

Railway mulls anti-collision

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matter came to the fore again after a fatal train accident in Brahmanbaria last year.

The Dhaka-bound Turna Nishita rammed Chattogram-bound Udayan Express at Mandobagh Railway Station in Kasba early on November 12, 2019, that left 17 passengers dead and many others injured.

Probe committees found negligence of the driver, his assistant and the guard of Turna Nishita Express was responsible for the fatal accident.

In their reports, probe committees recommended the introduction an "Automatic Train Stop" system to avoid any head-on collision between two trains.

Jahangir Hossain, the project director of construction of Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line, has prepared the draft study proposal titled "feasibility study, technology selection, specification finalization and detail design of Automatic Train Protection System for Bangladesh Railway".

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Jahangir said developed countries like the US, Japan and European countries have already introduced ATPS and India also introduced it recently.

Once the system is introduced, a train would be automatically stopped if it overshoots danger or red signal due to failure of designated staffers, and thus head on collisions can be avoided, he said.

Man sentenced

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village in Birganj upazila, was playing at an adjacent place to her house on June 14, 2016.

At that time, Riad took the girl to a nearby house luring her to give a mango. Then, he raped the girl.

As the girl started screaming, Riad strangled the girl to death. Later, Riad with the help of his domestic maid Doli Begum hid the body in his room after wrapping the body with a cement bag.

Three days later, police recovered the body and arrested Riad and Doli.

Later, the father of the girl filed a case with Pirkanj Police Station accusing Riad and Doli Begum.

Police filed charge sheet on December 12 of the same year.

Finally yesterday, the court yesterday delivered its verdict acquitting Doli from the case.

In Rajshahi, police arrested a man on charge of raping a neighbouring autistic girl around six months ago in Paba upazila.

The arrestee is Nuruzzaman, 42, of Baksara village in the upazila. He is a father of three.

Police said the 17-year-old girl used to work as a house help at Nuruzzaman's house. Taking the chance, he raped her around six months ago.

The incident came to light as the girl was found positive in pregnancy test around one week ago.

Later on Monday evening, the victim's father files case against Nuruzzaman.

Then, police rushed to the area to investigate into the incident, said Sheikh Mohammad Golam Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Paba Police Station.

"The girl cannot talk. When we asked about the incident, she showed Nuruzzaman," he said.

However, Nuruzzaman denied the allegation in primary interrogation, added the police officer.

[Our Dinajpur and Rajshahi correspondents contributed to this report]

World's loneliest

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rights groups launched a campaign to save him from the substandard conditions there, boosted by spirited social media support from US actress and musician Cher.

He arrived in Cambodia on Monday to much fanfare -- including a welcome from Cher herself, who not only travelled to see him off from Pakistan, but also arrived ahead of him at Siem Reap airport.

Yesterday saw Kaavan settling into his enclosure at Kulen Prom Tep Wildlife Sanctuary, where he was seen touching trunks with another elephant, captured in images provided by rights group Four Paws.

"First contact with an elephant in eight years -- this is a huge moment for Kaavan," said Martin Bauer, a spokesman with the Austria-based group that worked for months to get him ready for the flight.

"Kaavan will finally have the chance to live a species-appropriate and peaceful life," Bauer said, adding that the entire team was extremely moved to witness the interaction.

"He has a very bright future ahead of him."

Once Kaavan has adjusted to a "controlled setting", he will be released into the wider sanctuary, where there are three female elephants, an environment ministry official said on Monday.

The plan is to breed Kaavan with local elephants to "conserve the genetic fold".

Transporting an adult elephant by plane is no small task, and has only been undertaken a handful of times.

Helpers packed his trunk with 200 kilograms (450 pounds) of food to snack on during the seven-hour flight aboard a jumbo Russian cargo plane. A tube system was installed in his transport crate to handle up to 200 litres (58 gallons) of urine.

Covishield 'safe'

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is being unfairly maligned," ANI quoted SII as saying.

The man had served a legal notice on SII, claiming to have suffered a virtual neurological breakdown and impairment of cognitive functions, seeking Rs 5 crore in compensation and a halt to the trial.

The SII has collaborated with Oxford University and AstraZeneca Plc in testing Covishield, the vaccine candidate they developed.

Along with SII, the man also named Indian Council of Medical Research, one of the sponsors, and Chennai-based Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, which administered the vaccine to the man.

Couple held

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Naikongchhari's Ashartoli area.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team conducted a drive at Faruq's house in the upazila's Ashartoli village around 8:45pm and arrested them with the gold bars and Tk 1.99 lakh, said the OC.

The couple bought the gold bar from Myanmar, he added.

A case was filed with Naikongchhari Police station in this regard.

SC yet to settle CHT

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Following the two writ petitions filed by Bangalee settler M Badiuzzaman and the SC's pro-Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer Tajul Islam on April 13, 2010, the HC declared the CHT Regional Council Act 1998 illegal and unconstitutional.

In the verdict, the HC said the unitary character of the state, which is the basic feature of the constitution, has been hampered due to its formation. The council can now run since the HC verdict has been halted following a stay order from the Appellate Division.

