

# Man sent to jail over rape

4 rape accused held

STAR REPORT

A Netrokona court yesterday sent a man to jail on charge of raping a four-year-old girl in the district's Atpara upazila on Monday.

Mohammad Ali Hossain, officer-in-charge of Atpara Police Station, said the victim's father filed a case against the accused -- Mizanur Rahman, 25, resident of the Tenga village -- on Wednesday.

The man was arrested on the same day the case was filed, he added.

According to the case statement, the girl was playing at her yard on Monday afternoon when neighbouring Mizanur took her to his room and raped her.

Hearing the girl scream, locals rushed to the spot and rescued her but Mizanur managed to flee, the statement added.

Later, he was arrested and placed before the court.

## FOUR RAPE ACCUSED ARRESTED

Police yesterday arrested two men on charge of gang-raping a 25-year-old woman in Barishal city on Wednesday.

The arrestees are Farid Hossain, 32, and Al-Amin, 28, said police.

Nurul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station in Barishal, said the victim's father filed a case against six men on Wednesday.

According to the case statement, a group of six men intruded into the victim's house and confined her

parents in a room.

The criminals then took the woman to another room, gang-raped her and filmed the rape scene, the statement read.

Hearing the victim's father shout, locals rushed to the spot and caught Farid and handed him over to police.

Later, police arrested Al-Amin. The law enforcers are trying to arrest the rest of the accused, said the OC.

Meanwhile in Jhenidah, police arrested two men on charge of raping a schoolgirl in the district's Kaliganj upazila.

The arrestees are Prince, 22, and Nayan, 18, both neighbours of the victim, said police.

Kanak Kanti Das, assistant superintendent of Jhenidah police (Sadar circle), said the victim's father filed a case against three men yesterday morning.

According to the case statement, the victim was going to a neighbour's house when the trio picked her up, tied her mouth with scarf, took her to a nearby banana garden, made her senseless with medicine and gang-raped her.

Later, the criminals tried to throw the senseless victim in a pond but a local noticed that and started screaming. Hearing the scream, the trio fled the scene. Villagers then rescued the girl and informed police, the statement read.

# BTRC to issue notice

FROM PAGE 1

audit reports into the two operators' books of accounts.

However, both the operators have repeatedly been demanding arbitration against the audit claims as per Bangladesh Arbitration Act. But BTRC remains non-responsive on their demand claiming that it would only follow the Telecommunication Act for its decision.

To realise the demand in a commission meeting on July 24, the telecom watchdog decided to seek approval from the government for issuing show cause notice as the Telecommunication Act's section 46.

As per that section, the telecom regulator can cancel the licence of an operator if the former finds the latter's response unsatisfactory.

"This is public money and there is some procedure to realise the amount," said Jahurul, adding that they were only following the act and rules.

Contacted M Hafizuddin Khan, a former comptroller and auditor general (CAG), said there is no scope of arbitration regarding a "government audit".

"I think this issue will be settled in the court as mobile operators still have objections regarding the audit methods," said Khan, also an adviser to a former caretaker government.

The Daily Star contacted the operators for their comments, but they declined to comment on the issue.

However, they said they will try to convince the authorities to follow the

procedure and move for arbitration.

A senior executive of a mobile operator said they may even consider moving to the international court to get a solution on the issue and that would be a disaster for the industry and the country as well.

"The telecom regulator is not following proper laws... They are only trying use their power to gain the money in an unlawful way," said the executive, requesting anonymity.

GP and Robi officials said they have invested more than Tk 58,000 crore (over \$7 billion) in Bangladesh and now their investments are at risk.

Both the operators, which have together 12.36 crore or 76 percent of total active mobile connections, currently are not getting any approval from the BTRC about new services, packages and cannot import equipment to maintain their network as well.

On July 22, BTRC decided not to give any kind of approval to Grameenphone and Robi to roll out new package or service or import network equipment -- to pile on the pressure on the operators to clear their dues.

