

Two jailed for raping 10-yr-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

A Habiganj court yesterday sent two men to jail after police arrested them on Tuesday on charges of raping a fifth grader in Habiganj Sadar upazila.

The two accused – Abdal Mia, 25, of Bankandi village, and his accomplice Mamun – were arrested from the upazila's Boglabazar area.

According to the case filed by the 10-year-old victim's father, Abdal and Mamun took the child to an abandoned home and raped her there. When news of the incident spread in the area, some locals tried to hush it up.

However, upon information, Mahfuza Akter Shimul, additional superintendent of police of Sadar Circle, and other officials visited the spot. The criminals, however, had fled by then.

Golam Mortuza, officer-in-charge of Habiganj Sadar Model Police, said they rescued the victim from the spot and then admitted her to Habiganj General Hospital for treatment and necessary medical tests.

"After raiding several areas, we detained the two accused based on the victim's information and they were shown arrested after the father filed a case with our station on Tuesday night."

US eases some sanctions on Venezuela

AFP, Washington

The United States is easing some of its tough sanctions on Venezuela to encourage dialogue between President Nicolas Maduro's regime and its opponents, a senior official said Tuesday.

"The United States is undertaking a number of measures at the request of the Venezuelan interim government and the Unity platform of opposition parties negotiating with the Venezuelan regime, to support their decision to return to the negotiating table in Mexico City," the US official said.



Motorcyclists riding their vehicles on a sidewalk in the capital's Bangla Motor area yesterday, leaving little room for the pedestrians who are actually supposed to be using the space. This disregard for the safety of pedestrians is a common sight whenever there are traffic jams in the capital.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ease barriers to green energy

UN chief asks countries as climate change indicators hit record highs in 2021

REUTERS, Washington

The UN secretary-general yesterday called for a global coalition to speed the deployment of battery technology, urging countries to ease intellectual property constraints to hasten the transition from fossil fuels and combat climate change.

Antonio Guterres' plea comes as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) released its annual report, which found that four key climate change indicators – greenhouse gas concentrations, sea-level rise, ocean heat and acidification – set new records in 2021.

In video remarks released alongside the WMO State of the Climate, the top UN official called the report "a dismal litany of humanity's failure to tackle climate disruption" and laid out five actions that governments need to take to "jumpstart" the energy transition.

"The global energy system is broken and bringing us ever closer to climate catastrophe," Guterres said, adding that



while the cost of renewable technologies like wind energy and solar power have dropped significantly, major barriers inhibit widespread deployment.

Guterres called on countries, manufacturers, technology firms and financiers need to join forces to fast track the deployment of batteries, which he said was a common good and should not be held

back by intellectual property constraints.

He called for international coordination to scale up and diversify supply chains for renewable energy technology and raw materials, which are concentrated in a handful of countries.

The top UN diplomat also urged countries to speed up the permitting process for renewable energy projects – similar to a recent proposal by the EU, and renewed his calls for governments to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies.

In order to give the world's developing nations more access to renewable energy to power their growing populations, Guterres also called for private and development banks to triple investments in renewables to \$4 trillion an year and help poor countries with upfront costs associated with wind and solar power.

"Commercial banks and all elements of the global financial system need to dramatically scale up investments in renewables as they phase out fossil fuels," he said.

BNP has a history of rigging polls

FROM PAGE 1

The blatant rigging, she said, triggered a movement which forced Khaleda Zia's then government to step down and hand over power to a neutral caretaker government to hold the national election.

She also referred to the February 15 parliamentary election in 1996, held during the tenure of Khaleda's then government, which was boycotted by opposition parties and shunned by voters.

Elections were also rigged by BNP in 1981 and by Ziaur Rahman in 1977, 1978 and

1979, the PM said.

Hasina said the BNP, knowing quite well that they would suffer a huge defeat in the next general election, is now trying to raise question about it.

"The BNP has no leadership at all. All are convicted criminals. It is not possible to win any election with convicted criminals."

The premier said the development of the electoral system is the brainchild of the AL. In this regard, she mentioned about the introduction of voter list with photo, transparent ballot box and EVM.

Hasina, also the AL president, said her party was elected by the people and it has returned the voting rights to the people.

She said the country's massive development is owed to the AL because it has been in power for a long time.

Coming down heavily on a section of intellectuals and economists for unnecessary criticism based on false information, Hasina said how could they talk foolishly like this.

She mentioned that this section of people is saying that the government has done a grave mistake

by implementing mega projects, like Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and Padma Bridge rail link.

"They feel pain whenever we do anything for Bangladesh.... They do not see anything good for Bangladesh. They do not feel good when Bangladesh moves forward."

Hasina said mega projects are taken up in the interest of the people of Bangladesh.

"Can others who were in power show a single example of doing anything for the country or its people or brighten the image of the country? No, they can't.

They just made Bangladesh a nation of beggars," she said.

The premier directed the AL leaders and activists to strictly follow the party's policy and ideology as it can give something to the people.

She asked the knowledgeable-intellectual people to join politics if they wanted to run the country.

The AL observed the 42nd homecoming day of Hasina on May 17.

On this day in 1981, she returned home after a long exile in India. Hasina was elected the AL president in

her absence in the party's national council held on February 14-16 in 1981.

PM's comments

FROM PAGE 1

heard, Mahfuz Anam – they went to America, went to the State Department, and sent email to Hillary [Clinton] . Anyway ... the then World Bank president Mr [Robert Bruce] Zoellick on his last working day, not at any board meeting, stopped the funding for the Padma bridge project.

However, it has turned out to be a blessing in disguise in one sense."

Monitoring may begin

FROM PAGE 12

development partner.

In recent dialogues, Washington put strong focus on Bangladesh's labour rights issue.

Earlier in 2013, the US suspended the GSP (generalised system of preferences) facility due to concerns over labour rights. Bangladesh also cannot avail the US's International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) facility for the same reason.

"I think we will discuss the restoration of the GSP in the Economic Forum," Momen said.

He added that Bangladesh is currently unaffected from the lack of DFC funding. "However, if there are additional

benefits, the government will ask for it."

On labour reforms, Momen said the government regularly discusses the issue with the European Union and the International Labour Organization.

He said there is an inter-ministerial committee comprised of secretaries of the ministries of foreign affairs, law, home, labour and commerce that meet from time to time and assess the progress.

About specific issues that the US raise regarding labour rights, the foreign secretary said some include the formation of trade unions, the right to association, stopping any kind of intimidation and child labour.

Hike electricity price

FROM PAGE 1

By withdrawing the BPC's recent price hike and reducing the dependency on the expensive privately-owned quick rental plants, the government could save another Tk 14,238 crore, he said.

He alleged that the cost-effective power plants often remained underutilised while the quick rental plants were in use, ignoring the "Economic Merit Order". "Who is responsible for breaking the order?"

The BPDB's power plant in Bhola has no gas crisis, he said, adding that if the plant's 72 percent production capacity were utilised, the cost would have been Tk 2.58 per kWh. But the plant's 38 percent capacity is being used, raising the per kWh cost to Tk 4.14.

Sometimes, the BPDB's power plant remains shut "at instructions given over the phone at midnight" just to buy power from a private quick rental plant, Prof

Shamsul alleged.

At the hearing a representative of the National Load Dispatch Centre, which controls which plant is operated at what capacity, said no rule was broken on their part. But BERC chairman Abdul Jalil echoed Prof Shamsul, saying, "Breaking the rule is common but we want to know who ordered it."

Energy expert Prof Ijaz Hossain said the current electricity price was set in 2020.

"Without stability in prices, how would one do business? There was a gas crisis 20 years ago and there is a gas crisis now. But where is the planning? How come nearly 50 percent of power plants are running on oil in 2022?" he asked.

Oil-based power plants are not used anywhere else in the world unless there is an emergency, he said.

Jalil said the commission would consider the proposals and the arguments.

Govt study rings alarm bells

FROM PAGE 1

It revealed that higher-class antibiotics were being used in 70-80 percent of cases in Bangladesh when the World Health Organisation recommends keeping the usage within 40 percent.

The study was based on collation and analysis of four years (2018-2021) of antimicrobial (antibiotics, antifungals and antivirals) resistance data and the usage data from 34 labs and five private pharmacies in the country.

The researchers analysed records of more than 10 lakh patients' antibiotic sensitivity.

The Directorate General of Health Services and the Directorate General of Drug Administration under the initiative of CAPTURA Consortium of International Vaccine Institute conducted the study.

