

## Nurse ‘tortures’ her 11-yr-old house help for over a year

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

A nurse of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital (SOMCH) has been accused of torturing her 11-year-old house help for over a year in the city's Nabab Road area.

The victim is currently undergoing treatment at the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital's One Stop Crisis Centre.

On Monday, a case was filed in this connection with Sylhet's Kotwali Police Station.

The girl's father, a day labourer from Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila, said nurse Shahnaj was also from his village.

He said, “My daughter studied until the fifth grade. Considering my financial constraints and Shahnaj's request, I sent her to work as a domestic help around a year and a half ago.

“My daughter has been abused by the nurse since she went to work for her. The nurse intimidated her into hiding the scars from us, but we finally saw them when she came home for Eid.”

The victim said, “She [Shahnaj] would often beat me with a hot spatula. She would hit me if she couldn't find her money or if she thought I had eaten too much food. I would scream in pain, but no one in the neighbourhood could hear me. I was also afraid to tell my parents about the abuse because I was scared of what she would do to me.”

Despite multiple attempts, this correspondent failed to reach Shahnaj on her phone. Her number was found switched off.

Contacted, SOMCH Director Brig Gen Mahbubur Rahman Bhuiyan said, “I've not been officially informed of the matter, but it has come to my attention. The hospital authority will soon seek an official explanation from the accused nurse and take necessary steps accordingly.”

## Woman raped in Dhanmondi restaurant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was raped by an unidentified youth in the capital's Dhanmondi area Monday evening.

The father of the 21-year-old victim filed a rape case with Dhanmondi Police Station yesterday afternoon against an unnamed accused.

Parvez Islam, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, said that a 20- to 24-year-old youth, tactfully took the victim to a closed restaurant on the sixth floor of a building on Sat Masjid Road and raped her on the restaurant's balcony.

The victim is currently undergoing treatment at the One Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The OC added that efforts are on to apprehend the suspect.

**Our densely populated city has an interesting phenomenon. Many choose to live in the outskirts of Dhaka in places like Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Keraniganj, to name a few, and commute to the metropolis every day either for study, work, or other purposes.**



PHOTO: SAAD ABDULLAH

FEDA AL HOSSAIN

Dhaka's high cost of living prevents these people from moving to Dhaka permanently, especially with their families. Be it living in a shared house or getting a small apartment, the cost of living in the city is significantly higher than living in Gazipur, for instance. Even if it means travelling to the city every day for work.

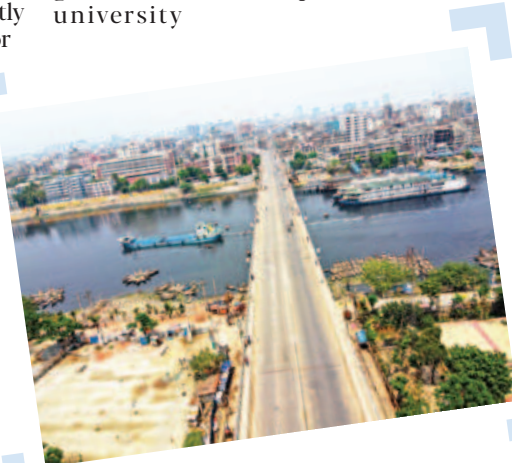
Rizwan Ahmed, a travel agent with an office in Motijheel, makes his daily commute from Gazipur.

“I actually lived in Dhaka with my family in a rented home for some time, but it was far from my office; the traffic jam made matters worse and the higher cost of living was not giving me any respite. So, I moved back to my home in Gazipur town and while the bus journey every day is anything but smooth the monthly expenditure is significantly less,” he said.

Another important reason why people opt to make the commute instead of living in Dhaka is their preference to live in their locality surrounded by family and friends. It

can be incredibly difficult to come and live in a new place and miss the sense of belonging and attachment that one feels with their hometown.

Sahana Parvin, a resident of Narayanganj, completed her graduation from a private university



in Dhanmondi. She said, “Coming from Narayanganj, I have spent a lot of time on the road. Often the long hours on buses took its toll on me but as soon as I went back home and was surrounded by my friends and family, I felt like all

the fatigue went away in an instant”.

In the local context, covering the distance between let's say Dhaka and Narayanganj of around 30km sounds like a daunting task. In most developed countries, however, this is not much of an issue as highly developed infrastructures make it convenient to commute even longer distances.

With the recent inauguration of the Metro Rail and projects like the expressways, people can also harbour a hope of living a life where they do not necessarily have to live in the same place for accommodation and work.

“My hometown is in Munshiganj and I like the quaint setting of the place. I have this dream of coming to work every day from there in my car and then going back the same day. I have seen how the roads have been developed in the last few years so who knows maybe this will happen sooner than I think!” remarked Hashem Ali, a lecturer at a private university.

However, until that is happening a large number of people will have to undertake the “great commute” and continue to endure a lot of problems.

## RHD fears it'll create chaos on highway

FROM PAGE 1

rail authorities said that they had prepared the detailed design of the proposed line considering all technical aspects and the RHD's future plans about the highway.

