



Rahul set to return to parliament

Indian SC suspends his defamation conviction



REUTERS, New Delhi

India's top court yesterday suspended opposition Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi's defamation conviction, allowing him to return to parliament and contest national elections due next year. Gandhi was convicted in March in a case brought by a lawmaker from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the western state of Gujarat over comments he made in 2019 deemed

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A microbus, which got stuck after a mudslide, being recovered by a crane in Chattogram city's Tiger Pass area yesterday morning. The port city experienced incessant rain over the last couple of days.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Criminals rape woman tying up her husband

Cops arrest 6 suspects

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police on Thursday night arrested six men on charges of raping a woman after tying her husband to a tree in Tangail's Sakhipur upazila.

The couple was walking in Chader Hat area in the evening when eight to nine men stopped them and forced them to go inside a forest, said Rezaul Karim, officer-in-charge of Sakhipur Police Station.

The suspects then tied the man to a tree and gang-raped the woman, he said, quoting the case statement filed by the husband.

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Locals later rescued them, he said.

The arrestees are Shafiq Ahmed, 25, Mozammel Haque, 30, Labu Mia, 25, Bulbul Ahmed, 25, Babul Mia, 30, and Asif Ali 24.

Mozammel made a confessional statement in a court about his involvement in the crime, police said.

The suspects, sent to jail by a court, are known as petty criminals in the area, he said.

Police are trying to arrest the others, he added.

The woman was sent to a one-stop crisis centre for medical examination, he said.

FAILED RAPE ATTEMPT

Man kills two children, stabs sister-in-law

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Failing to rape his sister-in-law after breaking into her house, a man stabbed her and killed two children in Barguna on Thursday night.

Police arrested the suspect, Elias Pahlan, 30, yesterday, and a court later sent him to jail, said AKM Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Barguna Police Station.

The children he stabbed to death are Taifa, 3, and Hafizur, 13.

Police said the suspect sneaked into the house of Reagan Akhter, a single mother, in Fuljhuri area of Barguna late at night and tried to rape her.

When Reagan resisted the rape attempt, Elias stabbed her with a sharp weapon, said AKM Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Barguna Police Station.

As Reagan screamed for help, her daughter Taifa and neighbour Golam Khahir's son Hafizur, who was sleeping in the house, woke up and started to cry, the officer said, quoting Reagan.

Elias then stabbed both of them. Hafizur died at the scene and Taifa died while she was being taken to a hospital, OC Mizanur added.

Reagan was taken to Sher-e Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barisal in a critical condition, he said.

The suspect had admitted to police that he had committed the crimes, he said.

The bodies of the children were recovered and sent to Barguna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Reagan is the younger sister of Elias's wife.

Rice for poor in the hands of clubs

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Pabna Officers' Club received rice from a government support programme meant for the vulnerable and the poor.

From the district relief and rehabilitation office, it received 3 tonnes of rice for making furniture for its office and another 5 tonnes for installing submersible pumps on June 25.

This club is not alone. Officers' clubs and press clubs in six upazilas of the district — Chatmohor, Faridpur, Bhangura, Sujanagar, Santhia and Ishwardi — and Rifle Club, Tennis Club, and Ladies' Club in Sadar upazila also got the assistance known as Manobik Sohoyota Kormosuchi, according to documents.

Biswas Russel Hossain, then deputy commissioner of Pabna, signed two memos distributing 203 tonnes of relief rice among 100 organisations.

According to the disaster management and relief ministry guideline on its website, those who are poor and ultra-poor; people, families, and institutions affected by disasters; people who do not have food; children suffering from malnutrition; underprivileged people during religious festivals are eligible for the support.

Government and non-government orphanages, and religious institutions are also eligible for the assistance.

Each organisation may get highest 5 tonnes in each allotment, according to the guideline.

Depending on necessity and under

special consideration, the government can extend the support to any person, organisation, and community, it said.

Mirza Hasan Shahid, a retired government officer living in the district, told The Daily Star that privileged public and private social clubs receiving the humanitarian assistance was shocking.

"The government runs the relief distribution work for the development of the underprivileged people and communities. Surprisingly, some of the relief materials are distributed among the privileged organisations, depriving the poor." He added that a syndicate is involved in misappropriating relief materials.

"This is a long-time practice that must be stopped," Shahid said.

Prof Shibojit Nag, president of anti-graft committee of Pabna chapter, said distribution of relief rice among the "elite" organisations is a violation of the rules.

"The government runs relief schemes to improve the lives and livelihoods of the underprivileged people and communities, but in many cases, the real beneficiaries are deprived," said Nag.

He added that proper monitoring is essential so that the right people and communities get the benefit.

WHAT RECIPIENTS SAY

Pabna Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Tahmida Akter, also the Pabna Officers' Club secretary, said they got the rice allocation following due procedure.

Asked whether the club sought the rice, Tahmida sidestepped the question and said, "The authorities can allocate rice to any organisation according to need."

Regarding the allocation for installing submersible pumps and making furniture, she said, "There are many needs of the organisation. So, the club got the allocation like any other organisations."

Sujanagar UNO Tarikul Islam, also president of Sujanagar Officers' Club, said they got 3 tonnes of relief rice for repair of the club building and other expenses.

"Although this is an organisation of the government officers, it does not earn enough to maintain itself. The club building needs some repair work and that's why we have taken the relief rice following the procedure."

Santhia UNO Md Masud Hossain, also president of Santhia Officers' Club, said by taking the relief rice, the club did not violate any rules.

Helalur Rahman Jewel, former president of Chatmohor Press Club and



SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Panna Kaiser passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Author and former lawmaker Panna Kaiser died yesterday at the age of 73 while undergoing treatment at the capital's United Hospital.

She was a writer, intellectual and cultural organiser. She was also chairperson of Khelagharb Kendriya Asar, a children's organisation.

She dedicated her life to spreading the spirit of the Liberation War and the pursuit of justice, members of Khelagharb told The Daily Star yesterday.

She was the wife of martyred intellectual Shahidullah Kaiser and mother of actress and entrepreneur Shomi Kaiser.

In a condolence message, President Mohammed Shahabuddin said the nation would remember Panna Kaiser's contribution as a member of a martyred intellectual's family

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Coal miners uncover Roman ship in Serbia



REUTERS, Kostolac

Archaeologists in Serbia are painstakingly brushing sand and soil off the ancient woodwork of a Roman ship discovered by miners in a vast opencast coal quarry.

After an excavator at the Drmno mine uncovered some timber, experts from the site of a nearby former Roman settlement known as Viminacium rushed to try and preserve the skeleton of the ship, the second such discovery in the area since 2020.

The vessel was probably part of a river fleet serving the sprawling and highly developed Roman city of 45,000 people which had a hippodrome, fortifications, a forum, a palace, temples, amphitheatre, aqueducts, baths and workshops.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



BNP leaders and activists gather for their rally on the waterlogged street in front of the party's Nayapaltn headquarters yesterday. The meeting was organised to protest the sentencing of BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman by a Dhaka court.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Fresh violence in Manipur leaves 23 hurt 'Armoury looted'

TNN, Guwahati

India's Manipur state saw a resurgence of lawlessness exactly three months after ethnic strife first erupted on May 3, leaving 23 people wounded on Thursday, media reported yesterday citing officials.

The violence centred in Bishnupur, where hundreds of woman protesters initiated a march to "prevent" the mass burial of 35 victims of the festering violence in Churachandpur, which was postponed earlier following the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the Manipur High Court ordering a status quo at 6:00am.

The protesters clashed with central security forces, who responded with tear gas shells and mock bombs, resulting in 21 people being wounded, many of them women, while a mob reportedly looted a significant number of arms and ammunition from the armoury of the 2nd India Reserve Battalion (IRB) in Naransena of Bishnupur district.

In a separate attack, a Manipur Rifles jawan and another man

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5