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Terror in uniform

Barishal city residents start to speak up against a dreaded sub-inspector after custodial death of an apprentice lawyer

SUSHANTA GHOSH

The death of 30-year-old apprentice lawyer Rejaul Karim Reja in custody on January 3, which sparked outrage in Barishal city, has led to an outpouring of accounts by locals of a sub-inspector's many transgressions.

SI Mohiuddin Ahamed, a Detective Branch official of Barishal Metropolitan Police, and two others have been sued in connection with the custodial death and he has since been closed and attached to police lines.

Multiple residents of Sagardi and Rupatali areas in Barishal city alleged that Mohiuddin has for years been using his position to harass, extort, and torture locals -- including threatening some with "crossfire".

He had at least two official complaints lodged against him as well before this latest accusation and case filed against him.

Rejaul died at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital on January 3, with doctors confirming multiple injuries on his body.

His family claimed he was tortured after being picked up from a tea stall by Mohiuddin and two of his associates on December 29 on false charges of being involved in drug dealing.

Younus Munshi, father of Rejaul, lodged a case under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013 with Barishal Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against the

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People using a "bridge" made of bamboo that was being transported on the Boro Mohapuro river in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila as a bailey bridge behind them collapsed around 6:30am yesterday, unable to take the load of a stone-laden truck. Road communication between Khagrachhari and Rangamati was severed and three people were killed.

PHOTO: ANVIL CHAKMA

3 killed as Bailey bridge collapses with truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Three people were killed as a stone-laden truck fell into the Boro Mohapuro river in Rangamati after a Bailey bridge over Rangamati-Khagrachhari road collapsed early yesterday.

The accident led to a suspension of road communications between Rangamati and Khagrachhari and Rangamati town and Naniarchar upazila.

The dead are: truck driver Md Arafat, 30, of Chakaria upazila in Cox's Bazar, Muhammad Johirul Islam, 35, of Dinajpur and Muhammad Bachchu, 28.

Police said quoting witnesses that the bridge collapsed around 6:30am when the Khagrachhari-bound truck from Chattogram was crossing the bridge in Kutukchhari of Rangamati Sadar upazila.

Hearing a big bang, locals rushed to the area and found the truck

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PK Halder's cohort took Tk 3,520cr loans with fake papers

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

With fake documents, a close accomplice of Proshanta Kumar Halder, known as PK Halder, alone managed to get loans of about Tk 3,520 crore from three non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) between 2015 and 2019.

The money was transferred to different accounts of Nawsher Ul Islam, a proprietor of Nature Enterprise and MTB Marine, sources said.

He withdrew about Tk 2,432 crore.

The accounts are now frozen where about Tk 952 crore is still there, they added.

The findings came out after the ACC's enquiry into the embezzlement of over Tk 3,500 crore from People's Leasing and Financial Services by PK Halder.

The three NBFIs are: International Leasing and Financial Services (ILFSL), FAS Finance and Investment, and People's Leasing and Financial Services.

"Halder was at the top position of the NBFIs during the period [2015-2019]. He patronised it," sources said.

In 2015, Halder joined NRB Global Bank as its managing director. Before that,

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Security fears hit Biden inauguration

Homeland Security chief quits unexpectedly as FBI warns armed protests being planned in all US states

AGENCIES

US Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf announced his resignation unexpectedly Monday as worries rose over more violence during President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration next week.

Wolf's departure as head of the body in charge of security for the January 20 event came five days after President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol, hoping to prevent Biden from replacing him.

The Homeland Security Department oversees several law enforcement bodies including the Secret Service, the point agency for security for the White House and the US president.

Wolf, who said he was stepping down for procedural reasons, named Pete Gaynor, the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to replace him.

But the move did not end questions over whether the US capital city would be adequately secure over the coming week.

An internal FBI document warned of the possibility that armed Trump supporters could hold protests in all 50 states between the coming weekend and January 20, according to US media.