In 2011, the government and the CHT Regional Council filed two separate appeals with the SC challenging the HC judgment, saying that the CHT Regional Council is a statutory authority to facilitate the functions of three hill district councils and was formed in line with the constitution.

The provisions of the CHT Regional Council Act 1998, which have been declared unconstitutional by the HC, are actually protected by the constitution, as it provides for affirmative action in favour of a disadvantaged section of the population, they said in the appeals.

On March 3, 2011, the Appellate Division upheld its chamber judge's stay order and allowed the government and Santu Larma to move separate appeals before it against the HC verdict.

The appeals had come up in the

cause list of the Appellate Division on March 6, 2018, for their hearing.

The same day, a four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain adjourned hearing of the appeals for four weeks after the then Additional Attorney General Murad Reza prayed for time to take preparation for placing arguments on the issue.

Later, the appeals were not heard by the apex court as none of the parties took any move for hearing the matter.

Murad Reza resigned from his post on October 11 this year.

Contacted, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, who was appointed to the post on October 8 this year, told this paper on November 29 that his office would place arguments before the Appellate Division in support of the appeals when these would come up before the apex court serially.

The attorney general said his office would not take any initiative for hearing of the appeals at this moment as the apex court is not hearing and disposing of the old cases due to the pandemic.

SC lawyer Tajul Islam, one of the writ petitioners, said they would not take any initiative for hearing the appeals as the government, which is the main respondent to the case and has filed the appeal against the HC judgment, is not so serious about quick hearing and disposal of the appeals.

The government should take steps for hearing the appeals, he added.

Vaccines coming

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Referring to findings of the World Health Organization (WHO), the

secretary said, "Global studies showed that anybody can stay safe, even up to 95 percent if he/she wears a protected mask. So everyone, including children and adults, has to wear masks. Other health regulations, including social distancing, have to be maintained accordingly."

He also said the government has continued the "no mask no service" campaign countrywide and the hospitals are preparing themselves for tackling the possible second wave.

On Monday, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said in a press briefing at the secretariat that the government would initially distribute three crore doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine among people for free.

A proposal to buy the vaccine from Serum Institute of India has been sent by the health ministry to the cabinet committee on economic affairs for approval. The committee will sit today to discuss the matter.

"Approval from the Economic Affairs Committee is required as per section 76 of the Public Procurement Rules since it will be bought from a

single source," he said.

On November 5, the government signed a trilateral MoU with the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bangladesh's Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd for buying three crore doses of the vaccine.

The finance ministry on November 16 initially allocated some Tk 735.77

crore for the Health Service Division to procure the Covid-19 vaccine.

Apart from the vaccine from SII, Bangladesh will buy 68 million doses from the Gavi under a global arrangement called COVAX. The first shipment of vaccine doses from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is likely to be delivered between February and June next year, said officials of the health directorate.

Meanwhile, 31 people were reported dead from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release issued from the DGHs.

With this, the total number of deaths rose to 6,675 while the death rate stood at 1.43 percent. Another 2,293 cases were recorded in the same 24 hours taking the total number of positive cases to 4,67,225 added the release.

Against a number of 15,501 tests conducted in those 24 hours throughout the country, the positivity rate was 14.79 percent, while the overall positivity rate stood at 16.76 percent.

At least a total of 2,513 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the same 24 hours.

With this, the total number of recoveries rose to 3,83,224 while the recovery rate stood at 82.02 percent.

Among the 31 deceased yesterday, 17 were males.

Two were aged between 21 and 30 years, two between 31 and 40, one between 41 and 50, seven between 51 and 60 and 19 were above 60 years old, added the release.

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crore for the Health Service Division to procure the Covid-19 vaccine.

AJMAL KHAN

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman who left Dhaka on

November 29 on a visit to the coastal

areas, arrives at Jhalkathi today. The

prime minister is on a three-day visit

to the coastal areas to see for himself

the coastal embankment projects,

arrangements for the conservation of

coastal forests and preservation of

wildlife. At Jhalkathi the PM is

received by Awami League leaders and

workers and local people.

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SOURCES: December 3, 1972 issues of

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JS body for home wants to see process

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the committee on whether the respective ministries organised such foreign trips with the ministry's fund.

The government has several times given its opinion against the parliamentary committee's foreign tours with the ministry's funding.

At a meeting held in late August, the parliamentary standing committee on home affairs ministry had recommended the respective ministry to organise a foreign tour.

The committee made the recommendation to get a better idea on how to make the activities of the agencies under the ministry and the UN missions in different countries more dynamic and effective.

In another meeting held in late November, the ministry informed the standing committee about the progress in this regard.

The committee was informed that passport and visa related activities are underway in 15 Bangladesh missions.

Employees of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Immigration and Passports are working in the Passport and Visa Wing in these missions, the ministry informed the committee.

Once the Covid-19 situation is normal, a plan can be made to inspect the passport and visa issuance activities at those missions, the