

Pregnant woman

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after the 20-year-old woman filed a case against three people, including a another woman.

But alleged rapist Sabbir, 21, and Asma Begum, 30, who allegedly beaten up the victim along with Sagor and Sabbir when she told her about the incident, went into hiding, said police.

According to the case statement, Sabbir and Sagor went to the victim's house in Baipal area around 3:30pm on Sunday and wanted a matchbox from her. Her husband, who is a construction worker, was not at home at that time. As she went to the room to bring the matchbox, Sabbir entered the room and Sagor locked the door from outside.

Sabbir then raped the three-month pregnant woman. After that, he asked Sagor to open the door and Sagor opened it and the duo left the spot. The victim disclosed the incident to her husband around 5:30pm after he returned home.

Later, the victim's husband informed neighbour Asma Begum of the incident. Asma then asked them not to share the incident with anybody. As they protested, Asma, Sabbir and Sagor beat up the duo, the case statement added.

Contacted, Shubrata Roy, sub-inspector of Ashulia Police Station and also investigation officer of the case, told The Daily Star that Sabbir was made the prime accused in the case, while Sagor was accused of abetting the rape and beating up the couple and Asma for assaulting the couple.

"We already arrested Sagor. And the victim was sent to One-stop Crisis Centre at Dhaka Medical College Hospital for tests," said the police official, adding that they were trying to arrest the other accused.

Liberal Deuba

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and control the spread of the coronavirus that has infected more than 658,000 people and killed nearly 10,000 of them - figures experts say fail to reflect the true toll.

The biggest challenge of the new leader is to free every citizen from suffering from Covid-19 by inoculating them," said Prakash Sharan Mahat, a senior leader of Deuba's party.

More than 1.3 million people have had a first dose of Covid-19 vaccine and are awaiting a second shot as the government scrambles to protect its people.

Deuba, 75, head of the centrist Nepali Congress party, will head a coalition with former Maoist rebels and a party representing a minority community dominant on Nepal's southern plains, the latest development in a months-long political crisis that left the country without a parliament.

Deuba, who has served as prime minister four times in the past, must win a vote of confidence in parliament in the next month.

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered Deuba be appointed in place of K P Sharma Oli, who had failed to win a vote of confidence and dissolved parliament twice in recent months, which the court ruled was unconstitutional.

Deuba, a staunch democrat, will aim to end corruption and create conditions for free and fair elections due next year following the latest bout of political instability, Mahat said.

But Krishna Khanal, who teaches political science at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan University, said Deuba had struggled when he led governments before.

"The country has faced major crises every time he was prime minister in the past," Khanal told Reuters.

'Increased risk' of rare nerve disorder after J&J Covid vaccine: US

AFP, Washington

The US Food and Drug Administration updated its warning labels Monday for the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine to include information about an observed "increased risk" of a rare neurological disorder called Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS).

The news is a further blow for the company, which was granted an emergency use authorization for its shot in February but has played a minor role in America's coronavirus immunization campaign.

Based on analysis of a federal vaccine safety monitoring system, officials have identified 100 preliminary reports of GBS after approximately 12.5 million doses administered, people familiar with the matter said.

Of these reports, 95 of them were serious and required hospitalization. There was one reported death.

GBS is a neurological disorder in which the body's immune system damages nerve cells, causing muscle weakness or, in the most severe cases, paralysis.

It affects an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 people each year in the United States, and most go on to recover.



Patients receive care underneath a tent, erected on the compounds of a hospital to handle an influx of people suffering from the Covid-19 coronavirus, in Yogyakarta yesterday, as Indonesia faces its most serious outbreak driven by the highly infectious Delta variant.

The New York Times

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last month is a devastating indictment of the West Pakistani military crackdown in Bengal. It strongly challenges the [US] Administration's policy of continuing both military and economic support for the Yahya Khan regime in Islamabad. This official confirmation of earlier widespread reports of barbaric action in East Pakistan renders inexcusable any further shipment of American military equipment to the Pakistani armed forces.

"There are clear grounds for suspending all further military and economic aid to the Pakistani Government, excepting relief supplies, until the reign of terror in East Pakistan is ended and steps are taken to restore power to elected representatives of the people who are currently in prison or in hiding," added the newspaper.

SOVIET ENVOY REGRETS US ARMS AID TO PAKISTAN

Mir Qasimov, vice-consul of the Soviet Union at Calcutta, deplored US arms aid to Pakistan and said it would only aggravate the situation in Bangladesh. He emphasises that the situation in Bangladesh should be tackled by arriving at a political settlement between the leader of the Awami

League Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Pakistan President Yahya Khan. The diplomat further said the influx of evacuees from Bangladesh to India had created a "colossal human problem".

