



Launch strike catches people off-guard

STAR REPORT

Passengers suffered immensely yesterday as water transport workers enforced an indefinite work abstention to press home their 10-point demand, including pay hike.

Due to the strike that began early yesterday, operation of launch was suspended on almost all the waterways across the country.

“No launches left Sadarghat Launch Terminal since [yesterday] morning. Some people came to the terminal, but most had to return,” said Alamgir Kabir, joint director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

The workers’ demands include a minimum monthly salary of Tk 20,000 and a compensation of Tk 10 lakh in case a worker dies of natural causes or an accident while on duty.

Sadarghat terminal remained almost empty in the morning.

Fuljan Begum, who came to the terminal to travel to Chandpur, said, “I was not aware of the strike. I along with my eight-year-old daughter reached here around 8:00am. Then, I learnt that launch operation was suspended. Now, I’m thinking of travelling by bus.”

Fruit trader Sirajul Islam regularly travels between the capital and Munshiganj. He buys fruits from the capital’s Badamtoli wholesale market and then returns to Munshiganj for selling them.

“Like the other days, I bought fruits from Badamtoli. Then, I came to Sadarghat Launch Terminal. But I found that launches were not being operated. Now, I’m in

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No launches are seen at the capital's Sadarghat terminal as transport workers yesterday went on an indefinite work abstention to press home their 10-point demand, including pay hike. They called the strike countrywide, causing immense sufferings to passengers.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

SC clears way for probe against Shahidul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court verdict that rejected photographer Shahidul Alam’s writ petition challenging the legality of the investigation into a case filed against him under section 57 of the now-abolished ICT act.

A five-member Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique dismissed a leave to appeal petition filed by Shahidul.

Other judges of the bench are Justice Md Nuruzzaman, Justice Obaidul Hassan, Justice Borhanuddin and Justice M Enayetur Rahim.

Full text of the apex court order has not been released yet.

Senior lawyer Fida

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Online harassment of women rises

Finds study by ActionAid Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Online harassment against women increased, found a recent study commissioned by ActionAid Bangladesh.

As many as 64 out of every 100 women in Bangladesh faced harassment and violence online, up from 50 the previous year, according to the study titled “Online Violence Against Women 2022”.

Women mostly faced violence on Facebook (47.60 percent), followed by Messenger (35.37 percent), Instagram (6.11 percent), IMO (3.06 percent), WhatsApp (1.75 percent) and on YouTube (1.31 percent).

The nature of harassment reported by the 349 respondents includes hateful and offensive sexual comments (80.35 percent), sending sexually explicit pictures to inboxes and asking for sexual favour (53.28 percent), discrimination against women (19.71 percent), creating fake IDs in their name (17.47 percent), cyberstalking (16.16 percent), personal attack for supporting LGBTQ rights (13.10 percent).

The harassment also includes recordings of sexual assault posted on social media and blackmail over leaking of private moments. Women also reported that their photos were edited and published on pornography sites.

Almost 12 percent of the women said the harassers posted their private photos on social media, while a few also mentioned that they received threats of sexual assault, were forced to have sex in exchange for work and cheated with tempting offers to participate in showbiz and much more.

In the past year, 67.11 percent of the survey respondents said they were subjected to online violence or harassment 1-5 times, 22.37 percent faced it 5-10 times and 10.53 percent faced it more than 10 times during the last year.

According to the study, 65.07 percent of the respondents reported that the harassment had a severe

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Rape survivors face cruel realities

NILIMA JAHAN

Sabina, 33, a young professional from Rangpur, tries hard to forget about the horrific day in 2019, when she was raped by her uncle. But even after three years the memory of her ordeal is fresh and has turned her days into a harrowing quest for survival.

Like Sabina, countless survivors of rape find their lives paralysed by the aftershocks of psychological trauma, flashbacks, nightmares, stigma, social ostracism and financial hardship. The Daily Star interviewed seven survivors of rape and found that most who sought justice were traumatised further by a system that, more often than not, lends impunity to perpetrators.

Each of the victim’s accounts show the debilitating impact of rape on the victims’ lives.

“The struggles that survivors face as a result of being raped are not only limited to psychological harm,” said legal researcher Taqbir Huda, who coordinates Justice for All Now (JANO). “Sexual violence can trigger adverse economic events for survivors as well,” he added.

The financial harm, in turn, spills over to every other aspect of their lives, which is exactly how it played out for Sabina. Her perpetrator had filmed the rape and used the clips to blackmail her for money. In the

end, Sabina paid Tk 8 lakh — from her own savings and by taking a microcredit loan — to free herself from his threats.

