

CRACKDOWN ON BNP MEN

Her one son killed, another behind bars

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and SHARIFUL ISLAM

It was a fateful night for Fazilatunnesa's family.

Ruling party men stormed her house in Wari at midnight, just two nights before the BNP's December 10 grand rally – killing one of her sons and whisking away another son. All these happened because of her grandson's involvement with BNP's politics, she said.



"Is it a sin to get involved in BNP politics?" said the 89-year-old Fazilatunnesa in anger and grief.

Instead of taking any action against the Awami League men who entered their house on December 8, police rather arrested her son Shahadat Hossain Swapan after the AL men handed him over to the police.

Police later showed Swapan arrested in a case filed over violence at Kaptanbazar recently. He is now behind bars.

While Swapan was being taken away forcibly, his brother Millat Hossain, 70, tried to restrain the AL men after his mother Fazilatunnesa asked Millat to interfere as he was the local Panchayat committee secretary for many years.

At that time, one of the invaders struck the back of Millat's head with something hard. Millat went

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Tête-à-tête ... Two Oriental Pied Hornbills having a quick chat in the Satchhari National Park in Habiganj These unique birds are found across the Indian Subcontinent and throughout Southeast Asia. In Bangladesh, they are common in moist lowland forests of Sylhet and Chattogram. The smallest and most common of all Asian Hornbills, these birds can adapt to a variety of habitats, which helps them maintain their population. Like other hornbills, the Oriental Pied Hornbill is also known for its visually striking beak and casque. Though the birds are listed in the "least concern" category by the IUCN, they can still be severely affected by habitat destruction, and overexploitation and pet trade by humans.

PHOTO: ARIF AHMED

Fog sparks crashes, delays Six die on roads, flights disrupted

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed in road accidents in Gaibandha and Tangail yesterday.

According to police, the accidents took place as dense fog reduced visibility on the highways.

Of them, four were killed as a bus and a CNG-run three-wheeler collided head-on in Gaibandha's Majhipara area around 5:30am, said Moshir Rahman, station officer of fire service in Palashbari upazila.

Another man was injured in the accident, he added.

In Tangail, two people were killed and 15 others injured in three accidents.

In all the cases, vehicles crashed into one another from behind as dense fog made visibility poor on the Dhaka-Tangail highway, said Mollah Tutul, officer-in-charge of Gorai Highway Police Station.

A passenger bus, a truck

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Girl gang-raped to frame political rivals UP chairman, three others arrested

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

After using his connections to make fake NID cards of his political opponents and buying several SIM cards using those, Shahidul Islam Maznu, UP chairman of Faridpur's Ishan Gopalpur, rented a flat in the capital's Jatrabari.

He then ordered his accomplices to take a girl to that flat and rape her using the identity of his rivals.

On December 5, they did what he asked them to.

The gang then threatened her with life and forced her to file a case using the details of the fake NIDs and newly bought SIM cards.

She was first made to call the national emergency helpline, after which police rushed to the flat, in Jatrabari's Golapbagh, and rescued her.

Then, as per the gang's instructions, she filed a case against Uzzal Sarkar Loton, Mostafizur Rahman, Belayet Hossain, and Jamal Shaikh with Jatrabari Police Station on December 6.

Police immediately started an investigation and even managed to arrest the four falsely implicated men.

However, the tables turned when all four managed to prove to the police that they were not present at the crime scene using CCTV footage and cell phone details. After that, the investigators had to let them go.

The victim girl was next taken into police custody, and during interrogation, she revealed that one of the gang members and the chairman's "right-

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Payra, Rampal power plants now linked to Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aminbazar in Dhaka to Gopalganj 400KV double circuit line, considered one of the major power transmission lines in the country, is ready to transmit electricity.

This essentially means the line is almost ready to transmit power from Payra Thermal Power Plant and the Rampal Power Plant to Dhaka.

This information was made public through a Facebook post of the power, energy and mineral resources ministry yesterday.

The line from Gopalganj to Aminbazar over the mighty Padma was "charged", the ministry post wrote.

The authorities have successfully tested the 82.5km transmission line from Gopalganj substation to Aminbazar substation yesterday afternoon.

The Aminbazar to Gopalganj part of the transmission line includes 226 towers and 11 river-crossing towers, according to the Facebook post.

The project was delayed due to incomplete towers.

The delay caused sufferings to the people as power generated at the Payra plant could not be supplied to the grid due to the lack of supply line during the summer when power cuts were long and frequent.

The Bangladesh-China Power Company Ltd – owner of the 1,320MW Payra coal-fired power plant – was paid a huge amount as capacity charges because half of its capacity remained unutilised for at least two years.

The first unit of the plant started commercial

operation on May 15, 2020, and the second unit on December 8 that year.

Besides, the commercial operation of Maitree Super Thermal Power Project in Rampal is awaiting the same transmission line to connect to the national grid, said officials of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh.

"The connection strengthened the transmission system between the national grid and the Khulna-Barishal region," said ABM Badruddoza Khan, spokesperson for PGCB.

He said, "Now if there is an extra production of power in these areas, we will be able to transmit it to any other part of the country smoothly."

"People will get benefit of the transmission line in the next summer when the demand goes up," he added.

According to PGCB, the government approved setting up of the 179.42km Aminbazar-Mawa-Mongla 400KV double circuit line in April 2016 and it was supposed to be done by December 2020.

The Padma Bridge authorities got the work of tower construction in the river, but due to priority on the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project, installation of the transmission line was delayed.

As a result, power transmission from Payra to Dhaka remained halted for long. Shameem Hasan, spokesperson for Bangladesh Power Development Board, said PGCB finished a major construction work.

"Due to the delay, we suffered most this summer. We hope that next summer will be better."



4th Covid shot campaign begins on December 20

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special campaign for administering the fourth Covid-19 vaccine dose will start on December 20.

People aged above 60, who already received their third Covid jabs, will be vaccinated under this campaign, said a circular of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday.

Besides, frontliners, pregnant women, immunocompromised people and citizens aged 18 and above suffering from chronic diseases will be given the vaccine during the campaign, according to the circular signed by Shamsul Haque, member secretary of Covid-19 vaccine management taskforce committee.

The frontliners include – freedom fighters, staffers of the health ministry, its fellow organisations and authorised private healthcare organisations, all employees of the government, private and autonomous organisations, law enforcement and military personnel, journalists, bank employees, national team players and others working in the frontline.

Only Pfizer vaccine will

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'Danger' lurked under Mayan cities: study

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Ancient Maya cities were contaminated with "dangerous" levels of mercury that may have posed a health hazard to the people living in the mesoamerican civilisation, according to new research.

The review of studies, published recently in the journal *Frontiers in Environmental Science*, found the "unexpected danger" of mercury pollution beneath the soil surface of cities of the ancient Maya in Mesoamerica likely caused due to the frequent use of mercury and mercury-containing products by the people of this time between 250 and 1100 CE.

"Discovering mercury buried deep in soils and sediments in ancient Maya cities is difficult to explain, until we begin to consider the archaeology of the region which tells us that the Maya were using mercury for centuries," study co-author Duncan Cook from the Australian Catholic University said.

In the study, scientists reviewed all data on mercury concentrations in soil and sediments at archaeological sites across the ancient Maya world for the first time.

They found mercury concentrations ranging from 0.016 parts per million (ppm) at some regions to "extraordinary" levels of 17.16 ppm in other places. In comparison, researchers say the Toxic Effect Threshold (TET) for mercury in sediments is defined as 1 ppm.



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