Earlier on July 4, the BTRC had slashed Grameenphone's bandwidth by 30 percent and Robi's by 15 percent for non-payment of the dues -- enough to slow down their internet speed and raise the call drop frequency.

But the block on bandwidth was lifted on July 17 considering the inconvenience it was causing to subscribers.

inquired into the allegation. Later, the CJ and the two judges would send recommendations to the president for necessary action, he said.

The attorney general also said now the CJ was taking such decisions in consultation with the president and all judges of the apex court.

Meanwhile, Supreme Court Bar Association's Secretary Barrister AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon yesterday said there were corruption allegations against many other judges as well as SC officials and employees.

"Some Supreme Court officials and employees openly commit corruption. The lawyers are being harassed by them every day. We have already informed this issue to the chief justice," he said at a press conference at the SCBA auditorium.

"Taking initiative against corruption is urgent for protecting the image and dignity of the judiciary and to ensure justice," he said.

"We welcome the initiative of probing the allegations against the three High Court judges. But we are demanding that who is conducting the inquiry is made clear," added Khokon, also a joint secretary of the BNP.

Meanwhile, Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan, a SC lawyer and Editor of Dhaka Law Reports, termed the move to keep the three judges away from judicial activities unprecedented.

"It's also embarrassing for the entire judiciary," he said.

Khurshid, also the chief prosecutor of the Anti-Corruption Commission, said the matter was the centre of discussion at the SC throughout yesterday.



## Tiger poaching increasing

FROM PAGE 20

On an average, over 60 seizures and body parts of almost 124 tigers were recorded every year," the report said.

"Vietnam and Bangladesh also reported more than doubling average yearly seizures, and an increase in the number of tigers seized," the report claimed.

Over the last four years, Bangladeshi authorities mostly seized tiger skins. Bangladesh's seizures account for 2.9 percent of the worldwide seizures.

India, China, and Indonesia made most of the seizures -- India 463 or 40.5 percent, China 126 or 11.0 percent, and Indonesia 119 or 10.5 percent.

Wildlife experts in Bangladesh said the situation was dreadful as the number reflects only a tiny part of actually poaching incidents.

"When tiger population is poor, poaching in such a rate is really

concerning. Usually, only 20 percent poaching incidents are reported," said Monirul H Khan, renowned tiger researcher and a professor at the Jahangirnagar University's Zoology department.

According to WildTeam (formerly Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh), 19 incidents of tiger body parts recovery were recorded in Bangladesh between 2011 and 2019. Three cubs, 19 skins, 294 bones, seven skulls, and 45 teeth were recovered.

Prof Md Anwarul Islam, chief executive of WildTeam and a teacher of Zoology department at Dhaka University, said, "We compiled the data when seizures were made by different agencies. There certainly are unreported incidents. That's why we do not know the real picture."

Md Moyeen Uddin Khan, conservator of forest, Khulna circle,

said the number the report mentioned was unbelievable.

Our record says during the timeframe, 10 tigers died naturally and one during the Sidr cyclone, he said.

"There are 49 village tiger response teams, four co-management committees, and 22 community patrolling groups are there in the Sundarbans area for tiger conservation," he said.

Bangladesh has taken several steps for tiger conservation, including Tiger Action Plan 2009-2017, National Tiger Recovery Programme, and an amendment to the Forest Act, 2012.

According to the latest tiger census of the government released in May, the number of Bengal tigers in the Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans increased slightly, to 114 in 2018 from 106 in 2015.

# Distrust holds them back

FROM PAGE 1

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC).

The Rohingyas' lack of willingness to return was a recurring feature during the interviews, officially called intention surveys.

Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mohammad Abul Kalam said that none of the Rohingyas of the 295 families interviewed by the UNHCR and RRRC over the last two days had volunteered to return.

"We have interviewed 295 families, but none has yet shown interest to return to Myanmar," he told reporters at a camp in Teknaf around 12:30pm yesterday.

