



The three-way footbridge right in the middle of the capital's Farmgate intersection is always crammed with office-goers and students among other pedestrians. Amid this congestion, hawkers station themselves on the sides to take advantage of the inflow of potential customers. This in turn constricts the space even more, which inconveniences people crossing the road. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY TODAY

813 girls raped in last 8 months

Says report of National Girl Child Advocacy Forum

NILIMA JAHAN

Even though rape laws were amended last year to allow for the death penalty, a total of 813 girl children were subjected to rape, of whom 110 were subjected to gang rape in the first eight months of this year, revealed a report.

A total of 79 girl children with disabilities were subjected to rape in this period, while another 127 girl children also faced attempts to rape, the report of National Girl Child Advocacy Forum said.

Although there is a High Court directive on the disposal of rape or murder cases within 180 days of filing them with Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals, this is not executed in reality, the report found.

Sexual harassment of girl children in Bangladesh has increased by seven percent in the first eight months of this year, compared to 2020, the report also revealed.

The report, titled "Girl Children Situation Monitoring Report 2021", was prepared by the forum, based on reports of 24 daily newspapers, in 13 categories from

January to August, this year.

It will be officially launched today.

According to the report, a total of 112 girls were subjected to sexual harassment and torture from January to August 2021, of whom four were girl children with disabilities and 21 were subjected to pornography.

In most cases, the perpetrators were family members, relatives, teachers and stalkers.

A total of 193 girls were also killed in this period, due to rape, sexual harassment and family feud, while another 153 girls died by suicide.

In this period, nine girl children were subjected to acid attacks due to family feud and rejection of love proposals, while another 140 was subjected to trafficking and abduction.

Child marriage was at its peak during the pandemic. According to a survey of the forum conducted in 136 unions of Bangladesh from August 2020 to August this year, a total of 1,253 girl children were married before 18.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

A loss of Tk 1,223cr!

Ex-Biman officials submit statement before JS watchdog over lease of two Boeing 777 aircraft from Egypt that remained grounded for 2yrs

RASHIDUL HASAN

Two former top officials of Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday submitted their statement before a parliamentary body regarding taking lease of two Boeing 777 aircraft from Egypt, which led to huge losses at Biman.

They are Air Marshal (ret'd) Jamal Uddin Ahmed, former chairperson of Biman Bangladesh's board of directors, and Mosaddeq Ahmed, former managing director of the national airliner.

The parliamentary standing committee on the civil aviation ministry on September 8 directed the two to appear before the committee's meeting and submit their testimonies.

Leased from Egypt Air in 2014 for five years with stringent conditions that went against Biman's interests, the planes remained grounded from 2017, due to engine defects.

One was then returned to Egypt Air in July 2019 and the other in October of that year.

As per the lease agreement, Biman had to pay Tk 10 crore a month to Egypt Air, even if the planes remained grounded.

A probe by civil aviation and tourism ministry in March 2019 concluded that the terms and conditions of the "non-transparent" lease agreement clearly went against Biman's interests.

The probe body found that a section of Biman officials inked the non-transparent deal for personal gain, sources said, quoting the probe report.

A section of then Biman officials involved in the agreement signing actually did not want the planes to fly. They reportedly benefited while the planes remained grounded, sources in Biman said.

The revenue collected by operating the two aircraft was Tk 2,200 crore but the cost

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

12 Rohingyas among 14 held with 3.96 lakh yaba

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rab arrested 14 persons including 12 Rohingyas with 3.96 lakh yaba pills and a fishing boat from the river Karnaphuli in Chattogram early yesterday.

Rab officials said the contraband yaba tablets were being smuggled from Myanmar.

The arrestees are Abul Kalam (27), Abul Fayed (50), Monir Hossain (45), Alam (41), Rafiq (29), Yahia (28), Dil Mohammed (23), Mojibur Rahman (19), Abdul Majid (28), Tarek (19), Hossen (42), Basir Ahmed (22), Monjur Alam (19), and Ekram Ullah (19).

Among them, Abul Kalam and Fayed are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

THROWING STONES AT TRAINS

29 injured in 110 incidents this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On August 15, five-year-old Azmir Islam was returning to Syedpur with his family on an intercity train. As the train reached near the signal at Nilphamari's Syedpur station in the evening, a stone, thrown from outside, hit Azmir's right eye, leaving him injured.

Later, doctors said his eye was severely damaged.

Including Azmir, at least 29 people got injured after miscreants threw stones at running trains this year.

At least 110 incidents of stone throwing took place this year, shattering 103 glass windows, stated Bangladesh Railway (BR) at a meeting held yesterday to discuss how to prevent such incidents, with Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan as chief guest.

