ID], and the passports are checked for proof as part of the procedures," he said. "However, both the persons should be held responsible in this case," he added.

As per the rules of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), pilots carry copies of general declaration while operating international flights. They also have to keep their passports with them.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said they came to know that the pilot did not carry his passport by mistake.

But he should not have made such a mistake as it was a prime minister's flight, he told reporters at the Rab headquarters in the capital.

Kamal said immigration police also should have checked his passport. "We are investigating the incident. We will know the details following completion of the investigation," he added.

Meanwhile, the Biman Bangladesh Airlines and the cabinet division yesterday issued contradictory statements on whether the pilot was detained in Qatar.

The national flag carrier in a statement said Capt Fazal, who flew a 787 Dreamliner to Qatar on Wednesday from Dhaka, was neither detained nor arrested.

The cabinet division, however, in a gazette mentioned that Capt Fazal was detained at Hamad International Airport in Doha by the immigration authorities for not carrying his passport.

On Friday, the cabinet division and the home ministry formed two separate probe bodies to investigate the incident.

## Moon is part

FROM PAGE 12  
'SUSTAINABLE HUMAN PRESENCE' NASA's website on Friday said the Artemis program would send "the first woman and the next man to the Moon by 2024 and develop a sustainable human presence on the Moon by 2028." The program takes its name from the twin sister of Apollo and the goddess of the moon in Greek mythology.

NASA's Apollo program landed the first men on the moon 50 years ago on July 20.

The NASA website also provided details on the space agency's plans for making the moon a jumping off point for future missions to Mars and a place to test equipment and technology for other forays out into the solar system.

Trump's comments about the US manned space program reflect his desire to champion a bold new national objective as he mounts a re-election bid, while also seeking to counter the potential space weaponry capabilities of Russia and China.

Private companies are also joining the race to the moon.

Billionaire entrepreneur Jeff Bezos last month unveiled a mock-up of a lunar lander being built by his Blue Origin rocket company and touted his moon goals as part of a strategy aimed at capitalizing on the Trump administration's push to establish a lunar outpost in just five years.



A tank belonging to the Syrian regime forces drives on a road leading to the town of Jalamah in Syria's Hama governorate as smoke billows above buildings during clashes with jihadists yesterday. Fierce clashes between Russia-backed government forces and jihadists have killed more than 100 combatants in northwestern Syria in the past 24 hours, a war monitor said on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Waiting to come apart

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The RHD data of December 2017 shows that there are 4,507 bridges under the department, of which 996 are Bailey bridges. Of them, 973 have steel decks while the rest have wooden decks.

At least two Bailey bridges collapsed in May, bringing the safety issue to the fore.

A decades-old Bailey bridge caved in on May 11 in Santosh area of Tangail Sadar when a truck with an overload of sand was crossing it. This snapped road communication between the district headquarters and five unions.

On May 18, a part of the deck of a Bailey bridge over the Langulia river in Nakachhim of Tangail's Basail upazila collapsed, disconnecting Basanal and Sakhipur upazilas from the district town.

The RHD is now in the process of collecting data on bridges and would learn about the "health of the major bridges" early next year.

However, a preparatory survey of the RHD's "Western Bangladesh

Bridges Improvement Project" in 2015 said most of the Bailey bridges were in an "unsafe condition".

It had said the conditions of the bridges deteriorated and, in some cases, the bridges had collapsed.

These bridges have thin steel or wooden decks, which get easily damaged by repeated use by heavily loaded vehicles. Due to insufficient repairs, many have been left in hazardous states, the survey reported.

Khurshid Alam, executive engineer of Bridge Construction and Management Division-1, said the Bailey bridges were built on temporary basis and with a standard load capacity of 7.50 tonnes.

"But overloaded vehicles are making them vulnerable," he told this correspondent.

He said they put up warning signs near almost all the Bailey bridges about their load capacity, but a very few drivers abide by it.

After an accident, the RHD usually files a case against the owners of the overloaded vehicle, he added.

Asked about the absence of recent data on bridges, Rowshan Ara Khanam, additional chief engineer (bridge management wing) of the RHD, said they were collecting relevant data.

She said they have developed a software and provided training to some officials under the Bridge Management Capacity Development Project to create a database for bridges.

They have started collecting data in January and hope to get the information on major bridges within January next, she added. "The information will help them set maintenance priorities," she added.

"Besides, we are gradually replacing all Bailey bridges with RCC/PC bridges [concrete bridges]," Rowshan Ara said. But she could not say when all of them would be replaced.

OVERLOADING  
Transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque said the root cause behind the collapse of Bailey bridges is the overloading of vehicles.

"In my assessment, one Bailey bridge collapses every month on an

average," he told this newspaper on May 19.

Besides, overloading also damages concrete bridges and roads and reduce their durability and ultimately increase maintenance cost.

Prof Shamsul, also the former director of Accident Research Institute at Buet, said modifications made to vehicles, especially trucks, create more scope for overloading.

Even though such modifications are illegal, those vehicles get their annual fitness certificate from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, he said.

The expert said the authorities have to stop issuing the fitness clearance to modified vehicles to stop overloading and save infrastructure and government money.

Setting up weigh scales on highways would not be viable, he said.