He added that the authorities were fully prepared to transport the Rohingyas to the two transit camp, where they would be temporarily sheltered before being handed over to Myanmar.

Myanmar had cleared the names of 3,450 Rohingyas from a list of 22,000 plus Rohingyas sent by Bangladesh. In early August, Bangladesh provided the approved list to the UNHCR in Dhaka and sought its assistance in assessing their willingness to return to Myanmar.

Accordingly, officials of the UN High Commissioner for the Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangladesh and of the RRRC office conducted the assessment of 339 families out of 1,037 cleared by Myanmar.

"The process of assessing voluntariness will continue. We will see if anybody wants to return. The vehicles we have arranged [for their transportation to transit camps] will also remain ready," Abul Kalam said.

On Myanmar's efforts, Dhaka University's Prof Imtiaz said a delegation from the country had visited Rohingya camps in July, while the Myanmar's Independent Commission of Inquiry visited the camps this week.

"The purpose of all these initiatives, as well as the repatriation move, are

attempts to prove in the UN General Assembly in September that it has been sincere. It has actually been not," he said.

Myanmar is under pressure as two years have passed since the Rohingya influx and the International Criminal Court is moving to investigate the crimes, he said.

The first attempt of repatriation on November 15 last year also failed for similar reasons, as the Rohingyas had raised the same concerns and demands back then too.

'A SERIOUS LACK OF TRUST' Despite the mechanisms for the repatriation being ready, a lack of trust in Myanmar among the Rohingyas continues to exist.

"How can we believe that we will be allowed to go to our houses?" a Rohingya man said, echoing many others living in some of the world's largest refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, home to some 1.1 lakh Rohingyas.

Over 742,000 of them fled military atrocities including killings, rapes, tortures, burning of houses in Rakhine State since August 25, 2017.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said it was regrettable that none of the Rohingya interviewed as of yesterday was willing to return.

"Rohingyas lack trust [in Myanmar]. They fear that the safety and security in Rakhine is not enough. Therefore, the Rohingya leaders should be taken to Rakhine to prove that the situation there has improved," Momen said.

"We were expecting repatriation to start. We are not losing hope. We'll continue to work on repatriation."

Asked about the Rohingyas' demand, he said, "We cannot be held hostage to their demands. They have to achieve those after they return to their homeland."

If the Rohingyas stay here longer, they won't be comfortable, he said, adding that the Bangladesh government had already spent around Tk 2,500 crore for them and the donors may not be interested to release more funds in the future.

Meanwhile, in a statement

yesterday, UNHCR said it appreciated the consistent commitment by the government of Bangladesh to ensure that the refugees' decisions would be respected. UNHCR has agreed with Bangladesh and Myanmar that any repatriation of refugees must be voluntary, safe and dignified.

ARE ROHINGYAS BEING MISLED? A parliamentary body yesterday asked the foreign ministry to find out whether any non-government organisation was misleading Rohingyas and convincing them to not return to Myanmar.

The parliamentary standing committee on foreign ministry came up with the directive as several members of the House watchdog alleged that a number of NGOs were engaged in ensuring the refugee do not return.

"The committee has asked the foreign ministry to identify those NGOs and to oversee activities of all NGOs working in Cox's Bazar on the Rohingya issue," said a member of the committee wishing anonymity.

The parliamentary watchdog also asked the ministry concerned to enhance diplomatic efforts to rehabilitate the Rohingyas to their own country soon.

It asked the ministry to take a delegation of Rohingyas to Rakhine to give them a firsthand experience of the situation there in a bid to convince them to return.

The committee also asked the ministry to arrange visits to Vietnam, Thailand and Singapore for the members of the parliamentary body for holding talks with those countries on the Rohingya issue.

Awami League MP and chief of the parliamentary committee Faruk Khan presided over the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Earlier yesterday, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the government would take actions against organisations working against repatriation. "We are identifying them," he told reporters at his office.

