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Your Right to Know

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**“Once completed, those mega-infrastructures will change the face of the country and would have positive impact on the future of Bangladesh as well as the landscape of Japan-Bangladesh relations.”**  
ITO NAOKI, JAPANESE AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH, ABOUT JAPAN-FUNDED MEGA PROJECTS

**“Facebook’s actions to unfriend Australia today ... were as arrogant as they were disappointing.”**  
AUSSIE PM SCOTT MORRISON ON FACEBOOK’S DECISION TO BLACKOUT NEWS

**“The WHO has the support (from US) it needs to lead the global response to the pandemic.”**  
US SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY BLINKEN ON PAYMENT OF WHO DUES

## TRAFFICKING OF WOMAN WITH FORGED PASSPORT Syndicate teams up with officers

*CID probe on into involvement of immigration officers at Sylhet airport; moves to quiz UK citizen*

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and DWOHA CHOWDHURY

A human trafficking syndicate formed a nexus with immigration police personnel at Sylhet Osmani International Airport and got a woman trafficked to the United Kingdom with a fake passport, a CID probe has found.

According to officials of the Trafficking in Human Being (THB) Squad of Criminal Investigation Department (CID), UK citizen Mokarram over social media and Bangladeshi Md Asraf Miah allegedly allured the woman with a life in the kingdom.

The woman fell for it and gave Mokarram a passport size photo of hers, she said in a case filed later on.

Mokarram then sent another UK citizen Zain Deen to Bangladesh with a “British passport” on February 8, 2019. The passport had the photo of the woman and mentioned Rubina Khatun as her name. The woman’s name is not Rubina Khatun.

The officials said the passport had an entry into Bangladesh seal stamped at Osmani International Airport even though nobody was the bearer of that passport.

How the passport was stamped with or without the mandatory photograph taken at immigrations remains a mystery and investigators say that this could not be done without direct involvement of immigration police.

They said Zain gave the passport to the woman at the airport on  
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Two mallards captured in full flight over the scenic Tanguar Haor in Sunamganj. Scores of the migratory birds can be seen in the background, and further back is the outline of the hills of Assam. Tanguar Haor is a heaven for migratory birds, among them mallards. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ASKER IBNE FIROZ

The Daily Star  
CELEBRATES  
GLORIOUS  
50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE  
COURAGEOUS  
30 YEARS OF JOURNALISM

The fifth and final instalment of our special anniversary supplement, which is out today, takes an extensive look at what Bangladesh aspires to accomplish in the next 50 years.

MAKE SURE YOU GRAB A COPY OF THIS COLLECTOR’S ITEM FREE OF CHARGE FROM YOUR HAWKER.

## BRAHMANBARIA CHILD RAPE CASE HC blasts police, doctors for flaws

*SP, civil surgeon apologise to court*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday heavily criticised police and doctors of Brahmanbaria after finding inconsistencies in reports submitted in a case filed over the rape of a child.

“The police are called friends of people. Each alphabet in the word police has distinct meanings and they have significance. Do the police act in accordance with those meanings?” the HC bench of Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain and Justice K M Zahid Sarwar asked Md Anisur Rahman, the superintendent of police in Brahmanbaria.

The HC was referring to the investigation and medical reports by the police and physicians in Brahmanbaria.

Hearing a suo moto (voluntary) rule, the HC bench found in the police report that an attempt has been made to implicate a boy aged 11 or 12 under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act’s section 9(1), which has provision for death penalty.

“The investigation officer submitted a charge sheet to the trial court, implicating a boy... although it was not determined whether an incident of rape took place at all. The investigation officer said in the report that the accused was a 15-year-old and termed the incident a gang rape. Why did the investigation officer try to implicate a child in the case?” the bench asked.

The bench questioned whether the officer did the investigation only to establish that the victim was raped at a hospital. The officer collected  
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THE THIRD VIEW



MAHFUZ ANAM

ARMY CHIEF TALKS TO THE PRESS

SOME COMMENTS REQUIRE CLARIFICATION

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COVID-19 VACCINE

## Only a third of the recipients women

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The mass vaccination campaign has so far drawn much fewer women than men.

