

RU student rescued from university teacher's house

Says she was sexually abused by teacher's brother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A female student of Rajshahi University yesterday said she was sexually abused when she went to a university teacher's house for tutoring the latter's daughter at the city's Dharampura area early yesterday.

The first year student at English department accused the teacher's unemployed brother Shyamol Banik, 45, in a case filed with Motihar police station.

Police arrested Shyamol in connection with the case -- in which she alleged that he swooped on her and sexually abused her while she was asleep, said Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The girl went to the house of RU's Sanskrit department teacher Dr Bithika Banik at 7:30pm, to tutor Bithika's seventh-grade daughter, according to the case statement.

When the tuition session ended at 10:30pm, Dr Bithika asked her to stay at her home for the night, seeing bad weather and torrential rain outside. The student was provided a bed in a room at her house.

The student was a resident of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Hall at RU, of which Dr Bithika is the provost.

Bithika was in the house until 1:30am, when she had to leave the house answering a call from the dormitory, the provost said

while talking to journalists.

"Although I went to the dormitory that night, I decided not to take her with me. I thought she would be safe at my home," Bithika said.

She said the student wanted to go to the dormitory with her, but she decided not to take her as she went out in a rented vehicle. "I wanted to ensure her safety."

In the case statement, the student alleged that she went to bed after Bithika went out, with only her daughter and her brother in the house.

At 2:30am, she woke to find Shyamol on her.

"I was afraid and felt sick. I started shouting as loud as I could," she wrote in the complaint filed with the police station.

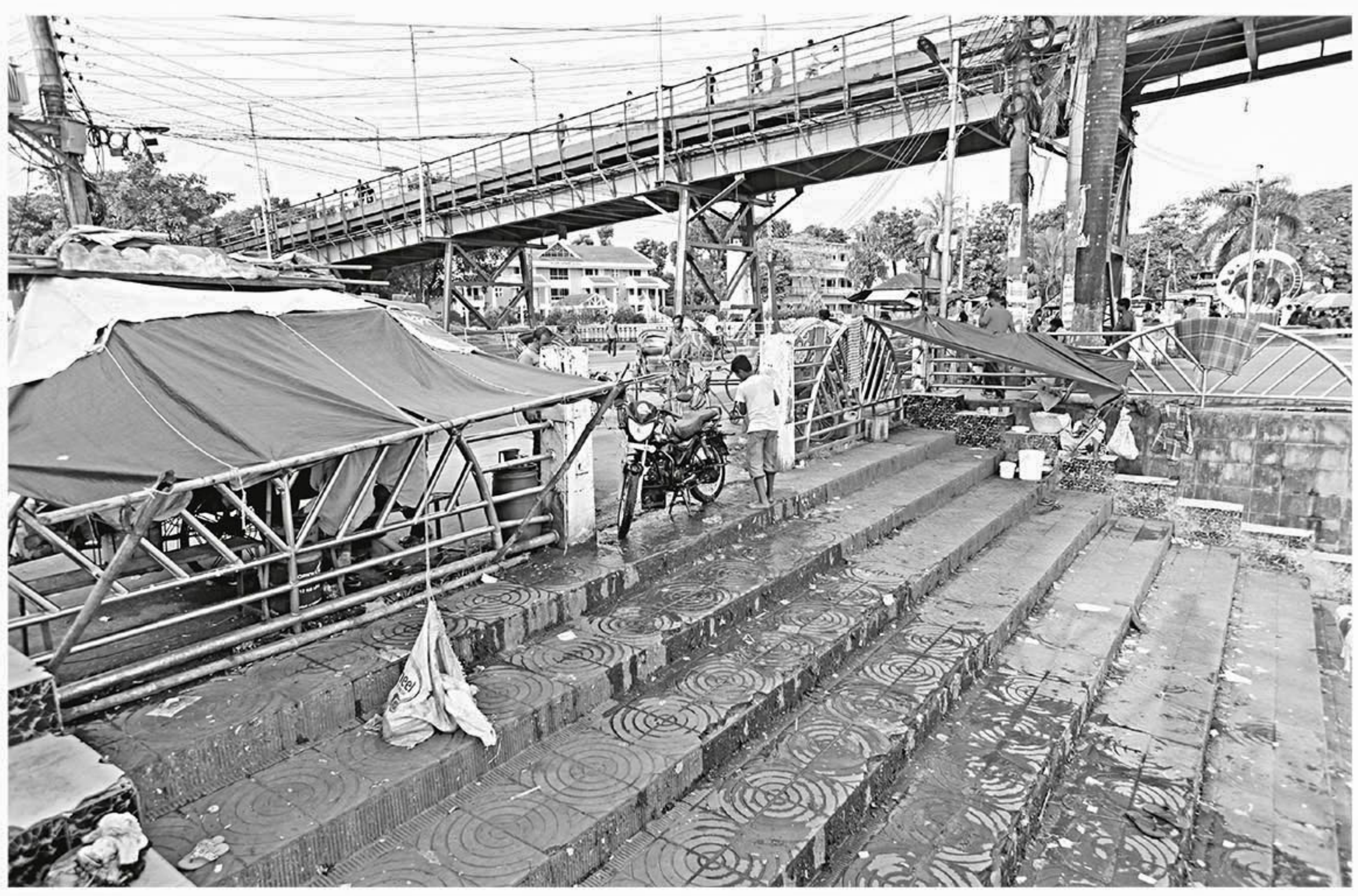
Shyamol ran away from the room, and finding no way to get out of the house, she called her father in Gopalganj.

