

Police constable

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threatening to release the photos on social media. He also blackmailed her into giving him Tk 2.3 lakh and gold ornaments.

The DB is investigating the case, said Joynal Abedin, officer-in-charge of Narayanganj Model Police Station. In Chattogram, police yesterday arrested a teenage boy on charges of killing a minor girl after rape, while in Mymensingh, a college girl, who was allegedly raped by her cousin last week, died on Sunday.

Besides, two people were held and two others sued over rape in four other districts yesterday.

The victim in Chattogram was Nipu, 9, daughter of Jashim Uddin of Mailer Matha area under Bandar Police Station. She was a class-II student of Hashem Smriti Kendra High School.

The accused, a ninth grader, used to live in a building adjacent to the victim's. The accused and the victim were relatives, said police.

On Sunday afternoon, the victim was alone at their home and her parents were at work. Her mother is a garment worker and father a day labourer.

The boy went to the victim's home around 3:30pm and killed her after rape. He then hung the body from a ceiling fan with a scarf and fled the scene, said police.

Her mother returned home around 5:30pm and found the body, said Fouzul Azim, inspector of Bandar Police Station.

On information, police recovered the body and interrogated the victim's neighbours and suspected that the accused committed the crime.

Police then arrested the accused, who later admitted that he killed the girl, said Fouzul.

In Mymensingh, a college girl, who was allegedly raped by her cousin last week, died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital on Sunday.

The victim, Yeasmin Akter, 24, of Khamarhati village in Netrakona's Purbadhala upazila, was a student of Abu Abbas Degree College in the district.

Her mother lodged a case with Purbadhala Police Station, accusing Alamgir Hossain, 24, a cousin and classmate of the victim, on Sunday night.

Police picked up Alamgir from this house in Sripurbali village of Netrakona Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Citing the case statement, Tauhidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Purbadhala Police Station, said Alamgir took the girl to his workplace in Mymensingh's Tarakanda upazila on Wednesday for a visit where Alamgir works as a salesman of a biscuit factory.

Then Alamgir raped her. The following morning, Alamgir talked to the girl's parents over phone and said Yeasmin was sick.

The victim's mother went to Shyamganj Railway Station area in Purbadhala on Thursday to receive her daughter. Alamgir handed over the girl to her mother and fled the scene, said the OC, quoting the statement.

The mother admitted her daughter to Netrakona General Hospital, but she was referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital on the same day. As her condition deteriorated, she was shifted to ICU of the hospital where she died on Sunday morning.

On information, police sent the body to the hospital morgue for an autopsy. The body bore "signs of struggles", the OC said.

During primary interrogation, Alamgir confessed to raping the girl, the police official added.

In Jhenidah, a 50-year-old man was sued yesterday for raping a six-year-old girl in Kaliganj upazila.

The accused, Ansar Ali, is a neighbour of the girl. Quoting family members, police said the girl was playing near their home around 1:30pm on Sunday.

At that time, Ansar, alluring her with sweets, took the girl to his house and raped her.

Hearing the girl screaming, her mother rushed there and tried to take her to a hospital. But the accused prevented the victim's family from taking her to the hospital, alleged the victim's family.

As the girl's condition worsened, some locals helped the victim's family admit the girl to the local upazila health complex. She was later moved to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital, said the victim's family.

The victim's mother yesterday filed a rape case against Ansar with Kaliganj Police Station.

In Dinajpur, police arrested a man for allegedly raping a first grader in Hakimpur upazila early yesterday. The arrestee is Sagar Mia, 20, of Joypurhat's Panchbibbi upazila.

In Noakhali, another man was sued yesterday for raping a college girl in Kabirhat upazila. The accused is Saifur Rahman, 27.

In Khulna, police yesterday held a man from Sheikhpara area in the city for allegedly attempting to rape a second grader on Sunday afternoon.

The arrestee is Shariful Islam Ashik, 20. Our correspondents in Narayanganj, Chattogram, Mymensingh, Jhenidah, Dinajpur, Noakhali and Khulna contributed to this report.

G7 summit wraps up with signs of hope

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a deal to provide \$20 million in emergency help to Brazil and its neighbours stop the Amazon forest fires.

While they were not expected to leave Biarritz with a more comprehensive set of agreements or even a joint communique, Trump and his Western allies appeared to have at least agreed cordially to disagree on issues dividing them.