“Asking us to change the route now basically means cancelling the construction of the metro rail which will start soon,” Md Aftab Hossain Khan, project director of MRT-5 (northern route), told The Daily Star.

The fears and frustrations shared by the RHD engineers regarding the issue are reflected in different documents they have shared with their higher authorities, including the Road Transport and Highways Division.

The 20km rail line with 14 stations will connect Hemayetpur and Bhatara via Gabtoli, Mirpur, and Gulshan. The 5.6km section, from Hemayetpur to Aminbazar, will be elevated while a 13.5km section from Gabtoli to Natunbazar will be underground. The remaining 0.9km will be elevated, too.

Physical work on the Tk 41,239 crore project will start with the development of a depot at Hemayetput. The metro rail authorities have already hired a contractor for the work and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the project later this month or early next month, said Aftab Hossain.

The Dhaka-Aricha highway links the capital with the north and some districts in the south. The RHD is spending Tk 696 crore to build dedicated service lanes and bus bays at major bus stops and market areas between Gabtoli and Paturia Ferry Terminal.

Moreover, the RHD in 2021 completed a feasibility study to turn the Gabtoli to Nabinagar section of the highway into an expressway.

The tussle between two agencies under the same ministry reflects

the lack of a comprehensive plan for the infrastructural development projects centring Dhaka and its adjacent areas, said transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman.

If the metro line, along with the stations, is built on the highway, it will obstruct future expansion of the highway, he added.

“This is a major highway. The highway should have been given priority considering its importance,” he told The Daily Star on Monday.

As the RHD has raised the issue at the stage of drawing the design, the DMTCL should have considered it, he pointed out.

**THE DISPUTE**

After the RHD raised its reservations about the proposed metro rail route, a meeting was held on March 23, 2021, where officials of both the RHD and the DMTCL were present.

At the meeting, RHD officials said blocking the highway corridor with metro rail structures would not be sustainable. Therefore, they requested for the Hemayetpur to Aminbazar section of the metro line to be either moved south or taken underground.

But MRT-5 Project Director Aftab Hossain Khan told the meeting that the line was planned on RHD land in accordance with the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) or revised STP. Due to technical difficulties and the heavy flow of traffic on the highway, the line cannot be moved south, he added.

The meeting also decided to sit again and finalise a paper that would be sent to the ministry concerned for a decision. But the issue was not resolved. In the meantime, the DMTCL has completed 90% of the line's design following the proposed route.

Another meeting between the RHD and DMTCL officials was held on March 23 this year.

According to the meeting

minutes, Sabuj Uddin Khan, RHD's additional chief engineer for Dhaka zone, requested the DMTCL to shift the Hemayetpur and Baliapur stations to the north.

Mohammad Ahad Ullah, RHD's executive engineer for Dhaka Division, said the metro line should not be built on the median of the highway. He also said the highway might witness severe traffic congestion during the construction period, just like the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway due to the construction of the BRT line.

The Tongi Gazipur section of Dhaka-Mymensingh highway is witnessing traffic congestion on a regular basis for years due to the construction of the BRT Line-3, a dedicated bus line from the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka to Gazipur.

According to the meeting minutes, Abdullah Al Mamun, additional chief engineer (technical services wing) of RHD, said the future expansion of the highway would be obstructed if the line was built following the proposed route.

There is enough land on the south side of the highway and “it's still possible to review the design of the metro rail without using RHD land,” reads the minutes.

RHD sources said Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri visited the project site on June 16 and gave the go-ahead for the DMTCL plan, ignoring the concerns raised by the RHD.

The secretary could not be contacted as he was abroad.

After that, RHD's Dhaka Division Office on June 22 sent a letter to its higher authority –Dhaka Circle Office – expressing its concern and requesting it to take necessary steps so that the metro rail route could be changed, said sources.

According to the letter, the

construction of a station and a depot at Hemayetpur will obstruct their plan to build a major interchange – a meeting point for roads which allows vehicles to move from one road to another without obstructing the flow of traffic – in the area for the proposed Gabtoli-Nabinagar expressway and the planned Dhaka outer circular road. It would also create a permanent bottleneck there.

Most of the metro rail line structure will be constructed on the highway, which will obstruct drivers' visibility and thus will create more risk of road crashes, reducing traffic speed at the same time, the letter noted.

Besides, the MRT lines are usually being built inside the city where speed limit of vehicles remains low but high-speed inter-district vehicles will be operated on the highway, and thus will increase the risk of road crashes, it added.

Contacted, RHD's Sabuj Uddin Khan said the authorities were trying to resolve the issue. He, however, indicated that the metro rail was going to be built on the proposed route.

Replying to a question, he said, “We will shift the route of the expressway as it would take more time to start. Both the projects are important to the government.”

Contacted, PD Aftab Hossain Khan, who is a retired additional chief engineer of RHD, said RHD's argument lacked technical assessment and was based on emotion.

He said they would close two lanes on the northern side of the highway at the Hemayetpur point during the construction period. To keep the traffic flow unhindered, he said, they would build two lanes on the southern side before blocking the two lanes.

There will be no problem in the other parts of the route, he added.