The minister gave several directives,

Stone Throwing	BR's East Zone	BR's West Zone
Incidents	66	44
Injuries	16	13

- DIRECTIVES ISSUED BY MINISTER**
- Enhance vigilance of police and Railway Nirapatta Bahini
 - Involve local administrations
 - Engage media to raise awareness

SOURCE: BANGLADESH RAILWAY

including enhancing vigilance of police and Railway Nirapatta Bahini along the lines, BR Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also gave instructions to raise awareness in this regard and directed the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Dengue cases cross 18,000 mark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two more dengue patients died while 217 patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the new cases, 43 are from outside Dhaka. With yesterday's hospitalisation, the number of dengue cases has crossed the 18,000 mark in the country.

With the new cases, a total of 7,651 were diagnosed during September. Of the total infected, 2,272 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,698 were hospitalised in August, 2,286 patients in July, 272 in June, and 43 in May while the rest were admitted

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Access to info vital amid pandemic

Speakers tell Article 19 webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information on public health emergencies during a pandemic must not be hidden from people, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

They also stressed the heightened need for access to important public health information amid the pandemic.

The webinar titled "Citizens' Right to Information during Public Health Crisis" was organised by Article 19 on the occasion of International Day for Universal Access to Information.

The day is observed on September 28.

"The pandemic has made us to think about the importance of information with fresh perspectives. Even two years ago, we did not realise the extent of mismanagement and corruption in the country's health sector," said

- KEY POINTS**
- Involving people in dealing with pandemic
 - Giving everyone the right to speak
 - Digital, info literacy to combat fake news
 - Enhancing journalists' capacity in health reporting

Mithila Farzana, Current Affairs Editor for Ekattor Television.

Dr Mushtaq Hossain, adviser at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, said, "It is a must to involve people in dealing with the pandemic. Giving everyone the right to speak facilitates understanding of the overall situation and creates an atmosphere of healthy bargaining."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Engage civil society

Say speakers for effective implementation of dev projects

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Engagement of civil society and elected peoples' representatives is a need of the day for effective implementation of the development projects that often see irregularities amid poor oversight, said lawmakers and citizen groups at an event yesterday.

At a seminar jointly organised by COAST Foundation and the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL) at a city hotel, they said they also want a legal framework for civil society engagement in implementation of development project.

They also said sustainable development would hardly be achieved through the existing development planning and implementation paradigm.

In a key note presentation, Aminul Hoque of COAST Foundation said the government approves thousands of development projects every year but the Internal Monitoring & Evaluation Division (IMED) is not able to ensure effective monitoring of those projects.

Therefore, civil society engagement during project implementation and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



The DIC Road at the capital's Malibagh Chowdhury Para was dug right in the middle to install underground cables. A month on, the work is showing no signs of completion, piling an endless barrage of suffering on commuters. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Khulna city's Royal Mor looked less like an intersection and more like a small pond after yesterday's rainfall. The situation was similar in many of the city's roads.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Rain disrupts life in Khulna city

Two-thirds of city face waterlogging, residents point to improper drainage

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

After yesterday noon's rainfall, two-thirds of Khulna city had to deal with severe waterlogging. The rain inundated the city and made residents suffer immensely.

Amirul Azad, senior Met officer of Khulna Regional Met Office, told The Daily Star that Khulna recorded 40 millimetres of rainfall from 12pm to 3pm. The weather is expected to be sunnier today, he said.

Issues mounted yesterday, as the rainwater did not recede fast enough from most areas, because of siltation and adjoining canals being grabbed, said locals.

Md Rubel Mollick, a tea-stall owner at Sheikhpara area, said almost all the drains of Tatultala, Moilapota and Shibbari were filled with garbage.

"Khulna City Corporation (KCC) seldom comes to clean the drains. In just two hours, my home was flooded because of the sudden rain," he added.

Masuk Ahmed, a resident of Basu Para, said, "Just a little rainfall caused such a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Another case filed against Rassel, wife

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Evaly CEO Mohammad Rassel and nine others have been sued in another case filed over embezzlement of Tk 70,099 through forgery.

The nine others are Rassel's wife and Evaly chairman Shamima Nasrin; vice-presidents Ahmed Jahid and Mehedi Hasan; directors Atiur Rahman and Firoz Hossain; executive directors Arifullah Khan and Ehsan Chowdhury; head of commercial Sazzad Alam; and chief operative officer Torikul Kamrul.

On September 27, Advocate Alogir Hossain Rigan, also a customer of Evaly, filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahmuda Akter, court sources said.

The magistrate took cognisance of the case, recorded the complainant's statements, directed the officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station to investigate the case and submit a report before the court by November 8.

In the case statement, the complainant said he paid Tk 70,099 to Evaly for a motorcycle that he never received. The amount was not refunded either even though the complainant asked for it several times.

This comes after Muzahidur Rahman, an Evaly customer, filed a case on September 22 with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Debdash Chandra Adhikary against Rassel and his wife over embezzlement of Tk 85,000 through forgery.

On September 23, another Dhaka court directed police to interrogate Rassel at the jail gate for a day within three working days in the case.

Besides, two other cases had been filed against the couple with Gulshan and Dhanmondi police stations separately on September 16 and 17.

On September 16, Rab arrested the couple during a raid at their flat in the capital's Mohammadpur.