These ranged from Washington's escalating trade war with China, which many fear could tip the slowing world economy into recession; how to deal with the nuclear ambitions of both Iran and North Korea; and the question of whether Russian President Vladimir Putin should be readmitted to the group.

Trump, a turbulent presence at last year's G7 gathering, insisted during the Biarritz meeting that he was getting along well with other leaders of a group that also comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan.

The trade war between the United States and China, the world's two largest economies, escalated last Friday as both sides levelled more tariffs on each other's exports.

On Sunday, a White House spokeswoman said that when Trump told journalists that he had had second thoughts about last week's tariff blow against China, they were regret for not raising them more.

However, the mood-music changed abruptly yesterday, hours after China's yuan fell to an 11-year low against the dollar amid fears that the quickening Sino-US trade war would inflict more damage on the world's largest economies.

Speaking on the sidelines of the G7 summit yesterday, Trump said

he believed China wanted to make a trade deal after it contacted US trade officials overnight to say it wanted to return to the negotiating table.

Trump hailed Chinese President Xi Jinping as a great leader and said the prospect of talks was a very positive development.

"He understands, and it's going to be great for China, it's going to be great for the US, it's going to be great for the world," he said.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said he had not heard that a phone call between the two sides had taken place.

MAKE IRAN RICH AGAIN

Trump also backed away from confrontation over Iran yesterday, a day after French President Emmanuel Macron stunned other leaders by inviting Iran's foreign minister to Biarritz for talks on the stand-off between Washington and Tehran.

Trump told journalists that they had been wrong to report that he was blindsided by the five-hour visit of Mohammad Javad Zarif to the summit's sidelines, and said that while he thought it was too soon for a meeting he had no objections to it.

European leaders have struggled to calm a confrontation between Iran and the United States since Trump pulled his country out of Iran's internationally brokered 2015 nuclear deal last year and reimposed sanctions on the Iranian economy.

Macron has led efforts to defuse tensions, fearing a collapse of the nuclear deal could set the Middle East ablaze.

Trump indicated an openness to discussions with Iran on a nuclear deal and said he was not looking for regime change.

"I'm looking at a really good Iran, really strong, we're not looking for

regime change," he said. "And we're looking to make Iran rich again, let them be rich, let them do well."

Trump and Macron met over a long lunch on the first day of the summit and, as they gathered with other leaders for further talks yesterday, they greeted each other warmly and smiled.

DIGITAL TAX

Taking more heat out of the annual meeting, French and US negotiators meeting behind the scenes reached a compromise agreement on France's digital tax, a levy that had prompted Trump to threaten a separate tax on French wine imports.

The row had threatened to open up a new front in the trade spat between Washington and the EU as economic relations between the two appeared to sour.

France's 3% levy applies to revenue from digital services earned by firms with more than 25 million euros in French revenue and 750 million euros (\$830 million) worldwide.

Trump skipped a session of G7 leaders on climate change at which they agreed to the \$20 billion technical and financial help for the Amazon. Macron said Trump agreed on the initiative but could not attend because of bilateral meeting engagements.

A record number of fires are ravaging the rainforest, many of them in Brazil, drawing international concern because of the Amazon's importance to the global environment.

Macron shunted the blazes fires to the top of the summit agenda after declaring them a global emergency. Last week he accused Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's government of not doing enough to protect the area and of lying about its environmental commitments.

DMP's DC

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property was leased to her two sons till 2017. In 2018, they appealed to the DC office for renewal of the lease.

When the appeal was pending, a group of criminals led by one Javed Uddin Sheikh grabbed the land, looted valuables and evicted the family, according to a case filed by the victim's family on September 29 last year.

A day after the incident when the victim's family went to Bangshal Police Station to file a case, the officer-in-charge informed Ibrahim of the incident and recorded a theft case, the probe report said.

Later, the DMP initiated the enquiry after receiving a written complaint from the victim's family.

According to the probe report, some 30 to 35 armed criminals stormed the house of a martyred intellectual at 221, Nawabpur Road, tied all the residents and looted valuables worth Tk 5 crore.

Despite knowing that the land grabbers evicted the legal owner of the house, demolished a three-storey building and constructed a basement for a new building, he did not take any legal action against the grabbers, showing utmost negligence to discharge his duty, the probe report added.

