

## Child, widow raped

FROM PAGE 12  
her.

After a frantic search lasting for hours, the victim was found in the hilly area by her family members, the statement added.

The victim was sent to the One Stop Crisis Centre at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital yesterday for medical examinations, said the OC.

In Cumilla, a team of Rapid Action Battalion-11 Crime Prevention Company-2 arrested the imam early yesterday over raping a 14-year-old madrasa student confining her to his room.

Maj Mohammad Sakib Hossain, company commander of Rab-11 CPC-2, said a special team of Rab arrested imam Abul Bashar from Nur Jahan Hotel area in Cumilla city.

Bashar, 50, of Sobdolpur in Chandina upazila, is the imam of a mosque in Tirchor Noyabari of the same upazila.

Shamsuddin Mohammad Elias, officer-in-charge of Chandina Police Station, said the victim's father filed a rape case with the police station on July 24 against Bashar.

The complainant alleged that Bashar used to visit his house to give his daughter Arabic lessons.

The imam lured the girl to his room adjacent to the mosque on July 22 and

confined her to the room for two days. When the matter came to light, the imam fled on July 24 leaving the girl with custody of his brother Abu Yusuf.

The victim's family later rescued the girl with the help of villagers.

The girl underwent medical examinations at the One Stop Crisis Centre at Cumilla Medical College Hospital, said OC Shamsuddin.

In Joypurhat, a widow was raped in Kalai upazila on Saturday night.

The victim filed a case with Kalai Police Station on Sunday night accusing one Faridul Islam, said police.

Faridul, 40, is from Balukhura village in the same upazila.

According to the case statement, the woman was alone at her home on Saturday night. She went to bed after taking dinner.

As it was raining outside, she went out of the home to see if her cattle were safe in the shed.

As the victim returned to her room, Faridul grabbed her and raped her. At one stage, Faridul fled the scene after the woman started crying for help.

Selim Malik, OC of Kalai Police Station, said police visited the crime scene yesterday and were carrying out drives to arrest the accused.

[Our correspondents in Cox's Bazar, Cumilla and Dinajpur contributed to this report.]



A child receives a nucleic acid test for the Covid-19 coronavirus in Nanjing in China's eastern Jiangsu province yesterday, amid the country's most widespread coronavirus outbreak in months. PHOTO: AFP

## 'Abrupt' US pullout to blame

FROM PAGE 12  
and civil society activists.

It was time the Taliban and the Afghan government accepted each other and moved towards a peaceful solution, he added.

Afghan forces battled yesterday to stop a first major city from falling to the Taliban following weekend offensives by the insurgents on urban centres in a sharp escalation.

Taliban fighters assaulted at least three provincial capitals overnight -- Lashkar Gah, Kandahar and Herat -- after a weekend of heavy fighting that saw thousands of civilians flee the advancing militants.

Fighting raged in Helmand's provincial capital Lashkar Gah, where the Taliban launched coordinated attacks on the city centre and its prison -- just hours after the government announced the deployment of hundreds of commandos to the area, reports AFP.

Clashes have intensified since early May, with the insurgents capitalising on the final stages of the withdrawal of US-led foreign forces after almost 20 years.

**'NO MEDICINES'**  
In southern Afghanistan, fighting continued in Lashkar Gah overnight as Afghan forces beat back a fresh assault from the Taliban.

"Afghan forces on the ground and by air strikes repelled the attack," the military in Helmand said.

Resident Hawa Malalai warned of a growing crisis in the city: "There is fighting, power cuts, sick people in hospital, the telecommunication networks are down. There are no medicines and pharmacies are closed."

Medical charity Doctors Without Border said casualties were mounting in Lashkar Gah.

The United States and Britain said yesterday the Taliban may have committed "war crimes", accusing the insurgents of "massacring civilians" in the town of Spin Boldak on the border with Pakistan.

"In Spin Boldak, Kandahar, the Taliban massacred dozens of civilians in revenge killings. These murders could constitute war crimes; they must be investigated and those Taliban fighters or commanders responsible held accountable," the embassies of Washington and London said in separate tweets.

Meanwhile, thousands more Afghans who may be targets of Taliban violence due to their US affiliations will have the opportunity to resettle as refugees in the United States under a new program announced by the State Department yesterday.

Reuters exclusively reported on plans to set up the "Priority Two" refugee program, covering Afghans who worked for US-funded projects and for US-based non-government bodies and media outlets, earlier yesterday.

"In light of increased levels of Taliban violence, the US government is working to provide certain Afghans, including those who worked with the United States, the opportunity for refugee resettlement to the United States," the State Department said in the announcement.

"This designation expands the opportunity to permanently resettle in the United States to many thousands of Afghans and their immediate family members who may be at risk."

The program comes as fighting surges in Afghanistan ahead of the formal completion of the US troop withdrawal at the end of this month, with the Taliban pushing to capture key provincial capitals.

Representatives approved today, by a close vote, a foreign aid bill that would authorise \$6.9 billion in economic and military assistance over the next two years, but would suspend aid to Pakistan and Greece.

**OPERATION NAKSHI BORDER OUTPOST**  
The Pakistan army formed a strong position at Nakshi Border outpost situated in Sherpur District. The Bangladesh Liberation Army made it a target considering its geographical importance. On August 3, the Bravo and Delta Company of the 8th East Bengal Regiment attacked the border outpost.

The Pakistanis fled the camp and took shelter in a nearby forest. But soon they attacked the freedom fighters. A fierce battle broke out. Pakistani army suffered heavy casualties. Twelve liberation fighters embraced martyrdom.

**SADAT WRITES TO YAHYA ON BANGLADESH ISSUE**  
Egyptian President Sadat wrote to Yahya on the situation in East Pakistan. Sadat was believed to have stressed the need for creating conditions in East Pakistan which would enable refugees to return to their homes.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

## Bangladesh warns against

FROM PAGE 12  
South Asian decisions.

"The Pakistanis," Kissinger wrote in the memorandum, "have played along with the administrative game and have not made an issue of our restrictions. It was clear when I was in Islamabad that they were grateful that the US had not taken the formal step of imposing an embargo. The loss of military supplies bothers the military, but to [Pakistan President] Yahya [Khan] it seems at least as important that the US has not joined others in condemning him."

Kissinger said, during the telephone conversation, that Indians and critics of Pakistan in the Congress were asking for an embargo on arms and economic assistance to Pakistan.

"The extreme people want to cut off everything," he said, and concluded, "on relief we have a fighting chance but arms itself is hopeless."

In considering how to work around pressure for an embargo on arms shipments to Pakistan, Nixon asked about future export licences. Kissinger indicated that no licenses were being authorised "at this time".

Nixon concluded: "We will evaluate as it goes along. We will have to take the heat on this."

Meanwhile, the US House of

rent, but they refused.

"They placed a lot of pressure on us to reach an agreement with the Israeli settlers in which we would be renting from the settler organisations," said Muhammad el-Kurd, from one of four Palestinian families at the heart of the case.

"Of course this is rejected," he said. Justice Isaac Amit called for further documentation and said "we will publish a decision later", but without setting a date.

AFP, Jerusalem

## Israel's top court delays decision on Sheikh Jarrah evictions

Israel's Supreme Court yesterday delayed a decision in the case of Palestinian families facing expulsion by Israeli settlers in annexed east Jerusalem, an issue that exploded into armed conflict in May.

Palestinians said the offer was made that they remain in their properties in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood as "protected tenants" who would recognise Israeli ownership of the homes and pay a symbolic annual

## Irregularities widespread in 3 hospitals

FROM PAGE 12

three hospitals, but the hospital authorities concealed the information from the DGHS as they had no Covid treatment permission from the directorate, found the DGHS committee.

More than 40 Covid-19 patients died at Radical Hospital, according to the report.

During the visit, the committee found only one doctor in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the hospital. The doctor was not wearing any personal protective equipment (PPE).

Oxygen cylinders were kept on the ground floor ignoring safety measures, and this could have caused a serious accident at any moment, the committee found.

Although there are other commercial establishments in the building, there are no separate lift or stairs dedicated for Covid-19 patients, the report said.

Uttara Al-Ashraf General Hospital has been operating a nine-bed ICU with only one ventilator, one high-flow nasal cannula and without sufficient oxygen support and the requisite number of specialist doctors and health workers, the report added.

If a patient's condition deteriorates, the hospital referred the patient to other hospitals due to a lack of treatment support, exposing the patient to further risk, the report said.

The committee found all three hospitals charged Covid-19 patients exorbitantly, at rates much higher than those fixed by the government.

The committee in its report recommended a temporary suspension of Radical Hospital's licence and its treatment activities because it continues to risk patients' lives by dispensing Covid-19 treatment without necessary facilities while charging patients exorbitant amounts.

The hospital has also concealed Covid-19 treatment information, breaching a DGHS notice issued to the hospital on May 9 to stop Covid treatment.

The report also recommended stopping Covid treatment at Shin Shin Japan Hospital and Uttara Al-Ashraf General Hospital.

It also recommended issuing show-cause notices asking why their licences should not be suspended for risking

patients' lives by providing Covid-19 treatment without necessary facilities, over-charging and concealing information on Covid-19 treatment services while not having permission from the directorate, found the DGHS committee.

It also said mobile courts should be deployed to ensure that such hospitals abide by rules and standard practices.

**MORE FINDINGS**

Radical Hospital is operating a 10-bed ICU without sufficient ventilators, high-flow nasal cannulas, sufficient oxygen management and the requisite number of doctors and nurses.

The hospital also collected surplus bills showing various reasons while keeping patients hostage by refusing to discharge them until the bills were paid.

Shin Shin Japan Hospital continued treatment of Covid-19 patients without approval from the DGHS and increased the risk of infection by providing treatment to both Covid and non-Covid patients without proper safety measures.

It charges exorbitantly for oxygen and forces patients to pay more than the government-fixed rates for cardiac monitors, high flow nasal cannulas and service charge.

As a chart of charges were not displayed at public places at the hospital, it appears that the hospital used to collect fees as per the authorities' whims, the report says.

**ALLEGATIONS OF SABUJ'S FAMILY**  
Sabuj, from Sirajdikhan in Munshiganj, had been experiencing breathing problems and after his family could not find beds at various hospitals, they admitted him to Shin Shin Japan Hospital on July 18 after a broker informed them of a vacant ICU bed there.

The daily charge for the ICU bed was Tk 35,000, excluding all other charges, Jyoti Costa, Sabuj's father-in-law, told The Daily Star on Sunday.

He said on July 21, the hospital informed them that the patient immediately needed an Avastin injection, which they collected from Dhanmondi at Tk 80,800.

After the injection was administered, Sabuj started behaving abnormally from 1:30 am on July 23 and stabbed three nurses -- Mitu Rego, Kakoli and Sagar -- on duty at the ICU, he said.

Then, several unknown officials and

staffers, upon the instigation of the hospital's General Manager Shariful Islam, beat him indiscriminately from 1:30 am to 6:00 am, Jyoti said in a complaint lodged with Uttara West Police Station.

His right hand was fractured and his left wrist disjuncted, the complaint said.

Jyoti said when he reached the hospital around 10:00am that morning he found Sabuj with his hands and legs tied to a hospital bed in front of the ICU. Jyoti found bruises on different parts of Sabuj's body.

With the assistance of police, he took Sabuj to United Hospital for treatment where he died on July 26. He had to pay Tk 60,000 extra for the treatment of the nurses, along with a total bill of more than Tk 5 lakh to the Uttara hospital and around Tk 8 lakh to United Hospital.

He said Sabuj was supposed to migrate to the US with his family soon. He also demanded a fair investigation into the incident and punishment to those responsible for killing his son-in-law.

Asked whether the Avastin injection has any such reaction, a retired medicine specialist said under condition of anonymity that the injection is given to critical Covid-19 patients and he had never heard of any such side effects.

The hospital GM Shariful Islam claimed that their staffers were not responsible for the beating and that attendants of other patients assaulted Sabuj. He also claimed that their hospital has sufficient treatment facilities.

Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of Uttara Division of DMP, said Sabuj's lung was 70 percent infected. He was also beaten severely.

"We are waiting for the post mortem report to know the reason behind his death. If his death was caused by the assault, we will take legal action against those involved," he told The Daily Star.

He also said they were collecting information to know whether he was given proper treatment and will then seek the opinion of medical experts.

"If we find any anomalies legal action will be taken. We will also collect a copy of the DGHS investigation on the hospital," he added.

## Princess Diana's

FROM PAGE 12

Mother, the auctioneer said, adding that this seemed to have been from one of the cakes sent to the staff.

The 40-year-old slice, which has been kept in plastic wrap in an old cake tin, was sold to Dominic Winter Auctioneers in 2008 on behalf of Smith's family.

The auctioneer said it "appears to be in exactly the same good condition as when originally sold, but we advise against eating it."

The listing also includes printed Ceremonial and Order of Service programs for the wedding, which had an estimated worldwide television audience of more than 700 million people. It also includes a memorial Royal Wedding Breakfast program.

The auction is on August 11. The cake slice is expected to go for at least 200 pounds, or \$278.

This announcement comes just a few months after Princess Diana's sons agreed to loan her wedding dress to go on public display at Kensington Palace.

A car Prince Charles gave Princess Diana as an engagement present also recently went up for auction, selling for more than £52,000 (\$72,000).

## Sadeque Agro

FROM PAGE 12

airlines flight on July 5, 2021, Deputy Commissioner (Preventive) of Dhaka Customs House Mohammad Abdu Sadeq told media on July 6.

After the flight landed, no one came to the airport to claim the animals.

Abdu Sadeq said customs officials seized the herd as import of Brahman-breed cows is not legal in the country, and the importer could not be located.

The animals were handed over to the Livestock Department, he added.

## DU Prof sued

FROM PAGE 12

complaint, the Facebook post of Prof Karzon "was ugly and defamatory; it hurt crores of Hindu people's religious sentiments as it went viral on social media."

The complaint said, "Prof Karzon posted it on purpose to create religious chaos and to embarrass the government of a non-communal country."

