

Rapist brought to book after 11yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A rapist was served life-term imprisonment in Rangpur yesterday, 11 years after committing the crime.

According to the verdict, he will also have to bear all the necessary expenses of the child born out of rape and recognise the child as his own. The child will also be eligible to inherit all his properties. If the convict has no property, the state would take responsibility of the child, it added.

Md Rokonzaman, the judge of Women and Children Oppression Prevention Tribunal-2, delivered the verdict in presence of the convict, Abul Kalam (45), of Pirgachha upazila in a packed courtroom. He was also fined Tk 1 lakh.

According to the case statement, the victim, who is speech-impaired, is a relative of the convict. On December 1 in 2008, Kalam took her to a house and raped the 18-year-old. Later, she became pregnant.

The girl identified Kalam as the rapist. He, however, denied it. She gave birth to a child on September 9 in 2009.

Her father filed a case with Pirgachha Police Station on September 16 that year. In December, Abdus Samad Sarkar, erstwhile SI of the police station, filed a charge sheet.

Public prosecutor Jahangir Hossain said DNA tests of the child and Kalam were held, which also confirmed it.



Empty spaces tend to fill up quite fast in Dhaka, especially when those spaces can fit vehicles. Pickup vans are illegally parked on the road near La Vinci Hotel in Karwan Bazar as far as the camera lens could see, yet they seem to avoid the eyes of the law enforcement.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Municipalities unable to pay salaries would be dissolved: minister

Says proposal will be pushed to amend law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local government minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday said he would propose for dissolving the municipal councils if any municipality fails to pay salaries to its employees for 12 months.

"A move will be initiated to amend the Local Government [Pourosava] Act, incorporating a provision of dissolving councils that fail to pay salaries to their employees from their own earnings," the minister said at a national policy dialogue on Strengthening the Urban Local Governments in Bangladesh. Livelihoods Improvement of Urban Poor Communities Project (LIUPCP) of the Local Government Division (LGD), Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and UNDP Bangladesh organised the dialogue in collaboration with Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) Bangladesh and IPE Global (India).

Tazul said city corporations and municipalities run through their own laws, and it will be run through its own income according to its law. But most municipalities cannot pay their salaries, he added.

"It is not believable that people lack ability to pay taxes," Tazul said. He said a large amount of money was allocated to the municipality level from the Prime Minister's Fund and LGD ministry fund during the coronavirus pandemic. Everyone including the mayors and other stakeholders should take the responsibilities for strengthening local government bodies like municipalities and city corporations, he said.

PPRC Executive Chairman Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman chaired the session. British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson.

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ARANI MUNICIPAL POLLS IN RAJSHAHI

The 'rebel' who defeated AL candidate for mayor

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Before the January 16 municipal polls, he was blamed for inciting violence. Even his own party -- Awami League -- decided not to nominate him.

AL expelled him over various controversies, even though he was the former mayor of Arani municipality in Rajshahi's Bagha upazila.

Besides, he had been accused in murder and criminal cases, yet he campaigned unperturbed as a rebel candidate.

Despite all these, Md Muktar Ali won the municipal race by defeating AL's mayor candidate Md Shahiduzzaman. He bagged 5,904 votes while Shahiduzzaman got 4,300 votes. BNP candidate Mohammad Tozammel Haque got 1,312 votes.

On January 16, three municipal elections were held in Rajshahi district with AL nominees securing two mayoral posts. Arani

is the lone municipality in Bagha upazila.

So how did Muktar pull it off?

Despite being an expelled leader, Muktar told all that he had support of Mohammad Shahrir Alam, an MP from Bagha-Charghat (Rajshahi-6) constituency and state minister for foreign affairs.

And it worked. With the state minister "behind" him, he also got support from local leaders, which reflected in the polls result.

Muktar won in six out of nine vote centres. He even won the very centre where Shahrir Alam cast his vote -- Joygun Nesa Government Primary School. There, he got 1,195 votes while Shahiduzzaman 77 votes.

Asked, Shahiduzzaman categorically told The Daily Star that he lost the election as he failed to get the essential support of Shahrir Alam and most local party leaders.

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No scope for violence

CMP chief says about city polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

No one will be allowed to carry out any kind of violence and spoil the atmosphere ahead of the January 27 city corporation election, warned Chattogram Metropolitan Police Commissioner Saleh Mohammed Tanvir yesterday.

"We want to give a clear message to all of you over the CCC polls," said the CMP chief.

He was talking to journalists after a coordination meeting with the authorities concerned about the cricket matches between Bangladesh and West Indies, at CMP headquarters.