Around 3am, her father called the national helpline 999, OC Hafizur Rahman said.

Upon receiving the call, police contacted RU Proctor Prof Lutfar Rahman -- who lives in the area -- and conducted a raid at Dr Bithika's house.

Police rescued the girl and sent her to the One-Stop Crisis Centre at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. She was released

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Chandighat was constructed so that people could sit on the stairs and relish the beauty of Surma river in Sylhet. Unfortunately, the place is not only grabbed by vendors, it also remains polluted. Locals mostly avoid the area in the evening as according to them it becomes a safe haven for addicts and all sorts of antisocial activities. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEKH NASIR

DENGUE OUTBREAK

Daily admission below 400 for first time since July

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of dengue patients admitted to different hospitals across the country went under the 400-mark yesterday for the first time since July 24.

However, most of the patients are in hospitals outside Dhaka. A total of 398 patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country in 24 hours until 8am yesterday, of whom 267 are outside Dhaka, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A total of 86,155 dengue patients were admitted to hospitals across the country this year, of which 46,548 are in Dhaka and rest outside Dhaka, according to DGHS.

Meanwhile a woman died of dengue in Khulna early yesterday taking the unofficial death toll to 156, although the official figure is 75.

The deceased was identified as Lovely Akhter, 30, wife of Jamir Ali of Baliadanga village in Keshabpur upazila of Jashore district. She died at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH), reports UNB.

Shoilendranath Biswas, a resident

physician of KMCH, said Lovely was admitted to the hospital with dengue on Tuesday evening and she died around 2:30am.

According to the district civil surgeon's office, 16 people have so far died of dengue in the district.

Meanwhile, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), on their combined operation against Aedes mosquito yesterday, found Aedes larvae in 12 buildings after visiting 14,112 houses and other structures.

The mobile courts also found suitable places for Aedes breeding in 7,641 buildings. The teams destroyed both larva and breeding places during their drive, said an official of DNCC.

Since starting the combined operation against Aedes mosquito on September 15, mobile courts of DNCC found Aedes mosquito larvae at 278 of the 1,15,988 houses and structures they visited.

The team also found Aedes breeding grounds at 67,888 houses and structures during their 12 drives.

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JS body proposes merging cultural, tourism ministries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended that the government unifies cultural and tourism ministries into one, to flourish of country's tourism sector.