A trucker, wishing not to be named, said drivers hardly ever look at the warning signs placed before Bailey bridges. He said their job is to drive and they care little about the load unless it is to an extent that it damages the vehicle.

## Nigeria court overturns ban on opposition TV, radio stations

AFP, Lagos

A Nigerian radio and television station owned by an opposition politician resumed broadcasting yesterday after a court order temporarily overturned a ban imposed for alleged "inflammatory" content and unpaid licence fees.

The Federal High Court in the capital Abuja on Friday said African Independent Television (AIT) and RayPower FM radio should be allowed to operate until a ruling on their legal challenge to the ban.

The next court hearing is due on Thursday.

The National Broadcasting Commission said it had suspended the licence of the Daar Communications Plc, the owners of the two outfits, for breaching broadcast rules, not paying licence fees and "inflammatory, divisive, inciting broadcasts and media propaganda against the government."

## Bangladeshi

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Magistrate Judge Cheryl L Pollack ordered him permanently detained, citing the seriousness of the accusations and calling him a "danger to the community."

The investigation of Alam began last August, when he met with an undercover agent, the report said, citing the complaint.

He had apparently stated his interest in buying weapons and explosives for an attack on New York City a number of times. He also expressed his admiration for terrorist groups, including ISIS and Al Qaeda, the complaint said.

Last September, he told an undercover agent that Bin Laden's violent, extremist mission during the Sept 11 attacks was "a complete success," according to the complaint.

The agent also accompanied him to several "recon" trips to Times Square, where Alam scouted potential targets and used his mobile phone to make recordings of the area, the complaint said.

In January, he had also allegedly told an undercover agent that he wanted to "die fighting" and once again mentioned buying a gun, according to the complaint.

He expressed his intention to use the weapon to target those areas in Times Square where most of the tourists gathered.

In subsequent meetings, Alam continued to tell the agent that he wanted to purchase firearms, officials said.

According to the complaint, when an undercover agent asked Alam what would make him happy, he responded, "seeing the flag of Islam on the Twin Towers or the Empire State Building".

## Nasa to open

FROM PAGE 12  
Russia starting in 1998, and other countries participate in the mission and send up astronauts.

But the United States has paid for and controls most of the modules that make it up.

The new space tourists to the ISS will not be the first: US businessman Dennis Tito had that honor in 2001. He paid Russia around \$20 million for the trip.

Others followed in his footsteps, the last being Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberte in 2009.

Since 2011, Russian Soyuz rockets have been the only way to get to the space station. And they have transported only space agency astronauts, in addition to Russian cosmonauts.

There are usually three to six crew members on the ISS at any given time. Right now it is home to three Americans, two Russians and a Canadian.

Russia plans to resume tourist flights in late 2021.

The policy change announced Friday includes the opening of parts of the ISS to private sector companies for commercial and marketing activity.

This would include startups developing techniques for building materials in conditions of

weightlessness.

Fiber optic cables, for example, are of extraordinary quality when manufactured in microgravity.

The idea is to develop the space economy in the hope of seeing the private sector take over the ISS, which the United States hopes to stop financing in the late 2020s.

## 23m boys

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before their 18th birthday, compared to 1-in-30 young men.

While the prevalence, causes and impact of child marriage among girls have been extensively studied, little research exists on child marriage among boys, according to UN News.

It is clear though that children most at risk come from the poorest households, live predominantly in rural areas and have little to no education.

"As we mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we need to remember that marrying boys and girls off while they are still children runs counter to the rights enshrined in the Convention," reminded Fore.

"Through further research, investment and empowerment, we can end this violation," she asserted.

## AL leader's wife dies of burn injuries

FROM PAGE 12  
Upazila Unit AL, yesterday morning. Dilip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge (OC) of Baraigram Police Station, said that, on information, a police team stopped the burial and sent the body to Natore Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The OC said that when the police team intervened and queried Razzak, he initially told them that his wife sustained burn injuries in a gas cylinder explosion.

Upon inspection of Razzak's house, police, however, found the cylinder intact, giving rise to suspicion.

They also recovered the victim's burnt clothes which smelled like kerosene, the OC said.

Razzak then came up with another version of the incident in the afternoon, claiming that

his wife committed suicide by pouring kerosene on herself, Dilip said, adding that Razzak, when asked, could not come up with a reason for why she would do so.

Asked about the two different statements he gave to police regarding the incident, Razzak responded by saying he was ill and could not talk much.

Harun-Or-Rashid, additional superintendent of police (Baraigram Circle) said, a lot of suspicion surrounds the incident, but no one has filed a case yet.

Police will file a case if the autopsy report suggests it was a murder, he said.

Meanwhile in Pabna, Mahamuda Akhter Meem, a housewife who was allegedly physically assaulted and strangled for dowry in her in-law's house in Sadar upazila, succumbed to her

injuries on Friday after fighting for life for 17 days at RMCH.

The victim's family filed a case accusing five people, including Meem's husband, with Ataikula Police Station after the incident on May 21.

Police, however, could not arrest any of the accused.

Md Moniruzzaman, OC of the station, said, "The accused have gone into hiding and police are trying to arrest them."

Speaking to our Pabna Correspondent, Meem's brother Mehedi Hasan alleged Meem was tortured in her laws' house for dowry and they had recently made a fresh demand of Tk one lakh. He added that they beat her up and strangled her as they failed to pay the amount.



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