FIERCE RESISTANCE AT BELABO
Bangladeshi guerrillas put up a fierce resistance against the Pakistani army at Belabo, Narsingdi. Seven freedom fighters embraced martyrdom during the fight.

JAPAN STUDYING METHODS OF SETTLEMENT IN BANGLADESH

The Japanese government was anxious for a political settlement in East Pakistan and was examining how best that could be done, Ataushi Uyama, Japan's ambassador in India, said in Calcutta. He added that the large-scale influx of refugees from East Pakistan was no doubt a serious problem which had put great strain on India's economy.

REFUGEES SENT TO MIDNAPORE
Midnapore received the first batch of 1,500 refugees from Bangladesh. On their arrival in Midnapore station they were immediately sent to Brindabanpur camp by 20 reserved buses.

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Traffickers abuse visit, on-arrival visas

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and investigating some recent trafficking incidents.

According to the SB database, around 1,99,864 men and women have left the country for Dubai with tourist visas from January last year to June 30 this year.

Of them, only 2,1754 came back. Although the visa of the others had already expired, they did not return.

"Analysing the travel documents, we have come to know that most of the people are aged 18 to 40. We suspect these people might have converted their visas and have acquired working permits and some others may have tried to enter European countries illegally," said an SB high official.

In Dubai, there is a provision that says a traveller can change their visa to a work visa by paying 2,000 Dirham, according to officials.

"A group of traffickers has been using Dubai as a transit route to send their victims to Europe. We are trying to get details of the locations of these travellers," the SB official, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star.

UN data shows that at least 760 different nationals of different countries have died trying to cross the Mediterranean between January 1 and May 31.

Last year, the number was 1,400.

NEW ROUTE, CONTACT MARRIAGE
SB officials said a transnational syndicate -- operated by Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals -- recently found the means of arranging

"contract marriage" in order to traffic people abroad.

The traffickers first take their victims to Kazakhstan and Ukraine from Dubai after arranging contract marriages for them there. Each marriage costs around \$400-500, the officer said.

Once the marriage documents are submitted, the traffickers get residence cards for the victims, which are then used to enter Europe.

The CID said it has also found two new routes that traffickers have been using over the last month, as traffickers made online advertisements regarding trips to Poland, Germany and Canada.

The syndicate charge Tk 10 to Tk 13 lakh as fee for anyone who responds to the ad, SS Khan, special superintendent (human trafficking) of the CID, told The Daily Star.

"To go to Poland, the traffickers first take the victims to Delhi and then to Uzbekistan on tourist visas. Later, the migrants are forced to make their journey to Poland through tough hilly roads," Khan said.

For Germany and Canada, the traffickers take the victims to Togo, which offers on arrival visas for Bangladeshi travellers.

The syndicate was found using two routes, one of which led from Kolkata, to Mumbai, Ethiopia and finally Togo.

Through second route, the syndicate sent migrants to Thailand and then Ethiopia before Togo, he said.

The CID has come to know about these two new routes after eight

victims returned to Bangladesh from Uzbekistan and Togo in March and April of this year.

These victims have filed five separate cases with Paltan, Gulshan, Mirpur and Bhatara police stations and with Gopalganj's Kotalipara police station, said officials.

"We have already started investigating and arrested five people. Four were arrested for illegally trafficking people to Uzbekistan and one for trafficking people to Togo," said Khan.

Sources claim the traffickers are getting the scope of sending migrants on visit visa after making sure there are no hurdles at the airport.

"We have to pay around Tk 40 thousand and sometimes even Tk one lakh to manage the airport while sending people abroad," claimed Md Habib, an executive of Helpline Travel and Consultancy.

Once the airport hassles are taken care of, the authorities do not stop anyone from boarding a plane, he added.

Monirul Islam, SB deputy inspector general (immigration), however, refuted the allegation and said immigration is not involved with the irregularities.

"It is the brokers who collect extra money in the name of immigration."

THE ARREST, JOURNEY

On a tip-off, the CID arrested Ahsanul Bari, the mastermind behind trafficking people to Uzbekistan from the capital's Kakrail on June 17.

Later, three others -- Yesair Bari Ahad, his wife Habiba Khatun Liza,

and Alamgir Apurbo -- were arrested in Bashundhara and Mirpur area on June 25, said CID officials.

Akteruzzaman, additional superintendent of police of the CID, said Alamgir, Ahad and his wife Liza had been involved in trafficking people for the last couple of years.

"The arrestees promised the victims that they would be sent to Poland legally, and had taken Tk 10 lakh for the process. As there is no embassy in Dhaka, they took the victims to India first and from there, they took them to Uzbekistan on tourist visas on July 10, 2019," he said.

After waiting for the travel documents for around a year and half and failing, the traffickers sent the migrants by road. As they refused to travel illegally, the syndicate told them to go back to Bangladesh, said Akteruzzaman.