Of around 13 lakh people inoculated till Monday, around 33 percent were women and the rest were men.

Till yesterday, a total of 18,48,313 people were vaccinated with 614,658 being women.

Women also seem to be lagging behind in registration. Till yesterday, 28,63,300 people had registered for vaccination, of whom around 11 lakh were women.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the female population in the country is 8.13 crore, of whom around 17 percent are aged 50 and above.

Experts said the reasons behind such poor response was that women traditionally depended on men for access to healthcare in the country.

They also said mass awareness campaigns should be strengthened, targeting women specifically, to bring more people under the vaccination programme in order to curb transmission of Covid-19, which has already claimed around 9,000 lives in the country.

Dr Sayedur Rahman, chairman of pharmacology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said there were two reasons behind the poor response from women.

“Covid-19’s mortality and morbidity rates are less among women than men. That is why the fear is also less among women. Secondly, previous vaccination programmes were carried out on a door-to-door basis, but now people have to go to hospitals. It is basically town centric,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Rahman also said women in rural areas are not as familiar with technology, which is a barrier when trying to get registered for vaccination.

“The main problem is the elderly population, all of whom are yet to come under the vaccination programme. Elderly people have compromised immunity, which is why they should be vaccinated first, otherwise the whole exercise will be futile,” he said.

The lowest number of vaccinated women -- 1,968 -- was in Sherpur district, while the highest number -- 69,587 -- was in Dhaka.

Dr AKM Anwarur Rauf, civil surgeon of  
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## Mobile app launched for nurses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health minister inaugurated an application software named “Surokha Covid-19 Vaccine Prodan App” at Kurmitola General Hospital in the capital around noon yesterday.

After that, several media also reported that the Surokha app was available for mass use for the registration of Covid-19 vaccine. However, the reality was otherwise.

The Surokha mobile app for Covid-19 vaccine registration was supposed to launch in late January.

On Wednesday night, the health ministry notified about yesterday’s event saying that Health Minister Zahid Maleque “would be inaugurating Surokha app” yesterday.

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## Erfan Salim cleared in arms case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday cleared Mohammad Erfan Salim, son of Awami League leader and lawmaker Haji Mohammad Salim, in an arms case as the police did not find any evidence to prove the charges against him and the prosecution did not seek further investigation.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Special Tribunal-1 in Dhaka passed the order after a short hearing on the probe report that cleared Erfan.

Officials of Rapid Action Battalion, after a raid on Erfan’s Chawkbazar house on October 26 last year, told reporters that they seized five bottles of foreign liquor and an unlicensed pistol with two bullets from Erfan, while 406 yaba tablets and an illegal pistol with four bullets were also recovered from his bodyguard Zahidul Mollah.

Chawkbazar police submitted the probe reports in the arms and drug cases to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court of Dhaka on January 5.

In their final reports, Chawkbazar police said they did not find any evidence to prove the charges against Erfan in two cases filed under the narcotics control and arms acts.  
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Dredging of the Turag river going on in the capital’s Mirpur Beribadh to increase the navigability of the river, which bears a dried-up appearance. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Anis, Haris given pardon in line with the rules

*Says home minister*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said yesterday that Anis Ahmed and Haris Ahmed -- the brothers of Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed -- were pardoned in accordance with law.

Responding to a question from reporters after attending a function in the capital’s Moghbazar, he said lawyers were also of the opinion that there was scope for pardoning convicts under the rules.

“The process of releasing Haris and Anis has been done through due process. There is nothing secret about it,” he said.

Regarding Haris Ahmed’s name and picture on the wanted list of police, the minister said this was due to a communication gap.

On March 28, 2019, the home ministry issued a notification pardoning Haris Ahmed and Anis Ahmed, according to a government circular.

The Police Headquarters (PHQ), situated just one and a half kilometres from the ministry, has apparently not gotten that notification even after 23 months have elapsed.

Haris Ahmed, younger brother of Gen Aziz Ahmed, is still on the wanted list on the Bangladesh Police website.

Haris had been on the list of most wanted people on the website for several years until his name was dropped sometime after February 12 this year.  
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