"We are working to identify the violence elements in every ward and keeping surveillance on listed criminals... We have extended our security measures across the city over the election. We are conducting special drives to maintain law and order situation," said the CMP chief.

Mentioning the recent election violence in the city, the CMP commissioner said, "We can't control campaign as everybody [political candidates] has rights to do so. But if it turns into violence then we will go for tougher action."

"We are trying to ensure that no firearms are used during the election," said the CMP chief.

The players of Bangladesh and West Indies will go to Chattogram on January 26 and will play an ODI, three warm-up matches and a test match. They will return to Dhaka on February 8, sources said.

CHATTOGRAM CITY CORPORATION ELECTION

BNP banking on voter turnout, peaceful polls

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

BNP leaders in the port city are chalking out campaign strategies to take on the Awami League-backed candidate in Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) polls scheduled to be held on January 27.

BNP is encouraging voters to go for the voting centres, assuring them that the elections would be fair if they go to the polling centres.

BNP activists say that voters have now developed an apathy to go to polling centres. They think their presence will not make a difference as polls would not be held fairly anyway.

"AL men took advantage of the low voter turnout in previous polls and so a lot of fake votes were cast," said a BNP leader preferring anonymity, "If a huge number of voters show up, it would be tough for ruling party men to cast fake votes."

BNP leaders are in apprehension of illegal firearms being used to hinder their party's campaigning activities. They say they are worried that AL will crowd the polling centres with non-voters from areas outside the CCC jurisdiction to create chaos, and discourage genuine voters from exercising their right.

Another BNP leader in Chattogram said this has happened in recent elections.

BNP is trying to put pressure on the administration to establish check posts around the city to prevent outside intervention during the polls.

The BNP camp is also doubtful about the security of electronic voting machine (EVM).

"We previously saw ruling party agents take over the EVMs so that voters couldn't cast their ballots," said a top leader of Chattogram city unit BNP. They are

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Woman sues husband, his 5 friends for rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman yesterday filed a case stating that her husband's friends gang-raped her in Dhaka's Khilgaon area five days ago.

She filed the case with Khilgaon Police Station, accusing her husband Aiyub Ali and his five friends.

The five other accused are: Kalu, (35), Sanjib Kumar Das (37), Maksudur Rahman Mukta (50), Jahangir Alam (35), and Azizur Rahman (42).

In the case statement, the woman said that they used to live in Dholaipar area of the capital since they got married one year ago.

Recently, their relationship turned sour following family feud. On Tuesday, Aiyub tricked her to going to a house in Uttar Goran to meditate their differences. But when she reached there, five of husband's friends raped her, said Farukul Alam, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station, quoting case statement.

The woman took treatment at one-stop crisis centre of Dhaka Medical College Hospital for a couple of days, and underwent forensic test there, hospital sources said.

None of the accused were arrested yet.

IGP promises to uproot militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed yesterday expressed his conviction to uproot militancy from the country.

"We have to be vigilant until the last militant is wiped out and we are working towards that goal," said the police chief.

The IGP came up with the remark while speaking as the chief guest at an event at Rajarbagh Police Lines in the capital. The event was organised by the police's Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) on the occasion of the launch of awareness video commercial and television video commercial to prevent online-based extremism and militancy.

"We have achieved success in curbing militancy but there is no room for complacency here. I also want to uproot the last trace of militancy from Bangladesh," he said.

He said Bangladesh, like the rest of the world, is facing the challenge of militancy from the frontlines. Militants have targeted Bangladesh at various times for various reasons including geographical location, he said.

But due to the zero tolerance policy of the prime minister and the anti-militancy stance of the peaceful people of this country, their nefarious intentions did not succeed, said the police chief.

Criticising the recent surrender of nine militants to Rab, the IGP said there are always some people who are pessimistic. "I think they need psychiatric treatment."

Termining social media a hotbed of militancy in the country, he said, "Every unit of our police has continued cyber patrolling." Therefore, each unit has a separate cyber unit. Regular campaigns are being conducted on this basis, he explained.

Honouring the heroic life of Ayesha Khanam

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organises virtual memorial programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the 1970s, the idea of 'violence against women is a violation of human rights' did not exist. The issue gained importance through the women's movement in the '70s and '80s, and Ayesha Khanam made a significant contribution to the movement.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad acting president Dr Fauzia Moslem yesterday made the remarks at a virtual memorial programme yesterday for the recently deceased president of the organisation Ayesha Khanam. A pioneer of the women's movement in Bangladesh, Khanam dedicated her life to fighting for the rights of deprived, oppressed and disenfranchised women, speakers said.

Ayesha Khanam, a freedom fighter, breathed her last on January 2. She was suffering from lung cancer.