Investigators said they suspect the syndicate might have contacts and counterparts in Poland and somehow their link did not work in their favour.

"We have come to know some 10 to 12 other Bangladeshis are stuck in Uzbekistan. We are investigating if any local agency is involved with the racket and trying to identify syndicate members in Uzbekistan. We may seek Interpol assistance for further investigation."

Regarding the second route, the CID said they arrested one Bazlur Rahman last month in Dhaka for trafficking people to Togo.

THE ORDEAL, TORTURE
Saidur Rahman, 26, left Dhaka on December 30, 2019, for Togo.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Saidur said that he had signed a Tk 15 lakh contract with a travel agency. "I paid them Tk 6 lakh and the contract said it would send me to Italy."

He reached Togo on December 31 via Thailand and Ethiopia. In Togo, a Bangladeshi -- Nurul Alam Sumon -- received him from the airport and took him to a hotel.

"There, Sumon took \$1,200 from me. But three days later, they shifted me to a rented house.

"An African named Tudo then confined me with dozens of other Bangladeshis and began the torture. He would only provide us with rice and a piece of meat a day and sometimes [there would be] no food. If anyone protested, they would be beaten up."

He added, "I was forced to contact my family in Bangladesh and make them pay Tk seven lakh in two instalments to their local agent -- Tuhinuzzaman Bhuyan. One day, we found a cell phone access and managed to communicate with an NGO."

"The NGO, aided by local police, then rescued us and helped us come back. But they failed to take any action against Tudo as he seemed to be too powerful... In the torture cell, there were at least 50 to 60 Bangladeshis. They would take away everyone's passports and torture people unless they would get a hefty amount of money."

CID's SS Khan said, "We are investigating the cases and a drive is underway to arrest those involved."

Violence spreads

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provincial authorities. Police Minister Bheki Cele put the official death toll at 10.

Soldiers have been sent onto the streets to try to contain the unrest.

Zuma, 79, was sentenced last month for defying a constitutional court order to give evidence at an inquiry investigating high-level corruption during his nine years in office until 2018.

He also faces trial in a separate case on charges including corruption, fraud, racketeering and money laundering. He pleaded not guilty in court in May.

Zuma's foundation said there would be no peace in South Africa until the former president was released from jail.

"Peace and stability in South Africa is directly linked to the release of President Zuma with immediate effect," it said in a Tweet.

The violence could have been avoided. It started with the decision of the constitutional court to detain president Zuma ... This is what gave anger to the people," a spokesman for the foundation told Reuters separately.

Troops moved into flashpoints yesterday as outnumbered police

seemed helpless to stop the unrest, with columns of armoured personnel carriers rolling down highways.

The bodies of 10 people were found on Monday evening after a stampede at a Soweto shopping mall, Gauteng premier David Makhura said.

Hundreds of looters raided warehouses and supermarkets in Durban, one of the busiest shipping terminals on the African continent and an import-export hub.

Outside a Durban warehouse of retailer Game, looters stuffed cars with electronic goods and clothes, a Reuters witness said. Inside, the floor was a mess of discarded packaging as the crowd emptied the shelves.

The rand, which had been one of the best performing emerging market currencies during the pandemic, dropped to a three-month low yesterday, and local and hard currency bonds suffered.

Shops and petrol stations have been forced to close while on the streets protesters have hurled stones and police responded with rubber bullets, Reuters journalists said.

Aerial footage from local channel eNCA showed black smoke rising from several Durban warehouses, while debris lay strewn.

Pain-free blood

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Understandably, some diabetes sufferers avoid the painful process by minimizing their tests.

However, this latest test works by embedding an enzyme that detects glucose into a transistor that can then transmit the presence of glucose, according to Paul Dastoor, Professor of Physics at the University of Newcastle in Australia, who led the team that created it.

Since the electronic materials in the transistor are inks, the test can be made through printing at a low cost, Dastoor said.

"The holy grail of glucose testing has been something that is non-invasive," said Dastoor.

"[This test] really does open up the prospect of pain-free, low-cost glucose testing and hopefully much better outcomes for diabetes sufferers," he said.

The new test, Dastoor said, was created by chance as scientists were working on solar cells.

The project secured A\$6.3 million (\$4.7 million) in funding from the Australian government to establish a facility to produce the test kits should clinical trials be passed.

Dastoor said the technology could also be transferred to Covid-19 testing and allergen, hormone and cancer testing.

The university is already working with Harvard University on a test for Covid-19 using same technology, but it's the implications for other testing that has the physicist excited about the potential for the sensors.

"I think it's going to radically change the way we think about medical devices and in particular sensors because we can print these at remarkably low cost," said Dastoor.

Bangladesh Development Bank Ltd.

Head Office, BDBL Bhaban