## Non-critical

from page 1

Sumaia Aktar, 18, from Patuakhali's Mirzaganj upazila, was infected with dengue and admitted to Dumki Upazila Health Complex on August 14.

Family sources said after being diagnosed at the complex, she was referred and admitted to Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) on August 16 and died there on August 19.

It took around two hours to reach SBMCH from Dumki, they said.

Dr S M Bakir Hossain, director SBMCH said Sumaia was admitted in the hospital with symptoms of diarrhoea and had blood in her urine.

On August 18, she was transferred to the intensive care unit (ICU) after her condition deteriorated. She died despite their best efforts, he said.

Health and Family Welfare official of Dumki Upazila Health Complex Dr Shahin said they referred her to the SBMCH next day as her pressure fell and she was suffering from diarrhoea.

He said they referred only critical patient to SBMCH for better treatment.

Civil Surgeon of Patuakhali district Dr Hedayatul Islam said a trend is being observed that many dengue patients are being referred to district level hospitals from upazila health complexes.

Guardians of the patients in many cases tried to take them to divisional level hospitals for better treatment due to better road communication.

"We are trying to motivate doctors not to refer patients unnecessarily," he said.

Though a critical dengue patient in many cases needs ICU facilities, there are no ICUs or CCUs facilities in upazila level government health complexes across the country. Even many district level government hospitals also do not have the facilities.

Since August 8, hospitals outside Dhaka are receiving more dengue patients than those in the capital due to huge number of people travelling outside Dhaka for Eid.

Experts have termed this particularly alarming given the state of healthcare facilities in rural areas.

DGHS data shows a total of 59,592 patients admitted to different hospitals across the country till yesterday, of which 23,846 are outside Dhaka.

According to the DGHS there are 390 ICU beds in government hospitals across the country.

Assistant Director of the DGHS control room Dr Aysha Akhter said 60 patients are now undergoing treatment in ICUs in Dhaka.

There are 140 government hospitals at the district level and above, with 31,260 beds in total, while 524 hospitals with 20,026 beds in the upazila level and below, said Dr Satyakam Chakraborty, line director of DGHS's hospital services management.

The number of private hospitals and clinics across the country is 5,055 with 90,587 beds, he said.

Anamul Haque, civil surgeon of Faridpur General Hospital said there were eight upazila health complexes in Faridpur.

But only three of the eight upazila health complexes have pathological test facilities. So, most of the dengue patients have been admitted to FMCH for treatment.

THREE PEOPLE DIE OF DENGUE Three people died of dengue in Dhaka and Barisal yesterday with the number of the deaths rising to 110. However, official figure is 47.

Gias Uddin, 40, died after being diagnosed with dengue at Dhaka Medical College Hospital at 6:30am yesterday, while another person died of dengue at Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday, hospital sources said.

In Barishal, Monir Hossain Chowdhury, from Barishal's Mehendiganj, died after being infected with dengue at SBMCH yesterday, hospital sources said.

(Our Faridpur, Barishal, Mymensingh and Jhalkathi correspondents also contributed to the report)

## Rifat murder

FROM PAGE 1

Islam Sifat, Rayhan and Hasan.

Mozammel Hossain Kishor, father of Rifat Sharif's wife Aysha Siddika Minni, said police were likely to press charges against his daughter in order to save some influential people.

"I have been saying this, but nobody listens to me," he told reporters, adding, "My family is being destroyed."

Rifat Sharif's wife Aysha Siddika Minni was a key witness to the murder that took place in front of her college on June 26. Rifat Sharif, a 25-year-old internet service provider, was indiscriminately hacked by a group of youths there.

In a video footage of the incident that went viral in the social media, Minni was seen screaming and trying in vain to save her husband from the assailants.

The victim's father filed a murder case with Barguna Sadar Police Station against 12 people on the same day.

Police later arrested Minni. She made a confessional statement before a court.