The White House issued a statement saying that Trump had "declared that an emergency exists in the District of Columbia and ordered Federal assistance to supplement the District's response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from the 59th Presidential Inauguration from January 11 to January 24, 2021."



Chad Wolf

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Positivity rate dips to 9-month low

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The percentage of Covid-19 cases that come out positive was the lowest in nine months yesterday.

The health directorate reported 718 new cases in the 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday.

Against a total of 14,363 tests in those 24 hours, the positivity rate was 5 percent.

On April 5, the positivity rate was 4.90 percent, according to the data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). With the latest figure, the total number of positive cases rose to 5,24,020.

According to experts, the daily positivity rate is one of the important parameters to measure the transmission level of the virus.

If the rate remains below five percent continuously for two weeks and does not increase, it means the transmission is under

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Thai king sweeps prison floors

AFP, Bangkok



Thailand's king has visited prisons, sweeping floors alongside his official consort in the latest round of a charm offensive following unprecedented criticism of the monarchy during street protests.

The palace has stepped up public appearances in recent months, as the student-led movement has made calls for reforms to the monarchy, considered a taboo subject in Thailand.

Images released by the palace showed King Maha Vajiralongkorn and his consort, 35-year-old Sineenat Wongvajirapakdi, visiting different prisons over the past two months, dressed in jeans and polo shirts.

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Four arrested over rape in Patuakhali, Lalmonirhat

STAR REPORT

Police have arrested three men over the gang-rape of a woman in Patuakhali's Kuakata and another man over the rape of a fifth-grader in Patgram of Lalmonirhat.

The three arrestees in the Kuakata incident included the alleged boyfriend of the 22-year-old woman and manager of a residential hotel in the town known for its sea beach, the law enforcers said.

A Patuakhali court sent the trio to jail after they were arrested in different areas of the district yesterday.

The arrests were made after the woman filed a case against the three men with Mahipur Police Station on Monday night. The arrestees are her alleged boyfriend Roni Pada, 24, his friend Mainul Islam, 20, and hotel manager

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FORGING DOCUMENTS Bangladeshis arrested in Malaysia

THE STAR, Malaysia/ANN

Two Bangladeshi men, believed to be involved in selling fake immigration documents, have been arrested in Malaysia.

Immigration director-general Khairul Dzamee Daud said a team of Immigration Intelligence/Special Operations and Analysis personnel raided an apartment in Cheras on Monday and nabbed them.

"The mastermind, a 32-year-old Bangladeshi man, who was arrested during this raid, had been on our radar since we crippled another counterfeiting syndicate in

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 13

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:36 7:00
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:40 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A worker of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) cleaning a sewerage line in the capital to ensure uninterrupted drainage facilities to the city dwellers. He has no safety gear when even the inhalation of the fumes inside such manholes could become fatal. The photo was taken on the Holy Cross Road recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Herd immunity unlikely this year

Says WHO; Malaysia declares emergency

AGENCIES

The European Union started the approval process for its third vaccine yesterday after WHO scientists warned that herd immunity from coronavirus was unlikely this year even with mass inoculation schemes.

The 27-nation EU -- under fire for lengthy approval processes and slow national rollouts of drugs -- promised an "accelerated timeline" after confirming drug company AstraZeneca had applied for approval for the jab it developed with Oxford University.

The EU's medicines agency said a decision would still not come before January 29, even though the drug is already being used in countries including Britain.

And even with mass vaccinations, World Health Organization scientists warned that coverage would still not be wide enough for population-level immunity this year.

"We are not going to achieve any levels of population immunity or herd immunity in 2021," said WHO's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan.

The global health body redoubled pleas for vaccine makers to provide Covid-19 shots to its COVAX programme for poor nations, as an adviser said hopes of starting inoculations by February hinge on access to supplies.

The COVAX facility, backed by the WHO, GAVI the vaccine alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, has raised \$6 billion so far, and ordered 2 billion doses of vaccines with options on 1 billion more.

With nations including China, the United States, Israel and others dominating early deliveries, however, the WHO

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