

# Case against 6 PBI men dismissed

They faced charges of torturing ex-SP Babul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

A Chattogram court yesterday dismissed a case filed against Banaj Kumar Majumdar, the chief of police bureau of investigation, and five other PBI officials over the custodial torture of former SP Babul Akter.

Judge Jebunnesa of Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Court passed the order, court sources said.

The five others are: Nazmul Hasan, PBI's Chattogram district superintendent of police (SP); Naima Sultana, SP of PBI Chattogram metro unit; Santosh Kumar Chakma, officer-in-charge of Khulshi Police Station and former investigation officer of the Mitu murder case;

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# Four sent to jail for gang-raping 2 RMG workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court yesterday sent four men to jail on charges of gang-raping two garment factory workers in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila.

The accused, Al Amin, 25, and Mohidul Sardar, 35, of Ishwardi and Abdur Rashid, 35, and Javed Ali, 32, of Natore's Baraigram upazila, are workers of local rice mills and grocery stores, police said.

According to the complaint, they took the two women for a walk in Dashuria area along the Pabna-Rajshahi highway on Saturday evening and raped them at a quiet place near the road after dark.

After the men left, the women, still wearing torn clothes, asked motorists for help and were rescued by local police.

One of the women filed a case yesterday morning, said Orbinda Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, adding that a court sent the suspects to jail after police arrested them.

# GK Shamim

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19(a) and 19(f) of the Arms Act, while the remaining seven accused, including GK Shamim, were sentenced under section 19(c).

The eight were produced before the court around 1:00pm. After the judgement, they were sent to jail with conviction warrants.

Speaking to journalists on the court premises, GK Shamim, who was an influential contractor of the Public Works Department and other government organisations, alleged he was a victim of a deep-rooted political conspiracy.

He said this before being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) from the court after the verdict was announced.

He added that he was denied justice in the case.

State lawyer Salahuddin said the prosecution was satisfied with the verdict.

However, Mohammad Shaheenoor Islam, a defence lawyer, said they were dissatisfied and would go to the higher court to appeal against the verdict.

On January 28, 2020, the tribunal framed charges against GK Shamim and his bodyguards.

During the trial, 10 prosecution witnesses gave their depositions.

On September 20, 2019, Rab conducted raids on GK Shamim's house and office in the city's Niketan and seized eight firearms, a huge amount of ammunition, fixed deposit receipts worth Tk 165 crore, around Tk 1.8 crore in cash, a large stash of US and Singaporean dollars and some foreign liquor.

The elite force members then arrested him on charges of extortion and tender manipulation. His bodyguards were also arrested then.

The next day, Rab filed a case with Gulshan Police Station under the Arms Act.

Rab Sub-Inspector Shekhor Chandra Mollick submitted the charge sheet to the court on October 27 the same year.

According to the case documents, GK Shamim was directly involved with extortion, tender manipulation, illegal drugs possession and the casino business. He amassed a huge fortune through the tender business by intimidating people with licensed arms and collecting "toll" from bus terminals and animal markets, said the charge sheet.

It also said his bodyguards used to secure tenders of big projects by brandishing weapons and intimidating people. They also collected royalty fees for participating in the tender process.

GK Shamim's associates used to control gambling businesses and take part in extortion. He was also trying to siphon off his ill-gotten money abroad, it continued, adding that his bodyguard Aminul made fake documents for his firearm license.

The trials of three more cases filed against GK Shamim are now pending at different courts in Dhaka and Narayanganj.



A girl crossing Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue over a central reservation in the capital's Farmgate area yesterday, while another stands on the road after doing the same. Though there are three footbridges nearby, they opted to risk their lives in order to cross the road.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR China, India, at UN, call for negotiated way out

AGENCIES

China and India called at the United Nations for a negotiated end to the Ukraine war, stopping short of robust support for traditional ally Russia.

After a week of pressure at the United Nations General Assembly, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday took the General Assembly rostrum to deliver a fiery rebuke to Western nations for what he termed a "grotesque" campaign against Russians.

But no major nation has rallied behind Russia, including China, which just days before the February invasion of Ukraine had vowed an "unbreakable" bond with President Vladimir Putin.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on both Russia and Ukraine to "keep the crisis from spilling over" and from affecting developing countries.

