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Rape victim's character can't be questioned

Govt working to amend evidence act, law minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The provision for making "negative" remarks about the character of a rape victim in a rape case will be removed from the Evidence Act and the government is working to amend the existing law in this regard, Law Minister Anisul Haq has said.

The minister was responding to various proposals from opposition MPs on the cut motion during the passage of the proposed national budget for 2021-22 fiscal year in parliament yesterday.

Anisul said, "According to Section 155 of the Evidence Act, there is a sub-section on talking about the character of the victim in a rape case. That will be amended."

He hoped that a Bill would be placed in the next session of parliament, likely to be held in September, with necessary amendment to the Evidence Act.

According to Section 155 (4) of the Evidence Act, 1872, when an accused is prosecuted on rape charges, it may be shown that the complainant was of immoral character. This gives way for questioning the victim's character as a justification of rape.

This provision has been criticised heavily by different quarters for not upholding equality and special protection for women as guaranteed by the constitution of Bangladesh.

This outdated, patriarchal and unethical provision of this section is affecting victims of rape because the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



Desperate to leave the city ahead of the "strict lockdown", people get on a pickup truck in the capital's Shanir Akhra area yesterday. The fares were high as public transport were off the streets due to Covid-19 restrictions.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

TREATMENT ABROAD Khaleda must confess to the president for her release

Law ministers says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia must confess her wrongdoings and offer apologies to the President to go abroad for receiving treatment, said Law Minister Anisul Haq in the Parliament yesterday.

If someone can find other legal provisions in this regard he would quit his profession, the law minister said.

BNP lawmakers Harunur Rashid and Mosharof Hosen earlier alleged that the government was not allowing former premier Khaleda Zia to go abroad for political reasons.

Responding to the allegations, the law minister said Khaleda's family members had applied for her release and said she had to be taken abroad.

"But in their application, they did not mention any provisions of the law. We

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Who will give back 24 yrs of my life?

Asks Piara Akhter upon release from Barisal jail; she was framed in murder case at age of 12

SUSHANTA GHOSH and MD HABIBUR RAHAMAN

Tried as an adult when she was just a fifth-grade student, Piara Akhter spent the last 24 years of her life in jail for a murder she says she did not commit.



Released from Barisal Central Jail on June 10 for good behaviour, Piara hardly recognised anyone from her past life -- the world outside the walls of the prison is utterly unfamiliar to her.

"I have been imprisoned for 24 years because of a conspiracy. I have not committed any crime; who will give me back those 24 years?" she asked while talking to The Daily Star on Wednesday.

"I was in fifth grade when a policeman came to my primary school and took me into their custody. He said if I want to be free, I have to say that I hit my cousin and she fell into a canal adjacent to our home

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Nixon writes to Indira, Yahya

Pied Piper of Pakistan. Courtesy: Hindusthan Standard (July 2, 1971).

JUNE 1, 1971
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

NIXON'S LETTER TO INDIRA GANDHI
American President Richard Nixon, in a letter dated July 1, 1971, wrote to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that the US was concerned about the Bangladeshi refugee problem not only because of its humanitarian aspects, but more importantly because it was a major international issue with implications for all the interested parties, including the US.

"I hope that the assistance which we have been able to provide in support of the refugees and which has been discussed with your foreign minister will help to meet your most pressing immediate

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

SINOPHARM JOBS Nationwide vaccination resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The administration of the Sinopharm vaccine begins today in all district hospitals and 40 centres across the capital, health officials said.

It comes after the government on June 19 launched a trial vaccination on medical students with the Chinese vaccine.

At a virtual briefing yesterday, Dr Shamsul Haque, line director of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said those waiting to be jabbed after registration would get the shots across the country.

Students of medical colleges and universities will also be vaccinated upon their registration, he said.

Health officials said the government has around 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccines, gifted by the Chinese government, in hand.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Locals save stranded elephants in Teknaf



AFP, Teknaf

Two elephants were being led to safety by locals yesterday after crossing from Myanmar to Bangladesh, getting stranded on a beach and nearly dying at sea.

Separated from the rest of their herd, the male and female elephants waded across a river marking the border on Saturday, officials said.

Dwindling forests straddling southern Bangladesh and western Myanmar are some of the last remaining habitats of endangered Asian elephants.

One of their migration routes has been blocked since 2017 by refugee camps in Cox's Bazar housing hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who fled a Myanmar military offensive.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

RIVALRY IN TEKNAF 3 brothers shot by Rohingyas

Imam held over brutal killing of DU student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three brothers were injured as some Rohingya criminals opened fire in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

The injured are Rahmatullah, 30, Salamatullah, 22, and Mohammad Hossain, 18, sons of one Habibur Rahman.

The criminals from Jadimura Rohingya camp-27 in Teknaf attacked the three locals, said police.

Tariqul Islam, commanding officer of 16 Armed Police Battalion (APBN), said over previous enmity, some armed Rohingyas went to Habibur's house in Jadimura village and fired bullets around 3:30am.

His three sons suffered bullet injuries, he added.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Lalmonirhat mob killing: Imam arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Detectives arrested an imam for his alleged involvement in the brutal killing of Abu Yunus Mohammad Shahidunnabi Jewel in Lalmonirhat.

Shariful Islam, 40, was arrested from Patgram upazila on Tuesday night, said the investigation officer of the case and district DB Police Inspector Abu Hasan Kabir.

The DB official told The Daily Star that Shariful has been shown arrested in the murder case.

Hailing from Paschim Bhelabari village in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, Shariful is the imam of Dhabalsuti

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Seven houses built for homeless people in Koyerkhali area of Bogura's Sherpur upazila under the Ashroyon Project-2 have partially collapsed following moderate rainfall four days ago. Locals blamed poor quality construction work. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

ASHRAYAN PROJECT-2 Seven houses collapse after moderate rain

Those were given to homeless families as govt gift

MOSTAFA SHABUI, BOGURA

Seven out of 22 houses built for homeless people under the Ashroyon project-2 have partially collapsed following moderate rainfall in Koyerkhali area of Bogura's Sherpur upazila four days ago.

The houses, constructed on the bank of Burigari canal at a cost of Tk 38.50 lakh, were handed to 22 homeless families in January as gift in Mujib Borsho, but those are yet to be occupied. Many of those started developing cracks last month, said locals.

Haider Ali, 45, a beneficiary, said the back wall and the toilet of his house collapsed following the moderate rainfall.

Another beneficiary Shafali Begum, 29, said a part of her house has collapsed.

Fifty-year-old Badsha Akanda said, "We can't start living in our houses gifted by the prime minister because those are collapsing. There is no electricity in the houses. Besides, only one tube well has been installed for the 22 families."

Moksed Ali, 40, who got a house, said during the constructing, the authorities extracted soil from the Burigari canal to fill up the adjacent low-lying land and now the soil is being eroded from under the bases of the houses.

Some other beneficiaries said they were afraid of moving to their houses.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING JULY 1

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17

JAMAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION