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Another woman raped in moving bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Criminals threw out a man from a bus and then gang-raped his wife in the moving vehicle in Gazipur on Friday night.

Only four days earlier, another woman was gang-raped by criminals in a moving bus in Tangail.

Last night, a case was filed with Sreepur Police Station over the incident rape and robbery in Gazipur.

Police have so far arrested six people in this connection, said Sanowar Hossain, additional superintendent of Gazipur police.

According to the case statement, the staffers of a Bhaluka-bound Tagwa Paribahan bus were involved in the crime.

They first beat up the man, pushed him out of the bus and raped his wife.

They also robbed the victims of valuables, read the case statement.

The victim was going to Bhaluka with her husband from Naogaon, said police.

The duo got on the bus at Gazipur's Bhogra bypass around 12:00am Friday. As the bus reached Chandina intersection, its staffers asked all

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The number of city service buses significantly dropped after the government made an unprecedented fuel-price hike effective from yesterday. Many city dwellers were caught off guard. In this photo taken on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Sonargaon intersection yesterday evening, people are seen waiting for buses.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

US asst secy Sison in city

UNB, Dhaka

US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Michele J Sison arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a two-day visit as part of her tri-nation official tour.

She is likely to seek Bangladesh's support for Doreen Bogdan-Martin, a candidate for the post of secretary-general, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), said a diplomatic source.

The Russian Federation has nominated Rashid Ismailov as a candidate for the post.

The elections will be held during the Plenipotentiary Conference in Bucharest from September 26 October 14.

If elected, Bogdan-Martin would be the first woman to serve as ITU secretary-general in the organisation's 156 years of existence.

Bogdan-Martin has an "unmatched record" of bringing the needs and ambitions of the developing world to the fore, Sison tweeted during her visit to India.

Bangladesh and the US will "further follow up" the discussions that the two countries had over the last few months during her visit to Bangladesh.

Dhaka's demand for withdrawal of sanctions on Rab and the Rohingya

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RIISING COST OF LIVING

Fuel price hike not the last nail

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Friday's unprecedented hike in fuel prices, hot on the heels of increased electricity, fertiliser and gas prices, served as yet another massive blow to the people who are already struggling to barely survive amid surging living costs.

However, the latest fuel price shock is not going to be the last financial burden on them.

Electricity and water prices are set to increase further by next month and the government is mulling over further hiking the gas price to adjust with the change in the international market.

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority on May 25 decided to increase the price of water by 5 percent for both residential and commercial consumers. The increased price will come into effect on September 1.

Bangladesh Power Development Board on May 18 proposed raising the electricity price by 117 percent and the technical evaluation committee of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) recommended a 58 percent rise. The proposal is now awaiting approval of the BERC.

The last day for announcement of the new price is August 18, according to the law that gives BERC 90 working days after a public hearing to execute a decision.

Speaking to reporters at his Gulshan home on Friday, State Minister for Power,

PRICE HIKED	PERCENT	RAISED ON
Diesel	42.5%	August 5
Petrol	51.1%	August 5
Kerosene	42.5%	August 5
Octane	51.7%	August 5
Urea	42 %	August 1
Gas	22.8 %	July 1

PRICE TO BE HIKED	PERCENT	COME TO EFFECT
Water	5 %	September 1
Electricity	58 % (Recommended)	By August
Gas (second hike)	To be adjusted with international price	

Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid hinted at increasing the prices of gas and power.

He said the government was waiting to adjust the gas prices with the change in the international market.

The state minister's hints came just a month after the gas price for household and commercial consumers went up by 22.8 percent.

The BERC on June 5 decided to increase gas price following requests from public companies.

The price of natural gas for household consumers was hiked by Tk 105 for a double burner and Tk 65 for a single burner. The prices came into effect on July 1. Earlier, the price was Tk 975 for a double burner and Tk 925 for a single burner.

On August 1, the government increased the price of urea fertiliser by Tk 6 per kg, citing

hike in prices in the international market.

The maximum retail price of urea has been refixed at Tk 20 per kg from Tk 14 and the price at the firm level has been refixed at Tk 22 per kg from Tk 16.

The government in November last year hiked the diesel and kerosene prices by Tk 15 per litre, leading to an increase in bus fares by 27 percent.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), food inflation in the country was 8.19 percent in July. The latest hike in fuel prices will further increase the living costs.