## European countries

FROM PAGE 1

The national flag carrier is also planning to make a code-sharing agreement with Air Canada to have further reach into North America.

For years, Biman has been trying to sign codeshare agreements with several airlines. Both carriers will share the profits earned from routes under the codeshare agreement, said the Biman MD.

“Code sharing is a kind of indirect fleet expansion,” he said.

Aviation expert ATM Nazrul Islam lauded Biman's move and said this is a unique moment for the aviation sector in Bangladesh as this is the first time any carrier of Bangladesh is signing a codeshare agreement with a foreign carrier.

**WHAT IS CODE SHARING**

Code-sharing is a partnership between two airlines. It allows a flight to be operated by one carrier and marketed by another.

Put simply, code-sharing allows airlines to sell tickets to destinations they do not fly to but their partners do. These agreements allow airlines to offer numerous flights without additional equipment, resources, and costs.

Code sharing also provides passengers with a wide choice of flights. It also makes booking, checking in, luggage handling, and travelling more convenient. The coordinated schedules make sure there is enough time for connecting flights.

Airlines throughout the world

## Major rivers seeing rise in water

FROM PAGE 1

In Gaibandha, the Brahmaputra has been rising fast, said BWDB officials.

In Sunamganj town, the Surma was still flowing 7cm above the danger level and 130cm above in Chhatakat at 9:00am yesterday.

Several thousand people were still marooned as flood water inundated low-lying areas in the district.

In Netrokona, the Someshwari was

## 10 injured as drug gangs clash

Bystander shot, 14 held

UNB, *Narayanganj*

Two rival drug gangs clashed in Narayanganj's Chanpara early yesterday, leaving at least 10 people injured, including a bystander who was shot.

Following the incident, 14 people were detained and the situation was brought under control.

Police said there was a longstanding dispute between the Joynal group and the Shamser group over establishing supremacy and controlling the drug trade at Chanpara Rehabilitation Centre.

The two groups equipped with arms locked into clashes on Monday night and early yesterday.

Abir Hossain, senior assistant superintendent of district police, said a bystander named Hridoy sustained bullet injuries on his way home from his workplace when the two groups were exchanging gunfire.

“He is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The other injured were also admitted to several hospitals in the district.”

Police were conducting drives to arrest the others and trying to recover the arms used in the violence.

## Ex-Jubo League leader accused of rape, extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

A former Jubo League leader and his two associates were sued yesterday in a case filed over the rape of a woman in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar.

The accused are Shalik Baksh, 40, former general secretary of Hajipur union unit Jubo League, and his associates Hasanul Bari Sani, 35, and Saifur Rahman, 32.

The trio was also accused of extorting Tk 50,000 from the woman after threatening to blackmail her with photos and videos of the incident.

According to the case, on Eid day, the woman visited a relative's house in a village in the upazila. At one point, her relative went to his shop in the market, leaving the woman at home.

Finding the woman home alone, Shalik and his two associates broke into the house and raped the woman.

Kulaura Police Station OC Abdus Salek said, “Police are trying to arrest the accused, and the woman was taken to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital.”

## Two young men drown

UNB, *Kishoreganj*

Two young men died after drowning in a local haor yesterday while they were visiting a friend for his wedding in Kishoreganj's Karimganj upazila.

The deceased, Sharfuddin Rafu, 24, and Limon Islam, 23, were residents of Nakhalpara area of Dhaka's Tejgaon.

Karimganj Police Station OC Shamsul Alam Siddique said Rafu and Limon had just attended the wedding ceremony of their friend Taukir Ahmed.

Following the wedding, Taukir and his friends played a game of football.

After the game, the three friends went to take a bath in the Gunodhar Haor around noon and drowned.

Locals rescued them and took them to Kishoreganj Syed Nazrul Islam Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Rafu and Limon dead.

Tauqir was admitted to Kishoreganj Sadar Modern Hospital.

use code-sharing arrangements to

strengthen or expand their market.

**HOW INTERLINE WORKS**

When there is an interlining agreement between two carriers, a passenger has to buy a single ticket and check in once to reach his or her destination, not direct, with flights run by both carriers.

It relieves passengers from making bookings with both carriers and handling baggage during stopovers.

The interline agreement is a collaboration that improves inter-airline ticketing experience. It promises the flexibility of travelling across multiple locations without multiple bookings.

Biman MD and CEO said through the interline agreement, Biman will take passengers to Narita and Japan Airlines will take them to US cities.

“This means we will get the opportunity to take passengers to America indirectly via Narita.

“We are also expecting that the travellers from our neighbouring countries, including Nepal and India and especially people of Kolkata and Delhi, will also find the route attractive,” added the Biman boss.

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam said Biman will have to be cautious while signing the code-sharing and interline agreements so that its interests are protected.

Biman now operates flights to 20 international destinations most of which are in the Middle East.

still flowing 31cm above the danger level at 9:00am.

The other rivers including Kongsho and Dhonu were flowing below danger level, said Sarwar Jahan, executive engineer of BWDB in Netrokona.

[Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Bogura, Sylhet and Mymensingh contributed to the report.]