National Antimicrobial Resistance Containment of the CDC led the study.

"High-level use of 'Watch Category' of antimicrobials is alarming," said John Stelling,

professor at the Brigham and Women's Hospital of Harvard University, while presenting the findings at a city hotel.

Antibiotics are classified into three sets: the "Access Group" is prescribed for a wide range of primary level infections, the "Watch Group" for high-resistance bacteria, and the "Reserve Group" when all alternatives fail.

The researchers analysed the seven most common germs found in blood, urine, respiratory tract, soft tissue, stool, and body fluids for the study.

Of those, E. coli, Klebsiella, Pseudomonas, Staphylococcus aureus, Enterococcus, Salmonella Typhi and Acinetobacter spp were the most frequently identified bacteria.

These bacteria are responsible for urinary tract infections, septicaemia, diarrhoea, pneumonia, and wound infections, among others.

The analysis showed that more than three classes of antibiotics were

ineffective against 67 percent Acinetobacter spp, 58 percent Klebsiella, 55 percent E. coli and 38 percent Pseudomonas bacteria.

Penicillin, Cephalosporins, Sulphonamides, Fluoroquinolones, Macrolides, Tetracyclines, Aminoglycosides, and Carbapenems are the eight classes of antibiotics.

Prof Stelling said the prevalence of high-resistant bacteria is observed and this requires close monitoring to prevent the spread of these bugs.

He also noted that the use of "Reserve Group" drugs has increased to 8 percent cases in 2020 from 5.8 percent in 2018.

Sabrina Alam, assistant director at the DGDA, said around 67 percent of medicine retailers could not identify antibiotics.

For this reason, the DGDA has instructed labelling boxes and strips of all antimicrobials in red and the word 'Antibiotics' printed on them, said Maj Gen Mohammad Yousuf, director

Man kills child, then self

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A man hacked to death a nine-year-old son of the Dheukhali Union Parishad chairman in Faridpur's Sadarpur in the latter's house yesterday.

The chairman's wife was also injured in the attack.

The deceased, Al Rafsan, was the son of Chairman Mizanur Rahaman. His wife Diljahan Begum, 35, was undergoing treatment at Faridpur Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital.

Locals said one Ershad Mollah, 35, of Mollah Bari area, entered the chairman's house in the upazila town and hacked Rafsan indiscriminately around 4:00pm. When his mother Diljahan tried to save him, Ershad also attacked her.

They suspected that Ershad carried out the attack over a previous enmity with the chairman.

Quoting locals, Fahima Kader Choudhury, additional superintendent (Bhanga circle) of Faridpur police, said Ershad died by suicide after jumping from a mobile phone tower in Atrashi area around 7:30pm.

JS goes into budget session on June 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 18th session of the 11th parliament will begin on June 5. It will be the budget session of this year.

The parliament sitting will start at 5:00pm on that day, said a press release of the parliament secretariat.

President Abdul Hamid convened the session, exercising his power bestowed upon him as per article 72 (1) of the constitution.

The budget for the upcoming 2022-23 financial year is likely to be placed on June 9, according to sources at the parliament secretariat.

Although the budget sessions were shortened in the last two years due to the pandemic, this time the session will run normally as the situation has almost become normal, sources said.

Media personnel will be allowed to enter the parliament and cover the session in person.

Village guard lands in jail for raping homemaker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A Bagerhat court yesterday sent a village guard to jail over raping a homemaker in Bagerhat's Fakirhat upazila.

The victim filed a case against Mostafa Sheikh, 40, of Ghanshyampur village on Tuesday night. Mostafa is working in Shubhdia union.

According to the case statement, the homemaker went out of her house around 10:00pm on Monday to look for her goat. Finding her alone, Mostafa raped her.

Muhammad Alimuzzaman, OC of Fakirhat Model Police Station, said the woman was sent to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital for medical tests.

4 students injured as ceiling fan falls on them

Our Correspondent, Lalmonirhat
Four students were injured when a fan fell off the ceiling of a classroom of Lalmonirhat Government Girls High School yesterday.

The injured were given first aid.

Shamima Begum, headmistress of the school, said she was not present at the school as she was ill. "We are conducting an investigation to find out why the incident happened."