"China supports all efforts conducive to the peaceful resolution of the Ukraine crisis. The pressing priority is to facilitate talks for peace," Wang said.

"The fundamental solution is to address the legitimate security concerns of all parties and build a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture."

India, unlike China, has a warm relationship with the US but it has historic ties with Russia, its traditional defense supplier.

"As the Ukraine conflict continues to rage, we are often asked whose side we are on," said India's Foreign Minister

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. "Our answer, each time, is straight and honest – India is on the side of peace and will remain firmly there," he said.

"We are on the side that calls for dialogue and diplomacy as the only way out."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at a news conference declined to answer whether there has been any pressure from China. In his speech, he sought to cast blame squarely on the West, reports AFP.

"The official Russophobia in the West is unprecedented. Now the scope is grotesque," Lavrov told the General Assembly. "They are not shying away from declaring the intent to inflict not only military defeat on our country but also to destroy and fracture Russia."

# Policy reforms needed to avert slowdown: WB

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Bangladesh's population will reach a peak of 185 million in 2041 and the urbanisation rate will reach about 60 percent in 2050.

For this massive urbanisation to generate economic growth and lift Bangladesh to high-income country status, the process of urbanisation must solve two critical challenges: how to enhance and maintain the productivity advantage of Dhaka city in the face of this massive population surge, and how to make cities other than Dhaka and Chittagong attractive to formal firms and skilled workers to create productivity advantages.

In the short term, the focus should be on the creation of jobs in tradable activities for all types of cities.

Dhaka and Chittagong have the experience of nurturing a dynamic garment industry. These cities need to diversify their portfolio of tradable activities, which will require national-level policy reforms to enhance trade competitiveness, the report said.

City-level leaders should focus on reforms to ensure affordable housing and equitable access to city services.

In the medium term, improving connectivity both within and across cities as well as some measures of climate change mitigation and adaptation should be the focus.

In the long term, the focus should be on dealing with the infrastructural

challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation since sea level rise or warming is happening at a slower pace.

Bangladesh's financial sector performance will be a key determinant of its future economic development but the formal financial sector is not deep enough, the report said.

"Vision 2041 aims to increase national savings significantly but raising the level of savings and efficiently channelling them to productive investment will require major restructuring and greater efficiency of the financial system."

Credit to the private sector remains low in Bangladesh compared with most of its structural and aspirational peers.

Bangladesh needs to continue to build better financial sector infrastructure, improve its legal and regulatory frameworks, and phase out the existing distortions to enable a larger and more efficient flow of financing to the private sector, including to underserved segments.

Developing capital markets should be among the top policy priorities to unlock long-term finance for infrastructure and green investments.

Preserving financial sector stability will become more challenging in the future.

While Bangladesh was not affected much by the Asian Financial Crisis and the Global Financial Crisis given the relatively small and isolated nature of the country's financial system, this will

spent on emergencies and unavoidable circumstances.

The finance ministry on September 19 relaxed some provisions regarding foreign trips of government officials. But the circular categorically said that "officials concerned with technical knowledge" would be allowed to visit abroad for inspecting goods or services with the suppliers or contractors or consultants footing the bill.

RHD sources said the date for their visit was yet to be finalised but the supplier is paying for their trip. They said the ministry nominated the team members for the trip in the project titled "Procurement of equipment and machineries for construction, repair and maintenance for road infrastructure", a Tk 585.88 crore project being implemented with foreign funds.

A top RHD official said pre-shipment inspection of such machines is purely a technical matter and people with technical knowledge should carry those out. "A lawmaker, especially a chair of a parliamentary standing committee, can go abroad to take part in policy-level matters. But such a visit [as the one planned for Rowshan] by a lawmaker is unexpected and unfortunate too," the official told this correspondent wishing not to be named.

ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the road transport and highways division, said Speaker of parliament has approved her visit. "As a chairman of the parliamentary body, she used to monitor work [of the ministry] and thus she will make the visit to oversee work," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

not be the case going forward.

The reason being the high investment needs must be partially financed by external borrowing and the financial sector will become more integrated into the global financial system.

