

3 arrested in rape cases in 2 districts

STAR REPORT

Three people were arrested in two rape cases in Magura and Jashore on Monday night.

In Magura, Rab held two people on charges of gang-raping a 42-year-old woman, a mother of three, on Monday night.

However, the Rab officials did not disclose the arrestees' identities for the sake of investigation.

The victim's family members said they are inhabitants of a village in Jhenidah's Shailakupa. The village is situated in a bordering area of Jhenidah and Magura.

The victim along with her husband used to stay in a makeshift tent near a paddy field at night in Jagla village of Magura Sadar upazila to carry the harvested paddy to its owner's house on their horse cart.

During the paddy cultivation season every year, they normally do this work and get paddy or money for it.

Around 1:00am on Sunday, five unidentified criminals attacked them with sharp weapons.

The criminals tied the victim's husband to a tree and gang-raped the woman at knifepoint. They also looted Tk 5,000 before leaving the scene.

Hearing their screams, locals later rushed there and rescued the couple.

The victim later filed a case against five unknown criminals with Magura Sadar Police Station, said Joydul Abedin, officer-in-charge of the station.

On Monday night, Rab arrested two people from Baittapara Bazar in Magura Sadar upazila over their alleged involvement in the incident. They were being interrogated, said Lt Col Sarwar Hossain, company commander of Rab-6 in Jashore.

In another incident, police picked up a man from Jashore's Keshabpur on Monday night over the rape of a housewife.

The arrestee is Abu Sayed, 33, of Bhainia village of the same upazila.

Police said both the victim and the accused are neighbours. On Sunday night, Sayed asked the 35-year-old victim to go with him to bring medicine from a village doctor.

He then took the woman to nearby Dangir Beel and raped her with the help of some of his associates.

The victim lodged a case with Keshabpur Police Station accusing Sayed and three others.

The other accused -- Sirajul Islam, 33, Jasim Uddin, 32, and Siddiqur Rahman, 30, -- are residents of other villages in the same upazila.

Police were conducting drives to arrest the other accused, said Jasim Uddin, OC of Keshabpur Police Station.

[Our correspondents in Jhenidah and Benapole contributed to this report.]

Man held

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Akhter Nupur, 28 -- was rushed to a local clinic and then to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Anwarul Islam, officer-in-charge of Baraigram Police Station, said Taleb forcibly married Nupur seven years ago when she was a college student.

Nupur divorced Taleb three days ago and moved to her father's house.

On information, Taleb went to Nupur's present address at the upazila's Kamardaha village, threw acid on her face and fled the scene, he added.

Further legal procedures will be followed, the OC said.

2 Bangladeshis

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During the pandemic, Rina and her team of helpers have served around 400 meals a week -- including rice, vegetables, eggs and meat -- to sex workers in Dhaka who found themselves without clients and struggling to buy food.

"People see our profession as demeaning, but we do it to buy food. I am trying to make sure women in this profession are not left hungry, and their children will not have to do this work," Rina Akter told BBC.

Rina runs a daily drop-in shelter for sex workers in Gopibagh. Floating sex workers who work at night can come to this shelter in the morning to bathe, eat, rest and get treatment for sexually transmitted diseases.

Rima Sultana Rimu is an 18-year-old peace activist, and a member of Young Women Leaders for Peace in Cox's Bazar.

This programme -- part of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders funded by United Nations Women -- aims to empower young women from conflict-affected countries to be leaders and agents of peace.

Rima responded to the Rohingya refugee crisis in her community by advocating for gender-responsive humanitarian action.

She organises gender-sensitive, age-appropriate literacy and numeracy classes for Rohingya refugees, and for women and girls in the community who lack access to education.

"I am determined to bring gender equality to Bangladesh. I believe in the power of women and girls to fight for our rights. We will succeed," she said while talking to BBC.



A demonstrator gestures during a protest against racism, after a black man was beaten to death by security guards at a Carrefour supermarket in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on Monday night.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Vaccine hopes lift spirits across globe

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Johnson said that although the "scientific cavalry" was arriving, he warned "Christmas cannot be normal and there's a long road to spring".

The world is still engulfed in the unprecedented health crisis which has shattered economies, infected almost 58.9 million people and left nearly 1.4 million dead.

Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine is 95 percent effective according to a second interim analysis of clinical trial data, its developers said yesterday.

The two-dose vaccine will be available on international markets for less than \$10 (8.40 euros) per dose, they said, and will be free for Russian citizens.

It can be stored at between two and eight degrees Celsius (between 35.6 and 46.4 degrees Fahrenheit), they said, instead of the temperatures below freezing required for some other vaccines.