Food items apart, increased prices of toiletries and other homecare products have put an additional burden on the people.

In about six months, almost all soaps, shampoos, toothpaste, detergents, and toilet cleaners have become pricier by 10 to 27 percent.

TANGAIL HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Three suspects confess to court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The three arrested suspects of last week's highway robbery yesterday made confessional statements, with one admitting to raping a bus passenger.

Their statements were recorded at two separate courts in Tangail, said Court Inspector Tanvir Ahmed.

Of the arrestees, Mohammad Awal gave statement before Senior Judicial Magistrate Rumi Khatun while Mohammad Nurunnabi and Raja Miah before Senior Judicial Magistrate Shamaul Alam.

On Wednesday, a group of 10 young men robbed the passengers of a Narayanganj-bound Eagle Express bus and gangraped a woman passenger after taking control of the vehicle in Tangail.

Raja, who is the first suspect to be arrested, told the law enforcers that he was involved in the rape and robbery, sources said.

Awal and Nurunnabi admitted that they had robbed the passengers, they added.

Based on information received form the three arrestees, police are now conducting drives at different places to arrest the other suspects in the case, said the sources.

Hekmat Ali, a passenger of the bus, filed a case against 10 to 12 unidentified criminals with Madhupur Police Station in this connection the same day.

Madhupur police initially investigated the case but later the case was shifted to the Detective Branch for taking further legal procedure, Sarkar Mohammad Kaiser, superintendent of police in Tangail, told The Daily Star.

Madhupur police called Monir, driver of the bus, Dulal, helper of the vehicle, and Rabbi, passengers' guide, to the police station for questioning on Friday.

Govt to send IGP Benazir to UN event

PHQ hopes he will get visa despite US sanctions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government decided to send Benazir Ahmed, inspector general of police (IGP), among other officials, to the third United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit at the UN headquarters in New York on August 31 September 1.

Although the US on December 10 last year sanctioned Benazir and six other former and current Rab officials over human rights violations, high-ups at the Police Headquarters are confident that there would be no bar on the IGP joining the event.

According to officials at the PHQ, the 1947 United Nations Headquarters Agreement, signed between US and the UN, stipulates that the US government will not "impose any impediments to transit to or from" the area around the UN headquarters.

Apart from allowing free passage, the US is obliged to provide "any necessary protection" to UN visitors while they are in transit to UN premises, the deal adds.

The officials said the police chief will travel to

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Amazon gives Alexa a new name

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Amazon has launched a new wake word for its Echo devices in the UK. "Ziggy" is the fifth wake word option for Echo devices in addition to "Alexa", "Amazon", "Computer" and "Echo".

Customers can change the wake word of their Echo device customers via the Alexa app or the Settings screen on Echo Show devices, and all wake words options can be used with either the male or female voice options for Alexa.

"We are constantly looking for ways to offer our customers more choices so they can personalise their Alexa experience," said Dennis Stansbury, the Alexa UK country manager for Amazon.

"The wake word is very important as Alexa devices are specially designed to only detect the user's chosen wake word. Our devices detect wake words by identifying acoustic patterns that match the wake word, so a lot of consideration goes into the selection.

"We chose 'Ziggy' not only because it performed well in testing, but because it's fun and reflects Alexa's wealth of knowledge on everything from A to Z. As an aside, I am a self-confessed David Bowie fan, so I am enjoying saying 'Ziggy, play Ziggy' and 'Ziggy, play guitar' to my Echo device."

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Dhaka North City Corporation is building an underground drain stretching from Bangla Motor to Moghbazar without putting up safety fencing. This exposes workers and commuters to accidents. The photo was taken at the capital's Bangla Motor intersection yesterday.

Air strikes pound Gaza for 2nd day

15 killed, at least 120 wounded

AFF, Gaza City

Israel's military yesterday warned deadly air strikes against Palestinian militants in Gaza could last a week, as cross-border fire reverberated for a second day in the worst escalation since last year's war.

Israel has said it was necessary to launch a "pre-emptive" operation against Islamic Jihad, saying the group was planning an imminent attack following days of tensions along the border with Gaza.

Health authorities in the Palestinian enclave, which is controlled by the Islamist group Hamas, said a 15-year-old girl was among 15 people killed in the Israeli bombardment, adding that more than 120 have been wounded.

Civilians meanwhile took refuge in air raid

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