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More women, girls victims of violence in March

Finds Bangladesh Mahila Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Significantly more number of girls under the age of 18 were subjected to physical torture in March, when compared to February, found a report of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

The findings of the report, based on incidents reported in news articles, were revealed to the public yesterday.

Only in March, 28 girls (under 18) were reported to have been physically tortured and abused, whereas the number was just five in February.

Besides, the number of reported cases of physical torture against women and girls (under and over 18 years) rose to 43 in March, from 24, in February.

According to the report, in March alone, there were

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Two vans loaded with iron rods are being pulled by drivers on the wrong side on Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Due to the lack of monitoring from authorities, slow-moving vehicles continue to get on the highway, opening the chance for a fatal accident to occur at any second. This photo was taken in Narayanganj's Signboard area recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Is high hajj package cost not against public interest?

HC asks authorities

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking why the hajj package announced by the government this year should not be declared to be against public interest.

The HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Mohammad Ali issued the rule.

The court also wanted to know why other airlines besides Biman and Saudi Airlines are not included in the list of airlines for booking tickets for hajj, keeping the affordability of the pilgrims in mind.

Religious Affairs Secretary, Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary, Director General of the Islamic Foundation and Hajj Association of Bangladesh have been asked to respond to the rule within the next four weeks.

On March 6, Supreme Court lawyer and chief coordinator of Al-Quran Study Center Ashraf Uz Zaman sent a legal notice to the government to review the hajj package price and set it at Tk 4 lakh.

The notice -- which stated that legal action will be taken against the authorities concerned if they don't take necessary steps within a week -- was also sent to the religious affairs ministry.

The government fixed the cost of hajj for the current year at Tk 6.83 lakh. On the other hand, the minimum cost for hajj pilgrims under private management (without qurbani) has been set at Tk 6.72 lakh. With the announced packages, a pilgrim will have to spend around 1.5 lakh taka extra this year, compared to the previous year's budget.



Mirpur Road's bustling SHOPPING SCENE

RBR

As your car inches towards Dhaka College on Mirpur Road, you start to peek here and there assessing the shopping deals. The place is teeming with thousands of early Eid shoppers or random bargain hunters, all looking for the best offers before the festival.

No matter where in the world you stay and how many fancy shopping boulevards you have been to, a Bangalee needs to go to their favourite four corners of the shopping world -- Gawsia, New Market, Hawkers, and the all-important Chandni Chawk, with Priyangan Shopping Center and Doza Market on the sides -- when in Dhaka and during festive times.

For a fitting blouse, that particular shade of pink lace, the soft linens for housecoats, or that beautiful embroidery on the panjabi collar -- you need to go to Gawsia or Chandni Chawk at least a few times, especially during Ramadan. The mood in this part of the city is always festive, but come Ramadan, the shopping festivity turns to a frenzy.

Women and men equally flock to these areas for variation and affordable prices.

A three-piece set from Chandni Chawk, matching jewellery from the footpaths, and a slipper can complete your morning look for Eid day -- that too under Tk 1,500! You can venture out to the second storey for more expensive options to choose from for your evening wear. Walking toward the yardage shops in Chandni Chawk, you bargain for a white chikankari fabric for Tk 800 per yard for your exclusive Eid panjabi. You will be relieved to know that these shops will

relay your orders with the tailor in Chandni Chawk.

Doza Market is a haven for affordable, good-quality buys. From ladies' tops and trousers to children's clothes, men's shorts and t-shirts for casual use, you name it and you get it under Tk 2,000.

If you venture towards Priyangan to look for more panjabi or shalwar kameez options, the shops are lively with fashionable dresses featuring sequin work, dazzling borders, zari work, and so much more.

If you are done with your wardrobe purchases, and your interest is now on household accessories, then you most definitely should walk towards the rear of New Market and stop at the Singapore Market. Electronic appliances, barbeque stoves, pizza or dosa pans, blenders, non-stick woks, chopping boards, crockery, and cutlery; no matter how long your list is you will find it there. It's a treasure trove for household goods.

The vegetable market behind New Market is also a rendezvous for food purchases; unroasted cashew nuts, almonds, pistachios, chia seeds, exotic masala powder like asafoetida, special garam masala -- the list can be stretched as much as you desire. Also available are ripe tamarinds wrapped in banana leaves, fancy herbs like celery, sweet basil, salad leaves, and the must-buy loose orange pekoe tea leaves.

Shopping in this part of the city is fun. You get everything in one space and within walking distance -- tailors, embroiders, to grocers are all included.

Chandraat shopping in this vicinity will give you a rush like no other. Traffic though is a damper but the experience is worth it.

SWADHINATA STAMBHA PROJECT

New installations to be proposed to enrich Suhrawardy Udyan

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The Swadhinata Stambha (Independence Monument, third phase) project is going to see a number of new changes and additions to its original plan, as authorities plan to install a variety of structures at Suhrawardy Udyan, the historic site that witnessed significant moments of the country's journey towards liberation.

A revision proposal of the project will be placed at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) tomorrow.

For example, the government has decided to install bronze sculptures of Bangabandhu delivering his March 7 speech, as well as the surrender of Pakistani occupation forces, at the Udyan, instead of the previously planned concrete sculptures.

This proposal, along with others, seeks to increase the estimated cost of the project to Tk 397 crore, from its original estimation of Tk 265 crore.

If the proposal is approved, the project's implementation period will be extended by four and a half years, till June 2024, according to documents from the planning division.

Among the new things which will be set up in the area under phase three are holographic 3D instalments of the March 7 speech, light and sound show

on Liberation War, and various forms of water fountains at entry and exit space of underground parking.

The new components also include two passenger lifts at car parking, fire hydrant, walkway lights, glass canopy for the underpass, glass boundary wall, Ansar camp and a police station.

Three toilet spaces will also be constructed inside the underground parking for the convenience of drivers.

In 1998, the government undertook

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the project to build Independence Monument at Suhrawardy Udyan to commemorate the historical events that took place in the area.

The first phase of the project was completed in June 2007. Two years later, its second phase was approved to finish the incomplete 150-foot

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FIRE AT WARI COLONY

Wife dies a day after husband Children, their grandmother fighting for life

STAR REPORT

In a heart-wrenching development, a woman who was engulfed by the raging fire that broke out in the sweeper colony near the Joy Kali Temple in Dhaka's Wari on March 27, died yesterday morning, a day after her husband.

Shanti Rani, 27, wife of Raju Bosak, fought for her life at the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, but couldn't make it.

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Cops recover items stolen by Dubai expat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives have so far recovered Tk 10 lakh cash, five tolas of gold ornaments and two phones that two Dubai expatriates on January 13 sent through another expat who stole them.

Dubai expatriate Md Arif and his cousin Md Toyab purchased two gold bullions weighing 20 tolas and gold ornaments weighing 8 tolas at a cost of Tk 26.04 lakh, as well as one iPhone 13 and a Samsung Galaxy S-22 Ultra, as gift for the wedding of their sister and the groom, said police.

As the brothers could not manage a leave from their workplace, they sent the gifts through one

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Lawyers and activists gathered in front of Supreme Court yesterday to oppose the Digital Security Act. They demanded that the act not be used as a tool for harassment.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON