

HALALA MARRIAGE

Court issues warrants for 9 people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Panchagarh court has issued arrest warrants for nine people allegedly involved in issuing a fatwa for halala marriage that led to a middle-aged couple being isolated for four months in their village.

Judicial Magistrate MM Mahbub Islam passed the order after the police submitted an investigation report on Sunday, said Court Inspector Anisur Rahman. The matter, however, came light on Tuesday afternoon.

Officer-in-Charge of Debiganj Police Station and also the investigation officer Jamal Hossain told The Daily Star that he was yet to get the warrants.

On August 11, in a suo motu rule, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate

Matiur Rahman asked Jamal to submit the investigation report by August 22.

The OC probed the incident in Salimnagar village and submitted the report accusing nine people, including Md Shahjahan, Mufti Md Anwar Hossain, Md Nasir Uddin, Md Amir Chan, Md Shaheed, Md Sorman Ali, Md Julhaque, Md Mastafa, and Md Rassel.

Sources said Aynal Haque, 52, and his wife Jamiran, 42, had been isolated in the village for almost four months after a community leader issued a fatwa that Jamiran must marry another man, get a divorce from that man, and then remarry Aynal, which the couple refused to comply with.

As the couple refused, the accused asked everyone in the neighbourhood to isolate them.

Bangladesh allowance

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concern to Pakistan President Yahya Khan over the secret military trial of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bandarnaike was one of the 32 heads of states and governments who Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had addressed over Bangabandhu's trial.

CHINA PROVES UNWORTHY OF SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra today derided China for betraying the cause of Bangladesh's liberation struggle. It said, "It is amazing to note the dearth of suggestions from China camp for the 75 million people of Bangladesh. What, these so-called socialists think, should the people of Bangladesh do? They are being massacred without respite, without trial unless they belong to such communal and reactionary hordes as the Jamat-Islami and Muslim League or unless they agree to become out-and-out traitors of the people. Their properties

are being looted or expropriated under one pretext or another. Their sisters and wives are being brutally raped. What must they do faced with such a terrible fate? Do these Chinese and the Sinophiles want them to lick Pakistani boots and beg mercy, mercy that they may not be blessed with, just because that would help the Chinese foreign policy? Well, sorry, we refuse to do that. We refuse to do that because history tells us to wage this war. This is a just war because it is a struggle for people's liberation."

The clandestine radio station further said, "We have no doubt that with this act against the people of Bangladesh, China has put herself on the dock of history. She had a great role to play. A role to lead the downtrodden of the world toward a great future. But she has now proved herself unworthy of such noble leadership. This is, indeed, the most shameful phase in China's history."

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

Venomous sea snakes

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Lynch, and this was more common in the May-August mating season.

During this period male sea snakes look for females and start courting them as soon as they see them, study co-author Rick Shine, professor of biological sciences at Macquarie University, Sydney, told CNN.

This largely involves flicking the female's body with his tongue to check the chemicals on her skin to make sure she is the right species and sex, added Shine.

"Then aligning his body with hers, maybe wrapping coils around her to

hold her in place so he can position himself for copulation," said Shine. "But females often aren't interested, so they zoom away and hide in the coral."

Male sea snakes were more likely than females to approach divers, particularly during mating season, according to the study.

In some cases they would flick their tongue at the diver, and in 13 cases they charged at the diver. When a male sea snake charged the diver it came straight after an unsuccessful chase of a female, or following an interaction with a rival male.

Homegrown mRNA Covid

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based vaccines yet in its immunisation programme ahead of a potential third coronavirus wave.

"It's too early to get excited about this [Genova] vaccine as phase-3 trials are yet to be completed. By the time this vaccine reaches the market, India would have vaccinated a majority of its population already," said Prashant Khadayat, a pharma analyst at GlobalData.

Developing an mRNA vaccine would however help India "display its

scientific innovation at a global level", Khadayat added.

The technology behind Genova's vaccine, also used in shots made by US drugmakers Moderna Inc and Pfizer Inc, prompts the human body to make a protein that is part of the virus to trigger an immune response.

Genova is also investing in scaling up its vaccine manufacturing capacity. Its parent firm, Emcure Pharmaceuticals, filed draft papers with the market regulator for an initial public offering last week.

Rolling Stones drummer

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going to miss you man, peace and love to the family, Ringo," former Beatles drummer Ringo Starr tweeted.

Watts was born in 1941 during World War Two and grew up in the Wembley area of northwest London, attending Harrow school of Art before starting work as a graphic artist with an advertising agency.

Unlike his bandmates, Watts had been in a successful group before agreeing to join the Rolling Stones in 1963. He married Shirley Ann Shepherd in 1964 and they remained together until his death - the first regular member of the band to pass away since Jones in 1969.

Watts played drums on all of the group's 30 albums and on every tour, until he pulled out of the 13-date "No Filter" US tour due to start this September after an emergency medical procedure.

Probe reports

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enquiry stage," he said, adding, "We have obtained reports from around 22 places. Once we receive all the reports, we will investigate whether money laundering has taken place... But we do not want to say everything right now as the issues are still under investigation."

Rab arrested Helena Jahangir, who had earlier lost her AL post, in her residence on July 29.

Two cases were filed against her with the Gulshan Police Station and one with Pallabi Police Station.

The next day, detectives arrested two models -- Faria Mahbub Piasha and Moriom Akter Mou -- in drug cases filed with Mohammadpur and Gulshan police stations.

On August 4, Rab has arrested Pori Moni in her Banani residence. Producer Nazrul Islam Raj was arrested the same day.

All the accused were charged under the Narcotics Control Act, Special Powers Act, Pornography Control Act and Arms Control Act.

Piasha and Helena have already given confessional statements in court.

DU to reopen dorms in first week of Oct

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DU Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof ASM Maksud Kamal told this newspaper that all the resident students have been asked to get double dose of Covid vaccines by September 15.

The government is considering reopening educational institutions in phases with universities set to be the first to resume in-person classes amid the pandemic.

On March 17 last year, all educational institutions were closed to contain the spread of Covid. The closure -- recently extended till August 31 -- has led to cancellation of exams and left academic calendars in disarray.

Education Minister Dipu Moni, and State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossen yesterday said necessary preparations have been made for reopening schools and starting in-person classes in phases.

Zakir said the teachers of primary schools have been asked to keep their school campuses clean and ready for reopening.

Talking to reporters at his secretariat office, he said they want to reopen schools soon. The decision in this regard will be finalised upon instructions from the higher level of government.

He further said the government

plans to reopen primary schools in phases. Students of class-III, IV and V, may need to attend schools twice a week and students of class-I and II once a week.

Several upazila primary education officials told this newspaper that they received verbal instructions from high-ups of the Directorate of Primary Education to complete inspection of all primary schools in their designated areas by August 31.

They said field-level officials will have to oversee attendance of teachers at schools, home assignments for students and sanitation facilities at primary schools.

Zakir said the government has made preparations for holding Primary Education Completion Examinations for class-V students and terminal exams for other primary students.

But if the Covid situation worsens, the government may cancel the exams as in the previous year and students will be evaluated through assessment of homework.

He further said the terminal exams will be held based on shortened syllabus.

Speaking at a discussion in the capital, Dipu Moni said it's good news that the Covid infection rate in the country is falling gradually.

"We will be able to reopen educational institutions soon if the infection rate continues to fall."

She said educational institutions will be reopened in phases.

"It's because the number of students in our classrooms is more than the entire population of many countries... And it is important to maintain social distancing in the classrooms."

Road, Transport and Bridges Minister and AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader attended the programme as chief guest. The party's Cultural Secretary Asim Kumar Ukil, among others, addressed it.

The Awami League Sub Committee on Cultural Affairs arranged the discussion marking the National Mourning Day.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education has asked its regional officials to ensure that school authorities keep the educational institutions clean.

DSHE Director Belal Hossain said they have sent directives to the regional officials in this regard.

"Keeping in mind both the Covid and dengue situations, we also asked them to ensure that the school campuses are clean for reopening soon," he told this newspaper.

A principal mired in corruption

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monthly pay order (MPO) facilities.

On August 17, Abdul Kader, assistant director (college-3) of DSHE, issued a letter mentioning Wadud's MPO facilities has been withheld as the allegation of fund embezzlement, irregularities and misdeeds were proven against him.

Kader also issued a show-cause notice on Wadud asking him to reply within seven days as to why his MPO will not be cancelled permanently.

In another letter, the officer requested the president of the college governing body to file a criminal case against Wadud and inform the DSHE of updates. The case is yet to be filed.

Sharif Enamul Kabir, the college governing body president, declined to comment on the report.

WHAT THE DIA REPORT SAYS
The teachers alleged that Wadud started embezzling college funds soon after he was appointed the acting principal in February 2012 by late local MP Aslamul Haque, who was the college's governing body president.

Haque, the governing body president, appointed Wadud, then a lecturer, as the acting principal bypassing the then vice-principal and several senior teachers and his appointment as the principal afterwards did not follow due procedure, found the DIA investigation.

Since he had the blessings of the lawmaker, no one dared to speak up against his corruption, the teachers said. Along the way, Wadud enriched himself rather well.

The DIA investigation found Wadud took two personal loans with the amount never returned, owns two flats and paid a big amount for another 2,100 square feet flat in the capital that he booked and has an investment of Tk 10 lakh in the stock market and fixed deposit receipts.

The investigation also found a mismatch of Tk 5.66 crore between the cash book income and the register of collection.

The four-member DIA audit team in their report mentioned 34 specific cases of irregularities, corruption and misappropriation of college funds

against Wadud.

He took Tk 5 lakh from the college fund for his father-in-law's medical treatment, Tk 3 lakh for construction of a three-story building at his village home and Tk 2 lakh for purchasing floor tiles for one of his flats.

None of the amounts was returned, the DIA report said.

He embezzled Tk 6.8 lakh producing fictitious vouchers on purchase of construction materials for extension of the fifth and sixth floors of a college building in 2013 and another Tk 9.93 lakh producing a fake bill for making uniforms of college students.

Another Tk 15.04 lakh was spent for 'repairing benches' just 10 months after those were purchased from Lipi Furniture Mart.

Several teachers told The Daily Star Lipi Furniture Mart is owned by an Awami League leader and was a close associate of the lawmaker.

The furniture shop also got the commission to paint and renovate a college building, they said.

Lipi Furniture Mart getting work orders at different times without any tender was a violation of rules and ill-intended, the DIA report said.

The investigation also found Tk 10.80 lakh paid against a bill from Lipi Furniture Mart where no voucher was attached.

Spending more than Tk 10.17 lakh for constructing college boundary walls without any tender and disbursement of Tk 12.33 lakh as honorarium to members of the development sub-committee are against the rules, the report said.

During Wadud's tenure as the principal, Tk 18.49 lakh was spent for a street rally against drugs, terrorism and militancy and another Tk 6.45 lakh on education tours, which are unacceptable and tantamount to misappropriation.

The college did not give any money receipt to students it charged for testimonial, fees book and coaching fees, the DIA investigation found.

Since Wadud was appointed as the principal, 19 full-time teachers and 19 part-time teachers were recruited without following the rules and

regulations.

Several college teachers alleged that he took huge sums as bribes from those recruited in connivance with lawmaker Aslam, the former governing body president.

The DIA report also found that about Tk 24.25 crore were not deposited to banks, which it said was tantamount to temporary misappropriation.

Each students' ID card was priced between Tk 80 and Tk 90, but the investigation could not ascertain how much each of those actually cost.

The Daily Star contacted Arman Chowdhury, owner of Identity Source that supplied the ID cards, who said he charged much less than Tk 60 for each piece.

The college teachers said such ID cards are actually available in the market at Tk 35 per piece.

WHAT WADUD HAS TO SAY
The findings in the DIA report are false and he will apply for reinvestigation, Wadud said.

"It was not possible for me to provide all vouchers and documents of nine years to the committee in just three days," he told the correspondent on July 8.

He said he has all documents in hand and will appeal for reinvestigation after getting the DIA report.

Regarding the three flats mentioned in the DIA report, Wadud said he purchased the flat (at Janata Housing in Mirpur) by taking a bank loan of Tk 20 lakh and got a government flat at Swapanagar project through a lottery in 2014-2015.

He also admitted to having booked another flat at AK Udayan Development.

Wadud, who joined the college as a lecturer in the marketing department, said he purchased the flats with his savings and family support.

He told the correspondent that their village home in Natore was a two-story building and now they are renovating it to a three-storey one.

During a recent visit at Wadud's ancestral home at Dorihasmari in Gurudaspur, our Natore correspondent found a newly constructed three-storey building beside the old two-storey one.

Funding on decline, challenges up

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by the Taliban, which has already displaced millions of Afghans both in and outside the country.

"Funding for the Rohingyas will definitely drop because of Afghanistan and other crises in the coming days," said Md Shahidul Haque, former foreign secretary and currently IOM Bangladesh's senior adviser on migration and humanitarian policy.

Concerned over funding shortage, the Bangladesh government has been calling for the UN to start their operations in Bhashanchar, where the government sheltered 18,000 Rohingyas since last December as part of its plan to relocate one lakh of them from the camps in Cox's Bazar.

Mostly the local NGOs are now providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingyas in Bhashanchar with their own funds. But that is not going to last long if major international donors do not fund them, NGO officials said.

"We have almost finalised the protection policy of Rohingyas in Bhashanchar and the UN is likely to start operations there by September," Disaster Management and Relief Secretary Md Mohsin told this correspondent.

Humanitarian aid officials operating in Cox's Bazar said food rationing, housing, roads, water and sanitation facilities in Rohingya camps in Teknaf and Ukhia, home to nearly one million refugees, are now much better than before when they had fled the brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017.

However, newer challenges have emerged. Those include crimes like extortion by Rohingya gangs in the camps, conflicts over power between different Rohingya groups, lack of education and jobs.

Rohingyas coming out of the camps and taking risky sea journeys for Malaysia or Indonesia have also increased in recent times.

In the last two years, more than 1,300 Rohingyas were rescued in 11 districts while being trafficked, said police in Cox's Bazar.

According to the UNHCR, at least

2,413 Rohingyas took sea journeys to reach the two Southeast Asian countries last year. Of them, 218 died or were missing, making it the deadliest year on record for refugee journeys in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea since 2015.

"Rohingya crisis appears to be a protracted one. This has created huge frustration among the Rohingyas. Many of them are getting involved in criminal activities and leaving the camps," said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of COAST Trust, which has been working in the refugee camps for years.

The humanitarian services have been slashed significantly in the camps since the pandemic. Majority of the Rohingya youths have nothing to do at the camps and the children who used to go to the primary schools also cannot do it now due to the pandemic, he said.

Many children go to religious schools and there is no monitoring as to who funds them and what they are actually taught, Rezaul Karim said.

"There are reports of increasing level of crimes like extortion, domestic violence, prostitution, illegal drug trade and conflicts between various groups," he told this correspondent.

The development expert said it is no wonder that extremist groups can take advantage of the Rohingyas' vulnerability and exploit them. "We really don't know what happens in the dark of the night in the camps."

Policymakers need to seriously think of ways to address these risks until they are repatriated. Ignoring the concerns may boomerang for Bangladesh, which showed so much humanity to the displaced people, he added.

Noor Khan Liton, chief adviser of Human Rights Support Society, shares the same view.

They both said it is extremely important that the Rohingyas are provided education and engaged in income-generating activities and that authorities strictly monitor the camps day and night to prevent extremist groups.

"Presently, a small portion of the Rohingyas men and women are employed by NGOs or UN projects, but

the majority are jobless," Noor Khan said.

He suggested that the government take initiatives to engage them in income-generating activities within the camps so that they are prevented from getting into crimes and militant groups and their dependence on foreign aid comes down.

Rezaul Karim suggested the government ensure electricity in all the camps, allow NGO employees to stay in the campsites at night to prevent unwanted incidents by any vested quarters.

He said while the fund for the Rohingyas is dwindling, it is also important that the UN and other international agencies pay attention to its effective use by cutting overhead costs. Slashing foreign staff and involving more national NGOs in operations could help in this case in a big way.

Development activists say a certain amount of funds will be required, and it is very difficult for the government to bear huge sums every year for the Rohingyas from its own budget.

According to the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh's economy is burdened with an estimated \$1.21 billion a year for supporting the Rohingyas.

Shahidul Haque, also senior fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance, North South University, said Bangladesh is counting enormous economic, social and environmental losses by sheltering the Rohingyas.

"The world must not pass the burden onto Bangladesh. Bangladesh needs to conduct joint campaigns for funding, apart from creating pressure for repatriation," he said.

In response to queries by email, UNHCR said the coronavirus pandemic compounded vulnerabilities for the refugees and host communities alike.

"As one of the world's most populous nations, and having generously hosted Rohingya refugees for decades, Bangladesh needs robust and sustained international support," it said.

Man in jail for 4 days on fake warrant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A 65-year-old farmer in Narsingdi's Monohardi upazila was released yesterday, after four days of imprisonment against a fake warrant.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court in Dhaka released the victim -- Abdur Rashid -- yesterday afternoon as it did not find any case or arrest warrant against him.

According to Supreme Court lawyer Abu Sayeed Siddiqui Tipu, Rashid was shown arrested in a case filed over an attempted murder but the court did not find any such case against him.

In fact, no arrest warrant was issued against him, he further said, adding that the court directed the authorities to release him immediately.

Mohammad Atiqur Rahman, the jailer of Narsingdi District Jail, said the arrestee walked out of Narsingdi jail around 1:30pm yesterday.

Enamul Huq Sagar, additional superintendent of Narsingdi police, said they were investigating why such an incident occurred.

Rashid, a father of five, is a resident of Tarakandi village in the upazila.

According to his family members, Omar Faruk, sub-inspector of Monohardi Police Station, arrested Rashid from his home on August 19.

Contacted, the SI said that the arrest warrant was issued by the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court, the family members claimed.

Rashid was later sent to jail by a district court.

The victim's family members submitted the documents of the arrest warrant to the CMM court through lawyer Tipu on Sunday as the court was closed on Friday and Saturday.

Rashid's son Jahirul Islam demanded punishment for those involved in the incident claiming that a group of people were trying to harass his father because of a land-related dispute.

Court sets Oct 20

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Two other cases filed over undermining the national flag and celebrating "fake birthday" on August 15 also remain pending with the Second Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

Moreover, several other cases, including three arson cases filed with Cumilla's Chaudhagram Police Station, are also now pending with Cumilla courts.

Khaleda, who is now out of jail following an executive order from the government, is staying at her Gulshan residence.

She was earlier released from the capital's Evercare Hospital after 54 days of treatment for Covid-19 and other complications.

Complainant's

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inspector Liaqat Ali, former officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station Pradeep Kumar Das and assistant sub-inspector Liton Mia -- cross-examined her.

Earlier, on Monday, while placing her deposition before the court, Sharmin, who is the elder sister of Maj (ret'd) Sinha, said the victim was shot dead by Liaqat Ali as per instructions from Pradeep.

Hours after placing her deposition, lawyers of 12 accused out of 15 on Monday cross-examined her. Lawyers of the rest three accused cross-examined her yesterday, said the court's Public Prosecutor Faridul Alam.

The court's Judge Ismail Hossain on Monday started recording deposition of witnesses in the murder case. Sharmin was the first to testify.

There are a total of 83 witnesses mentioned in charge sheet. The court earlier summoned 15 of them to appear before the court and place their depositions in the first phase between August 23 and August 25.

Complying with the court directive, Sinha's associate Shahedul Islam Sifat yesterday appeared before the court that began recording her deposition at 5:00pm.

All the 15 accused of the case were produced before the court amid tight security at 9:45am yesterday.

Journalists were taking photos of the accused while they were getting down from the prison van. At that time the case prime accused Pradeep Kumar Das told journalists, "Why you are taking so many photos. Don't you know me?"

On June 27, the court framed charges against 15 accused.

Of them, 12 are policemen, including suspended OC Pradeep Kumar Das, police inspector Liaqat Ali, sub-inspector Md Shahjahan and assistant sub-inspector Liton Mia.

The others accused are suspended police sub-inspector Nandadul Rakshit, and suspended constables Sagar Deb, Kamal Hossain, Abdullah Al Mamun, Safanur Karim, Rubel Sharma, Mohammad Abdullah and Mohammad Rajib.

The remaining three accused are Nurul Amin, Nezam Uddin and Ayaz Uddin, close aides of the accused policemen. All the accused are now in jail.

On December 13, the investigators submitted the charge sheet of the case against the 15, about five months after Sinha was killed in police firing at a check post in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila on July 31 last year.