The parliamentary standing committee on cultural affairs yesterday came up with the recommendation at its meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Members of the parliamentary watchdog also decided to meet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina soon to convince her, meeting sources told The Daily Star.

"Across the world, culture and tourism ministries work hand in hand. But in our country, tourism was included with civil aviation ministry, which the standing committee thinks is illogical," Kazi Keramat Ali, an AL lawmaker and a member of the committee who was present at yesterday's meeting, told this correspondent.

He also said, "The tourism sector could not flourish so far in the country up to the desired level, and we think the respective ministry has failed to do so."

The committee therefore recommended that the government unite cultural and tourism ministries, like most countries in the world, for betterment of the country's tourism sector, said another member of the parliamentary body.

The meeting was presided over by ALMP and chairperson of the standing committee Simeen Hussain Rimi.

BANGABANDHU'S PORTRAIT IN ALL COURTROOMS

Law ministry issues gazette notification

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law ministry has issued a gazette notification asking the authorities concerned to preserve and display the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in all courtrooms across the country.

The ministry issued the notification on Monday, following a High Court directive in this regard.

Supreme Court (SC) Registrar General Dr Md Zakir Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday that the SC administration has already collected around 100 portraits of Bangabandhu following the HC directive.

The portraits will be displayed and preserved at the courtrooms of the Appellate Division and HC division of the SC before reopening of the court, which is on vacation till October 12, the registrar general said.

Dr Zakir also said the lower court authorities have already started displaying Bangabandhu's portraits in the courtrooms.

Following a writ petition filed by SC

lawyer Subir Nandi Das, the HC on August 29 directed the authorities to take necessary steps to preserve and display the portrait of Bangabandhu in all courtrooms within the next two months.

The court also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain within four weeks why their inaction in this regard should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of law, housing and public works, finance, the Supreme Court registrar general and the HC registrar have been made respondents to the rule.

Article 4(A) of the constitution says, "The portrait of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, shall be preserved and displayed at the offices of the president, the prime minister, the speaker, and the chief justice and in head and branch offices of all government and semi-government offices, autonomous bodies, statutory public authorities, government and non-government educational institutions, embassies and missions of Bangladesh abroad."



Vehicles parked in rows on this road beside Nathullahbad bus terminal in Barishal city continue to choke an already busy thoroughfare. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Fourth-grader assaulted by teacher

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police arrested a primary school teacher yesterday for assaulting a fourth-grader.

Ruhul Kuddus, 40, a teacher of Khaona Government Primary School under Koyra upazila, was arrested on charge of molestation from his home in Naksha village of Amadi union under the upazila.

The victim's father told journalists that his daughter fell ill after coming home from school on Monday. She was taken to the Upazila Health Complex on Tuesday morning. When the doctors examined her, she told them that the teacher had assaulted her. The doctors then informed her parents.

The victim's father filed a case about the matter to Koyra Police Station, after which police arrested Kuddus.

Habibullah Bahar, headmaster of

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GOPALGANJ UNIVERSITY

UGC team talks to students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team from the University Grants Commission (UGC) yesterday reached Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj.

The five-member team, led by UGC member Prof Dr Dil Afroza Begum, reached the campus around 5pm and talked to students who have been demonstrating since September 18, demanding resignation of the vice-chancellor for his alleged involvement in corruption and irregularities.

During its visit, the team will record statements of Fatema Tuz Zinia, the university correspondent of The Daily Sun, who was suspended on September 10 over a Facebook post. The suspension was later withdrawn amid widespread protests.

The team will also talk to VC Prof Khondoker Md Nasiruddin and officials of the university, before they submit a report to UGC -- the regulatory body for higher education, said officials of the commission.

Yesterday, students brought out a procession wielding brooms on the campus, protesting remarks made by the VC during a private television channel interview.

The VC in the interview claimed that students in the name of demonstrations are staying on campus overnight and engaging in illicit activities with outsiders.

The protesters held a press briefing where they came down hard on the VC, saying he wanted to divert their movement to another direction through his remarks.

They said they will continue their protest until their demand is met.