Dr Fauzia Moslem presided over the programme, moderated by lawyer Dipty Rani Shikder.

The programme started with a one-minute silence in tribute to the memory of Ayesha Khanam, and Bula Osman, education and cultural affairs secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad who died yesterday.

Joint General Secretary of Mahila Parishad, Shima Moslem in her speech said, "Ayesha Khanam dedicated her entire life to women's movement, secularism and progressive ideals for the establishment of women's and human rights."

She recalled Ayesha Khanam's words, "Women's movement is a Nakshi Kantha. You and I cannot weave it alone. Rather, everyone has to weave something here."

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ELECTRIC-RUN VEHICLES' GUIDELINE BRTA seeks opinion from stakeholders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of their initiative to finalise the draft guidelines for the regulation of electric-run vehicles, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has decided to seek written and specific opinions from stakeholders within seven days.

Upon receiving those, a technical committee will scrutinise them and make necessary additions and changes to the draft and finalise it, officials said.

The decisions were taken at a stakeholders' meeting held at BRTA headquarters yesterday. With BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder in the chair, representatives from different ministries, divisions, major auto importers, and other relevant agencies took part the meeting.

At a time when countries across the world are promoting production and sales of electric vehicles, Bangladesh does not even have a guideline to regulate them.

In light of this, and after a number of people applied to register electric cars, the draft guideline was formulated and submitted to the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry back in November 2018.

Following some complications in the draft's finalising, the ministry decided to amend The Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1983 to register electric vehicles, sources said. Only two such cars have been registered so far, they added.

"But the amended rules do not cover issues like how charging stations will be operated and how used batteries will be managed. The ministry has asked us to formulate the draft guidelines incorporating all of these issues," BRTA chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said.

ROHINGYAS WITH BANGLADESHI PASSPORTS

Saudi considers them Bangladeshis: envoy

UNB, DHAKA

Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Issa bin Youssef Al-Duhailan yesterday said they are considering those Rohingyas as Bangladeshis who have been to Saudi Arabia with Bangladeshi passports.

"They came with Bangladeshi passports to Saudi Arabia," he told reporters explaining why they are terming them "Bangalee people".

After attending a food distribution ceremony at a city hotel, the ambassador said they have already sent a list of 55,000 people who lost their documents or documents' validity expired. He said their documents just need to be renewed or reissued and there is a high-level committee with relevant authorities in Bangladesh to study their issues. "We're working very hard together."

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, who was present at the programme, said the government will provide passports if Bangladeshis are in the group who do not have passports, adding that Rohingyas who went to Saudi Arabia identifying themselves as Bangladeshis with Bangladeshi passports will be considered if they apply for renewing passports.

He, however said, "They're not Bangladeshi citizens who are from Myanmar; they're Myanmar citizens. It's clear."

He said the Rohingya issue is an old one, and Saudi Arabia has been generous to take Rohingyas in the past.

He also thanked the Saudi government for its support towards Rohingya repatriation efforts.

The Home Minister said Bangladesh continues its efforts on all fronts for the repatriation of Rohingyas to their place of origin in Rakhine State and hoped that the Saudi government will continue its support.



The coronavirus pandemic has forced schools to shut down for close to a year now. This has hit rural children especially hard, as they don't enjoy the same unbridled access to internet many of their urban and suburban contemporaries do. Still, yesterday was a joyous occasion for them. Going to school for a day to get books for the new year, they got a taste of the old normalcy that they desperately want to get back again. This photo was taken from Sylhet Sadar upazila's Khadim Nagar union.

PHOTO: SHEKH NASIR

KAKRAIL DOUBLE MURDER

Husband, 2 others sentenced to death

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced three people to death for killing Shamsun Nahar and her 17-year-old son Sajjadul Karim Shaon in Dhaka's Kakrail area in 2017.

The convicts are: Nahar's husband Abdul Karim, his third wife Sharmin Akter Mukta and Mukta's brother Al-Amin Johny.

Judge Md Rabiul Alam of the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka pronounced the verdict in presence of the convicts at a courtroom, assistant public prosecutor Mohammad Salahuddin Howlader told The Daily Star.

In the judgment, the judge said the prosecution was able to prove the charges brought against the convicts without a doubt and they deserved the highest punishment for their "heinous offences".

The judge observed that children are the greatest wealth to parents, but the father along with others killed his son and wife in cold blood.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 17, out of 22, prosecution witnesses including the case's complainant.

On November 1 of 2017, Shamsun Nahar (46) and her son Shaon, an A-level student, were murdered at their home in Kakrail.