AstraZeneca and Oxford University on Monday said their drug had proved on average 70 percent effective at stopping the virus after trying it on 23,000 people, days after tests of two other drugs suggested they were more than 90 percent effective.

The French head of AstraZeneca

says in an interview with AFP that three billion doses of the vaccine will be made available in 2021 at cost -- around 2.50 euros (\$3) per dose.

The European Union has struck a deal for up to 160 million doses of US firm Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine candidate, the head of the European Commission said yesterday, taking the EU's potential stock of Covid-19 shots to nearly 2 billion.

Last week, Moderna said its experimental vaccine was 94.5 percent effective in preventing Covid-19, based on interim data from a late-stage clinical trial.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned yesterday that any Covid-19 vaccine could lead to side-effects in some people, as even popular medicines do, and that the government would only go by science in finalising one for the country.

The comments came ahead of the possible launch of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine by early next year in India.

While World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus hailed the latest batch of results as light at the end of the "long dark tunnel", he cautioned that the world had to ensure drugs were

distributed fairly.

"Every government rightly wants to do everything it can to protect its people," Tedros said. "But there is now a real risk that the poorest and most vulnerable will be trampled in the stampede for vaccines."

QANTAS VACCINE RULE

Australia's Qantas announced that international travellers will need to be vaccinated against Covid-19 to fly, becoming the first airline to suggest rules could become common across the industry.

Chief executive Alan Joyce said the carrier would implement the measure once a vaccine was made available to the public.

"Certainly, for international visitors coming out (to Australia) and people leaving the country, we think that is a necessity," he told Channel Nine.

Joyce predicted the rule would likely become standard practice around the world as governments and airlines consider the introduction of electronic vaccination passports.

However, other major regional airlines, such as Korean Air and Japan Airlines, said it was too early to comment on what travel requirements might be when a vaccine becomes widely available.

PM wants ACC to probe allegations

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Their identities would be revealed once the ACC completes its investigation, he added.

Quader, also general secretary of the ruling Awami League, made the comments the day after the anti-graft body asked the government to provide a list of its officials who own homes in "Begum Para" of Toronto, Canada.

Besides, the High Court on Sunday asked the ACC chairman, secretaries concerned of the ministries of home and foreign affairs, the governor of Bangladesh Bank and the financial intelligence unit, chairman of the Board of Revenue, and the deputy commissioner of Dhaka to submit the details, including names and addresses, of the people who launder

money abroad, to the court by December 17.

Many Bangladeshis have bought luxurious homes in "Begum Para", spending millions laundered out of Bangladesh. Mainly, the wives and children of Bangladeshi millionaires live in these homes in an area, hence the name Begum Para.

According to a report published in this newspaper on November 20, Begum Para has come up in numerous political discussions in Bangladesh.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen recently raised eyebrows saying that government officials are forging ahead of politicians in the race to purchase luxurious homes in Begum Para. The minister spoke to The Daily Star on this issue over the phone on November 19.

Veteran journo Muniruzzaman

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A freedom fighter, Muniruzzaman was buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectual Graveyard in the evening, following his namaz-e-janaza at the National Press Club premises, where he was given state honours.

He is survived by his wife, a son, daughter-in-law and a host of well-wishers.

Soon after news spread of the death of the founding member of Sampadak Parishad (Editors' Council), a pall of gloom descended on people of the media community and other spheres.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, cabinet members, politicians and others from different sectors expressed deep shock and sorrow at Muniruzzaman's death.

In a condolence message, President Hamid said Khandaker Muniruzzaman was a pioneer of neutral, objective and fearless journalism. "His death is an irreparable loss to the mass media," he added.

Prime Minister Hasina prayed for

the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

Sampadak Parishad President Mahfuz Anam and Secretary General Naem Nizam in a condolence message said Muniruzzaman's long years in journalism, experienced leadership and wise counsel helped the organisation stand firm on issues of press freedom and independent journalism.

His lifelong involvement with progressive ideals, upholding of the values of our Liberation War and his unrelenting commitment to secular politics and cultural values made him a leading figure in promoting ethical journalism in the profession and democratic values in the society.

His passing away is an irreparable loss to the journalistic fraternity -- his absence will deprive its younger generation from working with an editor who gave a lot and had so much more to give to the profession of journalism.

"Ever smiling, always warm,

unrelentingly optimistic, he led a life of simplicity and ethics. He was a person of exceptional human qualities admired by all who worked with him and loved by all who knew him," said the message.