In the wake of their ongoing movement, the university authorities on September 21 declared a 10-day vacation ahead of Durga Puja.

Tk 23 lakh recovered from Naogaon savings office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A team of Anti-Corruption Commission in Rajshahi recovered Tk 22.87 lakh from a shelf of a senior clerk at the district national savings office in Naogaon yesterday.

The money may have been part of Tk 2.37 crore that went "missing" from the office last year, said ACC officials.

The clerk, Hasan Ali, has been arrested and process is underway to produce him before a court, said ACC deputy director Jahangir Alam.

Between March and December in 2018, the district office sold savings bonds worth Tk 2.37 crore to some 27 individuals,

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CASE AGAINST FORMER SONAGAZI OC

ACC prosecutor not allowed to quiz witness

JNU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday refused to allow advocate Mosharrar Hossain Kajol to cross-examine a prosecution witness in connection with a case filed against Moazzem Hossain, former officer-in-charge of Feni's Sonagazi Police Station.

Advocate Kajol, who is a public prosecutor of Anti-Corruption Commission, wanted to cross-examine witness Atiar Howlader Sajal in the case filed against Moazzem for recording and circulating footage of Feni madrasa student Nusrat Jahan Rafi.

But Dhaka Cyber Tribunal Judge Ash Sams Joglu Hossain did not allow Kajol to do so as he [Kajol] has no power to defend the accused Moazzem Hossain in the case.

During yesterday's hearing, Moazzem's lawyer Faruk Ahmed cross-examined Sajal.

At one stage, Faruk told the court that Kajol, his senior, would complete rest of the cross-examination.

The judge then asked advocate

Kajol whether he had his name in the "Vakalatnama" [getting power from the client to defend him or her in court]. Kajol said he appeared before the court as a senior lawyer and he would take part in cross-examination if the court gives him permission.

The judge said there was no scope for him to do so if he did not sign the document, and read out some provisions concerned. The court also rejected a petition filed by Faruk, seeking time for cross examination.

Public Prosecutor Mohammad Nazrul Islam Shamim told The Daily Star that the court did not allow advocate Kajol to cross-examine as a defence lawyer, because his name was not in the Vakalatnama.

Six out of 16 people have given statements in connection with the case so far.

Nusrat, a student of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa, was set ablaze on April 6 allegedly for refusing to withdraw a case filed against the madrasa principal for sexually harassing her. After fighting for

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ACC seeks list of luxury vehicles

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sent a letter to Bangladesh Road and Transport Authority (BRTA), seeking a list of private cars and SUVs with engine capacity of 2,500cc and above.

The letter, signed by ACC Director General (special investigation unit) ANM Al Firoz, was sent to the BRTA chairman, asking for a list of such vehicles registered with BRTA in last five years.

The ACC letter sought engine/chassis numbers, model, dates of import, registration number and dates, prices, VAT and other tax documents, names and addresses of owners of those vehicles.

Towards a 'Healthy Bangladesh'

CITY DESK

To promote social and policy accountability on women and adolescent health, Healthy Bangladesh SRH Network (HBSN) was launched on Tuesday.

Organisations and networks working on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) joined hands to launch the network through an MoU signing event in Dhaka, said a press release.

The network brings together a set of organisational capacities, including service delivery, awareness raising, research and documentation, capacity building and influencing policies. It will focus on building a collective voice in the areas of SRH rights specifically, and in the areas of

adolescent and women's health broadly.

The initial set of activities will be supported by Options Consultancy Services under DFID's WISH2ACTION programme.

The founding members include Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC); Options Consulting Services; Brac; Naripokkho; Family Planning Association of Bangladesh; Population Services and Training Centre; IPAS-Bangladesh; SERAC-Bangladesh; Society for Environment and Human development; RH-STEP; Mirror Institute of Arts and Justice; Kotah; Handicap International and Chashful.

PPRC Executive Chairman Hossain Zillur Rahman will be convener of the network, and PPRC will act as its secretariat.



PHOTO: COLLECTED