Police sources said Ibrahim helped the grabbers in exchange of a huge amount of bribe.

The investigation report was forwarded to the Police Headquarters and from there it was forwarded to the home ministry for necessary action.

During the suspension, Ibrahim will be attached to the Police Headquarters and will receive subsistence allowance as per the existing rules.

According to the gazette Ibrahim has been suspended under rules 12 (1) of Government Servants (discipline and appeal) Rules, 2018.

Govt warns

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outrageous, they also push Hong Kong to the verge of a very dangerous situation," the government said in a statement.

The protests began in mid-June over a now-suspended extradition bill that would have allowed Hong Kong people to be sent to mainland China for trial.

But the demonstrations have evolved over 12 straight weeks into a broad demand for greater democracy in the financial hub that was promised a high degree of autonomy under a "one country, two systems" formula when it was handed to China by colonial ruler Britain in 1997.

More demonstrations are planned in the days and weeks ahead, including a rally at Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways headquarters on Wednesday to protest against perceived "white terror", a term used to describe anonymous acts that create a climate of fear.

Cathay has emerged as the biggest corporate casualty of the protests after China demanded it suspend staff involved in, or who supported, the anti-government demonstrations that have plunged the city into its biggest crisis since 1997.

Asiatic black bear cubs rescued in remote Laos

AFP, Bangkok

Five Asiatic black bear cubs were rescued from a remote stretch of northern Laos and are being nursed back to health at a sanctuary, NGO Free the Bears said yesterday, calling the one-day rescue the largest in its 24-year history.

Across Asia thousands of the animals, classified as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of endangered species, are kept in cages as pets and used to extract bile from their gall bladders for traditional medicine.

Working with Laos police, the team swept in on three different locations in Luang Namtha province near the Chinese border last week.

Tk 1.35cr

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In case of any civil aviation accidents, international carriers go by the Warsaw Convention and MC99.

The MC99 establishes airline liability in case of death or injury to passengers, delay, damage or loss of baggage and cargo. It unifies all of the different international treaty regimes covering airline liability that had developed haphazardly since 1929. The MC99 was formulated to be a single, universal treaty to govern airline liability around the world.

The MC99 gives consumers better protection and compensation and facilitates faster air cargo shipments.

Food chain exposed to contamination

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He observed that people are not much aware of soil pollution, so the situation is getting alarming. "This pollution is also threatening the food safety issue."

ABM Farooque, former pharmacy faculty dean at DU, said heavy metals have long-term adverse impacts on health.

"Primarily, liver and kidney get affected, subsequently leading to cancer," he added.

No government has yet set any standard for permissible level of heavy metal concentration in soil.

Dr SM Munjurul Hannan Khan, additional secretary of the environment, forest and climate change ministry, said the environment department never checks the quality of soil -- whether it was polluted or to which extent it was polluted.

"We have our capacity to evaluate pollution of water and air. We are taking a project to get details about the country's soil. Hopefully we will start it soon," he told this correspondent last week.

According to a four-year study, conducted by Md Tanvir Ahmed Chowdhury, assistant professor of Department of Soil, Water and Environment at Dhaka University, the presence of heavy metals in soil of many areas is well above the global average.

A total of 1,444 soil samples were collected from 57 upazilas in 17 districts from 2012 to 2014 and analysed till 2016 to determine the concentrations of a range of heavy metals in soil. The research paper was partially published in Science of the Total Environment journal in 2017.

The researcher took samples from irrigated paddy fields and adjacent uncultivated land in both industrial and non-industrial zones in Bagerhat, Barguna, Bogura, Chandpur, Cumilla, Gopalganj, Jashore, Lakshimpur, Magura, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Satkhira and the industrial districts of Gazipur, Manikganj, Narayanganj, Tangail and Munshiganj.

"We have found high concentrations of chromium, cadmium and lead in agricultural land. In the land irrigated by groundwater, we have found high concentrations of arsenic," said Tanvir.

He observed that soil in Bangladesh is highly variable and concentration of mineral elements such as zinc, copper and nickel vary drastically from one place to another.

According to his findings, the range of chromium concentration in the paddy soil samples was 18 to 727 mg/kg, averaging 72 mg/kg. For soil samples of uncultivated land, the range was 21 to 313 mg/kg, averaging 66 mg/kg.