A host of ministers and state ministers, including Road Transport and Bridges Minister and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Planning Minister MA Mannan, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque, Education Minister Dipu Moni, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim expressed deep shock at the demise of Muniruzzaman.

Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Oikya NAP, Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka, and others also expressed shock.

Earlier, when Muniruzzaman's body was taken to the press club, his long-

Journo Kajol gets HC bail

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issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government to explain why Kajol should not be granted bail in the case.

In the petition, Kajol said he is ill and the section of the law under which he has been implicated is not applicable to him as he did not defame anybody.

After hearing the petition, the HC bench yesterday granted permanent bail to Kajol.

The HC bench also asked the investigation officer of the cases lodged against Kajol with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations whether he has taken permission from the Cyber Tribunal to probe the cases after 75 days of filing the cases.

The investigation officer and the Cyber Tribunal have been ordered to submit separate reports to the HC by December 15.

The HC bench passed the order after Kajol's lawyer Jyotirmoy told the court that the investigations of the two cases are illegal as the probes had to be concluded within 75 days of filing of the cases.

The investigation officer has not completed investigations of the cases in 75 days, which is a violation of the relevant provision of the law,

Jyotirmoy argued.

Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi represented the state during the virtual hearing on the bail petition.

On August 24, Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka refused to grant bail to Kajol in the case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Dhiman Chandra Mondol rejected his bail petition in the case on June 24.

Two other cases under the Digital Security Act were filed against Kajol on March 10 and 11 with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations.

Fifty-three days following his disappearance after leaving his office in the capital's Hatirpool, Kajol was found by Border Guard Bangladesh in Benapole on May 3.

He was then arrested, initially on charges of trespassing, but was granted bail after being produced before a Jashore court.

Later, he was shown held under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) after police informed the court that three more cases against Kajol were pending with different police stations in the capital.

The court then sent him to Jashore jail.

Honorary

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A special convocation will be held at a suitable date so that Bangabandhu could personally receive the degree. Bangabandhu was a student of Old Islamia College and later of the University College of Law.

DHAKA, HANOI RECOGNISE EACH OTHER

The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has accorded formal recognition to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh has also accorded formal recognition to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The announcement of the recognitions is simultaneously made by Dhaka and Hanoi. This brings the total number of countries to have accorded recognition to Bangladesh to 95.

TAJUDDIN, CARGIL TALK AID FOR 5-YEAR PLAN

Finance and Planning Minister Tajuddin Ahmed and visiting Vice-president of World Bank Peter Cargil have a meeting in Dhaka today to explore the possibilities of the bank and its member countries' assistance to finance the five-year plan of Bangladesh.

\$50M IDA CREDIT FOR BANGLADESH

The International Development Association (IDA) will provide a credit of 50 million dollars to Bangladesh to support the government's effort to reconstruct key sectors of the economy following the devastation caused by the cyclone of 1970 and the liberation struggle of 1971.

SOURCES: November 26, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Pianist's velvety

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at a time when Thailand's coronavirus-induced tourism hiatus means fewer visitors to feed them, and less funds for their welfare.

"We need to make an effort to make sure that they eat properly. And when they eat properly they will be calmer and will not be aggressive," said Barton, 59, a long-time Thailand resident.

Barton has played at four venues in Lopburi, a province famous for its marauding monkeys, including at an ancient Hindu temple, a hardware store and a derelict cinema.

The macaques are instantly drawn as he plays Greensleeves, Beethoven's Fur Elise and Michael Nyman's Diary of Love, some sharing his stool, others climbing onto his shoulders and touching his head.

Barton maintains focus as a small monkey runs up and down the piano keys as others chaw at his sheet music before one tries to wrest it away.

"A wonderful opportunity to see the wild animals just being themselves," said Barton, from Yorkshire in northern England.

Filling station

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22, Fahad Ahmed Pavel, 28, and Shahidul Islam, 18, in this connection after the victim's father Farid Mia filed a case with Shyampur Police Station.

The incident took place around 4:00am at Salahuddin Petrol Pump at Jurain.

Mofizul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shyampur Police Station, said four operators, including the victim, were on night duty at the petrol pump. One of the four, Emon, was asleep and Riad went to call him for duty.

Unable to awaken Emon, Riad sprayed a little bit of octane on his face. Angered by this, Emon took a container of octane, poured it on Riad and set him on fire, leaving him critically injured, the police official said.

Other employees of the filling station later took the injured to the hospital, the OC said.

Talking to reporters, Farid Mia, a driver by profession, said Riad is a student of Siddheswari College and took the part-time job this month at a monthly salary of Tk 5,000.