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## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

# 2020 worse than past two years

1,627 women raped or gang-raped amid pandemic, says ASK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rape and violence against women were more frequent in 2020 than in the previous years, rights body Ain O Salish Kendra said yesterday.

It mentioned that incidents of gang rape, murder after rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence have occurred too often.

At least 1,627 women were raped or gang raped across the country, of whom 53 were killed after rape and 14 died by suicide. The number of rape victims was 1,413 in 2019 and 732 in 2018, ASK mentioned in its annual report.

The report based on media reports, was released at a virtual programme yesterday.

ASK said the actual number of rape victims would be much higher as many women do not report abuse.

**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

The freedom of expression has been curtailed and repression increased during the pandemic, ASK said in its report.

The number of cases filed under the Digital Security Act

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A little girl collecting fallen Sheuli flowers in Hatirjheel lake area in the capital next to some barbed wires. There are some Sheuli trees along with others beside the lake. Many city dwellers go there to enjoy the beauty of the lake.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

### BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

## Judicial inquiry ordered over police firing on students

January 1, 1973

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN



### VIETNAM DAY CLASH

Two students are killed and seven others are injured when the police on duty open fire upon a procession of students organised by DUCSU and Bangladesh Chhatra Union in observance of Vietnam Day today.

The incident takes place in front of the American Centre at noon. The students killed in the police firing are Motiul Islam, 21, a final-year BA student in Philosophy, Dhaka University and Mirza Quadirul Islam, a second-year HSC student of Dhaka College.

A hartal is called from 5:00am to 2:00pm on January 2, 1973 in protest of the incident.

**BANGABANDHU DEEPLY GRIEVED**

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issues the following statement today in response to the incident of police firing in front of the American Centre: "I am deeply grieved by the unfortunate incident today which resulted in the

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Tk 2,000Cr LAUNDERING

## Faridpur AL leader lands in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Faridpur town Awami League's organising secretary Jafar Iqbal Harun Mondal was yesterday shown arrested in a Tk 2,000 crore money laundering case.

Jafar is also a cousin of Sajjad Hossain alias Barkat, the principal accused in the case and also former general secretary of Faridpur town AL.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Masud-Ur-Rahman passed the order after Uttam Kumar Biswas, assistant superintendent of police of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and also the investigation officer of the case, produced him before court with a prayer to show him arrested in the case.

Jafar was arrested on December 24 from

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## Japan to launch first wooden satellite by 2023



MAIL ONLINE

Wooden satellites that burn up completely on atmospheric re-entry — without releasing harmful aluminium-rich particles — are being developed in Japan.

The major component in today's satellites is aluminium — which, when broken down by the force of re-entry, releases long-lived aerosols that damage the ozone layer.

Researchers from Kyoto University have joined forces with Sumitomo Forestry to explore the potential for wood to be used in the extreme environment of space.

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## 28 more die from Covid

1,014 infected in a day

UNB, Dhaka

Covid-19 fatalities in Bangladesh surged to 7,559 with 28 more deaths recorded in 24 hours until yesterday morning.

The mortality rate stood at 1.47 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services said.

Besides, 1,014 new cases pushed the caseload to 513,510.

So far, 457,459 patients — 89.08 percent, with 1,389 new ones, have recovered.

Bangladesh reported its first cases on March 8. The infection number reached the 500,000-mark on December 20.

The first death was reported on March 18 and the death toll exceeded 7,000 on December 12.

Until now, 3,227,598 tests have been carried out, including 13,204 new ones. So far, 15.91 percent of the tests turned out to be

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## Banker turns racketeer

Made crores of taka by leaking question papers of tests for university admission, bank jobs: CID

MUNTAKIM SAAD

He drives a Nissan X-Trail and lives in a duplex with foreign fittings in Keshorhat village of Rajshahi's Mohanpur, where such luxuries raise quite a few eyebrows.

Senior Officer Manik Kumar Pramanik of Agrani Bank Ltd in Rajshahi made crores of taka at the age of 38 not from his service, but from under the table deals.

He was one of the masterminds behind a racket involved in leaking question papers of different university admission and bank

recruitment tests, according to the Criminal Investigation Department.

His misdeeds came to light after the CID recently arrested six people, including Manik, following an investigation into a Dhaka University admission test question leak.

A case was filed regarding the leak with Tejgaon Police Station in 2018.

The investigators said not only Manik, but also two-three high officials, working at important government agencies, were also

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### PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 1

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:30 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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A scaly-breasted munia sitting on a tree branch to get warm in the sunlight at Curzon Hall on Dhaka University campus.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## World begins ushering in locked-down New Year

AFP, Sydney

The world yesterday began ushering in the New Year, with pandemic controls muting celebrations for billions of people eager to bid farewell to a virus-ridden 2020.

After a grinding year that has seen at least 1.8 million people die from Covid-19, fresh waves of infection have sparked renewed lockdowns and forced would-be revellers to extend their 2020 tradition of watching events from the sofa.

The eagerly awaited first seconds of 2021 fell on the Pacific nations of Kiribati and Samoa from 1000 GMT, with the uninhabited Howland and Baker Islands the last to tip over into the New Year, 26 hours later.

New Zealand, which has won plaudits for its handling of the coronavirus, followed an hour later with large crowds gathered in Auckland to watch a fireworks display.

Although still isolated by international border closures, months of zero recorded cases in the community has let life in New Zealand return to relative normality.

In Australia's largest city, Sydney, fireworks lit up the glittering harbour with a dazzling display at 1300 GMT, but few spectators watched in person.

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## TOLL FOR BRIDGES JS watchdog forms three probe bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a rare instance, a parliamentary committee yesterday formed three sub-committees to look into issues, including the allegations of irregularities and corruption in the collection of tolls at bridges across the country.

The parliamentary standing committee on Road Transport and Bridges Ministry made the decision at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Awami League MP Enamul Haque of Rajshahi-4 as the convener of the two-member sub-committee that will

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