Both the averages were higher than 60 mg/kg, the global average of chromium concentration in soil as per data of different countries found from multiple scientific journals, the researcher said.

Referring to the chromium concentration, Tanvir said, "This is way beyond the normal range. Chromium as much as 727 mg/kg is found only in highly contaminated soil."

Besides chromium, cadmium concentration was found up to 5.58 mg/kg in paddy fields and up to 2.66 mg/kg in non-agricultural and non-irrigated land. The global average is 0.41 mg/kg.

Lead and arsenic concentrations were also high in some of the soil

samples. The study found arsenic concentration up to 88mg/kg in the samples from paddy fields and 24.27 mg/kg in the samples from uncultivated land. The global average ranges from 5 to 10mg/kg.

According to experts, groundwater extraction is one of the key sources of arsenic pollution in soil.

The study also found lead up to 91 mg/kg in paddy field and up to 36 mg/kg in non-agricultural and non-irrigated land.

About 13.5 percent paddy soil samples and seven percent uncultivated soil samples had lead concentration more than the world average of 27mg/kg.

Mohidus Samad Khan, associate professor at Buet's chemical engineering department, said the current situation could become acute due to industrial growth and pollution.

Noting that polluted floodwater from upstream could be a possible source of contamination, he said, "These heavy metals may contaminate food cycle, water bodies and aquatic life cycle."

It is difficult to neutralise contaminated soil, he added. "It is a long-term process and may require a series of treatments."

Bidhan Kumar Bhandar, director of Soil Resource Development Institute, said they usually do not monitor the heavy metals concentration in soil, rather measure nutrients of soil using 13 parameters.

"We conducted a survey a few years ago and we found that soil was not that much contaminated with heavy metals," he added.

NICVD pulls off a heart

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In case of the NICVD, each patient in a paying bed has to spend only around Tk 5,000 for the operation. For a patient occupying a non-paying bed, the procedure is done free of cost.

According to doctors, the cost of a traditional open heart surgery ranges between Tk 2.3 lakh and Tk 8 lakh at a private hospital.

Dr Asraf, assistant professor at the NICVD, said a minimally invasive surgery is an advanced form of an open heart surgery.

"It is being practised in many countries across the world for the last three-four years. We have successfully carried out such an operation on Nupur. We are hoping she would be released from the hospital within next three days," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Nupur from Pabna's Sujanogor upazila was suffering from Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) -- a hole in the wall between the two upper chambers of heart.

About the initiative, Asraf

said they had planned to introduce the surgery at the NICVD about one and a half years ago.

"There were some issues, including funding and approval from the higher authorities, that needed to be addressed. The prime minister's directives in this regard made things easier for us. She gave us the go-ahead and ensured all kinds of support."

About the risks involved and success rate of a minimally invasive surgery, the physician said, "It is complicated surgery. It is conducted through several tiny cuts in the patient's skin. So surgeons need to be very careful about avoiding injuries. However, this surgery makes patient feel more comfortable during their recovery period."

He said the NICVD would conduct such surgeries regularly and would also train up surgeons.

Chief Cardiac Surgeon of NHFB Prof Dr Farooque Ahmed and Associate Professor Dr Prasanta Kumar Chanda were present during the surgery at the NICVD.



Nupur

Disney unveils new theme

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and enter a launch pod for a simulated trip into space to board the Starcruiser.

Once there, visitors interact with an alien crew, learn about the ship's navigation and defense systems and train with a lightsaber. They'll also enjoy a "port day" at Batuu, the fictional planet of Disney's "Galaxy's Edge" land opening at Disney's Hollywood Studios in Orlando this week.

Disney has emphasised the interactivity of the new "Star Wars" land, and the hotel extends that idea. The choices made on the Halcyon "affect how your 'Star Wars' story unfolds," Johnson said.

Many details about the hotel have yet to be announced: Disney did not reveal when it would open, how many rooms it will have or its galactic prices. The company did note that every room will have a stellar view -- a digital screen that looks out into the cosmos.

Beyond "Star Wars," Disney outlined major developments to Epcot, which opened in 1982 as a futuristic World's Fair. To revitalise the aging park, Disney revealed a slew of plans: a Moana attraction called "Journey of Water," a Mary Poppins attraction in the United Kingdom pavilion, and an overhaul

of the 37-year-old "Spaceship Earth" ride, housed inside the park's iconic geodesic centerpiece.

Epcot will also debut two new night time fireworks shows -- "Epcot Forever" and "HarmonioUS," the latter described as "the largest night time spectacular ever created for a Disney park." The park is also being reorganised into four neighbourhoods: World Discover, World Nature, World Celebration and the existing World Showcase.

Epcot, which some fans think has lost its direction in recent years, is undergoing "the biggest transformation of any park we've ever accomplished," according to Bob Chapek, Disney's chairman of parks, experiences and products. The new Epcot will be "more Disney, more family, more timely and more relevant," he said.

Marvel is going to play a bigger part in Disney theme parks, connected by a single story arc across several international properties.

Previously-announced Marvel lands in Disney's California Adventure park and Disneyland Paris will be called "Avengers Campus" and "become part of an interconnected, global story" that also involves a third Marvel location at Hong Kong Disneyland.

One more Rohingya

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were gathering beside Jadimura Hill, police led a drive around 1:30am, said Officer-in-Charge of Teknaf Police Station Pradip Kumar Das.

Sensing their presence, the criminals opened fire on them, forcing the policemen to respond, he said, adding that police fired 10 bullets in self-defence.

The OC said two of his colleagues -- Sub-inspector Sabbir Ahmed and Constable Bahar Uddin-- were injured during the drive.

After the end of the gunfight, police rescued the injured Rohingya youth from the spot and admitted him to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex. He was later shifted to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The OC said they recovered a gun and five bullets from the spot.

ROHINGYA YOUTH KILLED BY FELLOW

Meanwhile, a Rohingya youth was stabbed dead by another member of

the community at Kutupalong camp in Ukhia on Sunday night.

The deceased is Rahim Ullah, son of Abdus Salam of Block D of the camp.

Refugees of the camp said Rahim had an altercation with Shahidullah. Later, Shahidullah and his associates stabbed Rahim, leaving him severely injured.

Other Rohingyas rescued Rahim and took him to a makeshift hospital at Kutupalong camp and then to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Abul Mansur, officer-in-charge of Ukhia Police Station, said police handed the body over to his relatives after autopsy.

Separately, police yesterday recovered the body of an anonymous person from Jaliapalang union of Ukhia, said Siddhartha Saha, in-charge of Inani police outpost.

The body was to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Siraj confesses

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of Justice Mamunur Rashid of Feni's Women and Children Oppression Prevention Tribunal, said Shah Alam, inspector of Police Bureau of Investigation.

Siraj gave the order to Nuruddin and Shahadat Hossain Shamim when they went to visit him in jail, added Alam, who is investigating the case.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday submitted a probe report to the High Court, saying that they had not found any "negligence" or "inaction" on the part of the madrasa's governing body Chairman PKM Enamul Karim in connection with the sexual harassment and killing of Nusrat Jahan Rafi.

The report was submitted by Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Bashar before the HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader yesterday.

The report also claimed that it had not found any authenticity of the media reports that blamed Enamul, also the additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Feni.

Additional Divisional Commissioner Habibur Rahman of Chattogram conducted the enquiry as per an earlier order of the HC.

After receiving the report, the bench kept it in record, saying it would hold a hearing on the issue one week after the court reopens on October

13, following its upcoming annual vacation starting from August 30.

Following a writ petition, the HC bench on July 15 this year directed the government to conduct an enquiry against Enamul.

On the same day, the bench also observed that had Enamul taken appropriate action against principal Siraj Ud Daula for sexually harassing Nusrat, she might not have suffered such a consequence.

The court also issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why Enamul's inaction should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench came up with the order and rule after hearing a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond.

In the petition, Eunus said that the Sonagazi madrasa governing body chairman reportedly did not take any action against Siraj Ud Daula even after Nusrat and her mother went to Enamul's office and requested him to do so. But Enamul not only refused, even he asked them to keep the incident a secret.

On April 6, a group of people poured kerosene on Nusrat and set her afire at the Feni madrasa for refusing to withdraw a sexual harassment case against the principal.

The 18-year-old girl lost her battle for life on April 10 -- an incident that sparked outrage all over the country.