Prior to filing of the case, a general diary was lodged on the matter on July 24.

On July 31, a delegation of Bangladesh Hindu Lawyers' Council led by its president Sunam Kumar Roy met DU Vice-chancellor Md Akhtaruzzaman and submitted a written complaint, seeking action against Prof Karzon.

The accused professor told The Daily Star that the post he shared was a satire and when he realised that it could hurt someone's religious sentiment, he removed it and apologised in another post.

"I apologised, the case was filed only for harassing me."

## Muhith still

FROM PAGE 12

said, seeking prayers from the countrymen.

Muhith on Sunday night had told Momen that everything was alright but there was no newspapers or books with him.

"So, I am supplying him with newspapers and books," Momen said.

Muhith also inquired about the situation of the country.

## Anger as top US Republican jokes about hitting Pelosi

AFP, Washington

The top Republican in the US House of Representatives faced calls to apologize or resign Sunday after joking about hitting speaker Nancy Pelosi with a gavel.

It marked a sharp escalation in a nasty spat between the Republican minority leader Kevin McCarthy and Pelosi, the chamber's top Democrat.

At a fundraising dinner Saturday night in Tennessee, McCarthy spoke with optimism about prospects for his party retaking the House in mid-term elections next year.

At one point attendees presented him with an oversized gavel, prompting him to joke that -- should he become speaker -- he would struggle to resist striking Pelosi with it.

"I want you to watch Nancy Pelosi hand me that gavel. It will be hard not to hit her with it but I will bang it down," McCarthy said to cheers and laughter from the room, according to details shared by a Washington Post reporter and a local Nashville journalist who were at the event.

McCarthy's comments were the latest sign of his deteriorating relations with Pelosi -- who last week called her Republican counterpart a "moron" for opposing mask mandates to fight the resurgent Covid-19 pandemic.

Democrats pounced on McCarthy Sunday.

Representative Ted Lieu of California urged McCarthy to apologize or resign, a call echoed by fellow California lawmaker Eric Swalwell.

"Violence against women is not a joke," tweeted Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez of New Mexico, one of a string of female lawmakers who voiced outrage at the comments.

## Complaints of blackmail led to arrest

FROM PAGE 12

lodge the case against Mou with Mohammadpur Police Station.

During the drive, Mou alleged that she was being framed.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, two security guards and a chef of Mou's house said the DB team took liquor into the house during the raid.

A security guard said, "A man came around 9:00pm [on Sunday] and told me that there was a parcel for Mou madam. He asked whether she was at home. I called madam over the intercom and found that she was at home. Within moments, 14-15 people in plainclothes entered our building. They took away our phones."

Another security guard told this newspaper, "They were asking: where is the whisky. As they found nothing illegal in the house after conducting a search for about two hours, they themselves were saying when the goods will come.... After 11:00pm, another 12-13 people came. They brought with them cartons."

Police, however, in the case statements claimed that the liquor and drugs were seized in the two houses.

The duo used to bring people to their house parties and sold liquor, and yaba pills. Another two-three people are involved in this crime, added the case statements.

Despite several attempts, this newspaper could not reach Harun Ur Rashid, joint commissioner of DB (North Division) of DMP, over the phone for comments.

Sources in the DB yesterday said detectives launched the drive against the models following complaints

about blackmail from some influential people.

A source close to the investigation said Piasha got into trouble with an influential person of a business group. He was the first individual to have lodged a complaint with the DB about the model and it triggered Sunday's drive.

Police claimed that the two models are members of a blackmailing gang.

Yesterday, the investigation officers produced the arrestees before the courts seeking 10-day remand for each of the accused.

The defence in both the cases submitted petitions to the courts, seeking bail and cancellation of remand prayers, saying that their clients were implicated in the cases as part of a conspiracy to harass them.

The magistrates, however, rejected the bail prayers and placed the duo on remand.

**BRIEFING AFTER ARRESTS**  
Briefing reporter after the arrests, DB Joint Commissioner Harun said they received complaints of blackmailing against the duo.

"These two models are the queen of night. They sleep in the day and carry out these activities at night. They are members of a blackmailing gang. They used to invite people from well-off families, arrange drugs for them and take compromising photos of them. Later, they would blackmail them with those photos," the DB official said.

The DB claimed to have seized 780 yaba pills, eight bottles of liquor and four bottles of beer from Piasha's Baridhara home.

## Macron takes to Tik Tok to push Covid vaccines

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday took to Tik Tok and Instagram to try counter misinformation about vaccines following a third weekend of demonstrations over a controversial Covid health pass.

Macron discarded his customary dark suit and tie for a black t-shirt in a short video from the presidency's holiday residence in southern France, in which he repeated that vaccines were the "only weapon" that could beat back a fourth wave of coronavirus.