But having to pay such a large amount of money left her financially crippled. With neither parents alive she had no one to support her. She could not even afford to buy food and practically starved resulting in her contracting pulmonary tuberculosis. Emaciated and sick, Sabina decided to seek justice. She filed a case at the local police station, after a report was



published in The Daily Star. But the search for justice too, brought on another round of agony.

As soon as she filed the case she was subjected to shaming and severely beaten by her stepmother and paternal uncles once. She had to leave her village for what happened to her. She desperately needed a job to survive and eventually showed up at the local UNO office. But they couldn’t manage anything for her at the time due to the pandemic.

After a three-month-long tailoring training, she received Tk 16,000 and a VGD card. “Nothing can be sadder than collecting VGD rice in spite of having a Master’s degree,” she said with her eyes full of tears.

Sabina now works at a micro-credit organisation in Rajshahi, with a borrowed amount of Tk 20,000 for security money and first month’s expenses, she said. During holidays she doesn’t go home. She’s constantly afraid that people at her workplace will find out that she was raped. The stigma, she worries, will cost her the job that is keeping her alive right now.

“I have nightmares that they will find out about my past,” she said, tears crammed in her eyes. “I constantly live in fear,” she added.

Like Sabina, another rape survivor, Nasima, 37, has been burdened with financial hardship after she was gang-raped multiple times at gunpoint in 2020. The prime accused is notorious drug trader Delwar, the chief of Delwar Bahini, in 2020. Recently, she was diagnosed with a stomach tumour that her doctors said needs to be removed soon. But bearing the cost of the surgery is out of her reach. She is often in pain, but cannot even afford painkillers.

After the brutal incident, her perpetrators demanded ransom

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MILITANT SNATCHING

‘Key coordinator’ surrenders to court

Another policeman suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A “key coordinator” behind the snatching of two convicted militants from police custody has surrendered to a Dhaka court yesterday.

Edi Amin, 27, an operative of the Al-Qaeda-inspired militant outfit Ansar Al Islam, surrendered to the court through a lawyer around noon.

Amin, however, claimed he was not involved in the snatching incident but was rather falsely implicated in the case.

After learning about the surrender, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit showed him arrested in the case, filed with Kotwali Police Station, and sought a 10-day remand.

In the remand plea, Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad, inspector of the CTTC unit, said Amin played a key coordinator’s role in the snatching incident, which was planned and directed by the outfit’s military wing leader — sacked army major Sayed Ziaul Haque alias Major Zia.

The plea further said Amin needs to be interrogated to know the location of the absconding militants, the outfit leader’s post, the number of members, and whether the outfit has any link with any international militant groups.

After a hearing, the court granted a four-day remand.

Confirming the development, SM Nazmul Hoque, deputy commissioner of the CTTC, said they are now looking to get vital clues regarding the incident.

Amin is also wanted in a case filed with

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FARDIN MURDER

DB looking into new theories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three weeks after the death of Buet student Fardin Noor Parash, the investigators are now considering some new theories as to why he died.

Previously, they focused their investigation on whether Fardin was killed by drug dealers, as some media reported citing unnamed sources in law enforcement.

They were also probing whether he was murdered by muggers, or if he was killed over a personal feud, but no headway could be made along those lines.

“We are now taking into account several new theories,” said Rajib Al Masud, deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of police (Motijheel), which has been tasked with the investigation.

He, however, declined to disclose details for the sake of the investigation.

Fardin’s father Kazi Nuruddin recently said “frustration is growing” in his family

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Shopkeepers sorting out colourful wool in front of Golap Shah Mazar in the capital yesterday. With the arrival of winter, the demand for the threads has increased with many opting to knit their own unique jumpers.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Humans, octopuses descended from same animal

MAIL ONLINE

Octopuses and humans descended from the same primitive worm-like animal that lived 518 million years ago, and this could be why the eight-limbed creatures are highly intelligent.

The creature, known as Facivermis yunnanicus, is the earliest known example of animals evolving to lose body parts it no longer needed and was minimally intelligent.

A new study led by Max Delbrück Centre, Berlin found octopuses’ brains are similar to humans because the marine animal has a variety of gene regulators called microRNAs (miRNAs) in their neural tissue comparable to the number in vertebrates.

The findings suggest miRNAs, a type of RNA gene, play a fundamental role in developing complex brains.

And this is “what connects us to the octopus,” co-author Professor Nikolaus Rajewsky said in a statement to SWS.

Octopuses are renowned for being clever. They can

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