At the same time, the domestic financial sector (primarily banks) faces longstanding vulnerabilities that have been magnified by the COVID-19 shock.

"Weaknesses in the regulatory and supervisory framework do not properly equip the authorities to deal with potential internal and external shocks in a timely and cost-effective manner."

With the impending end of preferential access to markets due to graduation from the least developed country bracket, Bangladesh will need to find new drivers of exports and growth.

In a worrying development, the share of exports in GDP has been declining since 2011, raising doubts about the sustainability of Bangladesh's growth model.

Besides, Bangladesh's exports are low compared with the country's peers.

The overreliance on garment exports and the perpetuation of a protective tariff regime challenge must end if the country must level up.

To accelerate and sustain export growth, Bangladesh needs to diversify its export basket, the report said.

Modernisation of Bangladesh's tariff regime is the first crucial step to supporting export diversification.

# Wails of grief drown

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He told this correspondent that he rescued 13 people.

"You won't believe the desperation to stay alive unless you see it with your own eyes. So many people were lost in the river right in front of my eyes, and there was nothing to do," he said, breaking down in tears.

# Al-Shabaab suicide attack kills 7 in Somalia

AFP, Mogadishu

A suicide attack claimed by the Somali Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab killed at least seven people and injured nine others in Mogadishu yesterday, the army and eyewitnesses told AFP.

A "desperate terrorist" blew himself up yesterday morning near a line of new recruits who were enrolling at the Nacnac military base in the south of the Somali capital, local military commander Abdullahi Adan told AFP.

# Counter the propaganda

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virtually, the PM asked the expatriates to highlight the country's unprecedented development that has taken place during the tenure of the Awami League government.

Hasina said Bangladesh has achieved so much that its nationals can move around the world keeping their heads high with dignity. "Uphold the image wherever you go," she told the Bangladeshis living abroad.

She pointed out that the relatives of the war criminals and killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman alongside the people who fled the country committing various crimes such as money laundering are behind the propaganda.

"The people, who are spreading the propaganda on the social media, were mostly sacked from jobs for their involvement in misdeeds or they fled the country committing crimes."

The PM called upon all to expose the misdeeds of the people who are now lecturing others with false and fabricated information about the government and Bangladesh using social media.

"Don't pay heed to their words [propaganda], rather present our development stories before the people."

Hasina asked them to inform congressmen, senators and elected representatives to their localities about the development of Bangladesh

# 2 more die from Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Covid-19 patients died in the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, read a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services.

In the same 24 hours, the DGHS confirmed 572 fresh cases of Covid-19 countrywide.

Against a total of 4,413 tests, the positivity rate was 12.96 percent while the overall positivity rate was 13.61 percent.

Of the dead yesterday, one was male and one female.

One of them was aged between 61 and 70 years while another between 81 and 90.

Both died at hospitals in Dhaka, according to the release.

In those 24 hours, 358 Covid-19 patients recovered from their illness, raising the total percentage of recovery to 97.09 percent.

With the latest count, the total number of fatalities due to Covid-19 rose to 29,353 and the total number of confirmed cases to 2,021,690.

# Man sent to jail over rape in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Noakhali court yesterday sent a man to jail for his alleged involvement in the rape of a speech-impaired girl in the district's Kabirhat upazila.

Bahar Uddin, 55, of Nobogram village, was arrested on Saturday and produced before the court yesterday, said Raiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Kabirhat Police Station.

The victim's father filed a case against him with the police station the same day, he added.

According to the case statement, Bahar took the teenage victim to an isolated place, luring her with chocolates, and raped her around 5:00pm on Saturday.

The victim was sent to a local hospital for treatment.

# Israeli forces kill Palestinian militant in West Bank

REUTERS, Nablus

Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian militant yesterday during an army operation in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian officials said, in the latest in a series of incidents in recent months around the volatile town of Nablus.

"The Dens of Lions", a Palestinian umbrella group formed of militants from different factions, said the man, Said Al-Kawni, was a "hero of resistance" and died during "clashes with occupation forces".

Asked whether there were any precautions to ensure safety of pilgrims, ADC Dipankar refused to make any comment and said they would be able to say more after the investigation.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Puja Uddipan Parishad expressed profound shock at the incident.