



Labourers of a steel re-rolling mill, in the capital's Postogola Shoshan Ghat area, seen engaged in dangerous work without any proper safety gear or tools. The authorities of such mills and factories hardly pay attention to workers' safety, which often results in tragic accidents. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Girl found dead in Rangpur victim support centre

### 2 police personnel closed; probe body formed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Authorities withdrew two police personnel yesterday in connection with the death of a young girl at the victim support centre of Kotwali Police Station on Sunday.

Rangpur's Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Abu Maruf Hossain told reporters yesterday that he is heading a three-member body, formed on the police commissioner's directive, to probe the incident.

The other members are Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Menhazul Alam and Assistant Commissioner of Police (CTSB) Mahbub-ul-Alam.

Assistant Sub-inspector Nadira Akhter and constable Afroza Begum of Kotwali Police Station were withdrawn and attached to the police lines due to their alleged negligence of duty, the DC said.

The body of 19-year-old Ruhi was recovered from the victim support centre of the police station around noon on Sunday. It was later sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for an autopsy, said the DC, adding that the body was handed to family members yesterday evening, following the autopsy.

Ruhi is the daughter of Sekendar Ali of Hariyarghat village in Jhenaidah.

Maruf claimed Ruhi died by suicide.

On January 22, Ruhi had come to Rangpur to meet a boy named Akash, the DC said. Akash's mobile phone was switched off at one stage, and the girl started wandering in the area till midnight. Haragachha police rescued her and took her to the victim support centre.

## RISKY DWELLING

### Govt report recommends relocating 6,000 Rohingyas living on hill slopes

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Around 6,000 Rohingyas should be evacuated from two camps in Cox's Bazar to avert casualties as they are living on hilly slopes that are vulnerable to landslides, said a government report.

The Department of Environment (DoE) report said the hillocks of the camps, which have been razed by 75 to 90 degrees, are at risk of landslides, especially during the heavy rain expected in the coming monsoon.

The report, prepared after a field visit on December 21, said around 6,000 people of 1,267 families are living on the slopes of hillocks at Camps 21 and 22 in Teknaf and should be evacuated from there before the next monsoon.

Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Shah Rezwan Hayat told The Daily Star that he was yet to receive the official order to act on the information but received a copy of the environmental assessment report.

"After receiving the copy and instructions, we will review the report and will take appropriate actions consulting with all stakeholders," he said.

Hayat said Camp 21 is one of the most vulnerable to landslide among the Rohingya camps.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the DoE report. Md Ashraf Uddin, DoE director general, said they have already sent letters to the authorities concerned mentioning the report findings to take actions.

Local authorities and international aid agencies have long been warning about a looming natural disaster in the densely populated camps during monsoon.

According to RRRRC office sources, six Rohingya

refugees were killed due to landslides and flooding in the camps last year.

Over 7,00,000 Rohingyas, who crossed over into the coastal district fleeing persecution in Myanmar since August 2017, are dwelling in shacks made of thin bamboo and plastic sheets and too weak to stand heavy rains and storms.

The Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar is the world's



largest refugee camp as more than one million have been living in the 34 camps in the district since 2017.

The report said the total land area of Camp 21 is around 99.86 acre and the whole camp is located on hillocks.

A total of 16,000 families are living in Camp 21 and among them some 5,500 people are living in landslide-vulnerable areas on the slopes of the hillocks.

"Due to heavy rain, there is a chance of landslide in the coming monsoon ... As drainage system is not proper, there is a chance of landslide and

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## A horrifying journey by bus

### Gang robs passengers; cops seem reluctant to record case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After completing a two-day training, Shafiqul Islam, a resident at a Tangail hospital, along with a friend got on a bus in Dhaka's Abdullahpur to go to Tangail around 12:30am on Friday.

It was not long before he realised that most of the 10-12 people on the bus were robbers. He had no clue that eight hours of torture was ahead of him.

Talking to The Daily Star on Sunday, he said he and his friend sat in the second row of the Dhaka-Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj bus. The bus seemed a little dark and a little empty.

Shafiqul said after crossing Kamarpara near Uttara, the bus went to a secluded place and seven to eight people jumped on passengers with knives. They took his friend to the back of the bus.

They were slapping the passengers and hurling abuse at them.

The robbers tied Shafiqul's hands, legs, and also blindfolded him.

"I have asthma. I wanted a drag of the inhaler, but they didn't allow me," said a still traumatised Shafiqul.

He said the robbers dropped some passengers off at a place called Kabirpur ahead of Chandra around 4:30am. Among them was Shafiqul's friend.

The robbers kept Shafiqul tied and blindfolded at the back of the bus and headed back towards

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## Slap sanction against Rab

### European Parliament member asks EU

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A European Parliament member has asked the European Union to impose sanctions against the Rapid Action Battalion, saying it has been involved in numerous extrajudicial killings and disappearances.

Parliament member Ivan Stefanec in a letter to Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on January 20 said the human rights, freedom of speech, civil and political rights situation in Bangladesh is deteriorating.

He also cited the US sanctions against Rab and seven of its current and former officials.

"In view of the events mentioned above, I ask that you use the power you have to help enforce sanctions against the Rapid Action Battalion, Rab for short. I also ask you for help against the Bangladesh Police and the Government," Stefanec said.

The parliament member's office confirmed this in an email to The Daily Star, which has also obtained a copy of the letter.

Stefanec, also a member of the European Parliament Sub-committee on Human Rights, said the ruling party in Bangladesh often uses inhumane practices, which have also been reported by institutions. "These include manipulating election results or suppressing political dissent."

About US sanctions, he said the actions were taken due to "multiple extrajudicial executions

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## Muhith to start foundation to fight pandemic

### The former finance minister turns 89 today

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

AMA Muhith might have retired from public service but he could not stop working towards the welfare of people.

"I am now planning to start a foundation that would work to eliminate coronavirus, once and for all -- this virus is the enemy of civilisation," he said, adding that work for the foundation will begin soon.

He was struck by the rogue virus last year, leaving him hospitalised for days on end.

Muhith, who placed the national budget a record 12 times, feels the



economy he has left behind is evolving well.

During his tenure as the finance minister, the country witnessed a significant increase in budget size, steady growth and inflation in control.

He was one of the driving forces behind Bangladesh taking up mega projects and taking a significant stride towards a lower-middle-income country.

"Bangladesh's development process is well on track. The country is doing better -- a lot of work is being done. As result, development is taking place," he told The Daily Star ahead for his 89th birthday today.

Born in 1934 in Sylhet, Muhith joined civil service in 1956 after a bright academic life.

He held important positions in the public service and was the first diplomat of the Washington Embassy of Pakistan who transferred his allegiance to Bangladesh during the liberation war.

He also played a vital role in drumming up the world's support for Bangladesh. And in 2016, he was conferred with Swadhinata Puroskar, the highest civilian award, for his contribution to the liberation war.

Muhith, who joined Awami League in 2001, deems the country is being steered by the most capable person.

"Prime Minister's sister Sheikh Rehana is a very competent advisor of PM. I hope their partnership can work further. The people of Bangladesh have found the right stairs to development."

Nowadays, writing consumes him.

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A man on a rickshaw covers himself with a plastic sheet after unexpected rain hit the Kotwali area of Chattogram yesterday afternoon. With winter still lingering, sudden spurts of rainfall end up lowering the temperature, causing many to suffer further in the cold. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN