

397 women raped in last 10 months

Says Mahila Parishad report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 2,575 women and girls were subjected to violence during January-October this year, said a Bangladesh Mahila Parishad report yesterday.

The report was unveiled at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club.

According to the report based on 13 national dailies, 397 women were raped while 115 were gangraped during this period. Thirty-one victims were killed after the incident while 12 died by suicide. Besides, 221 females were physically abused while 443 were killed for various reasons. At least 231 females died mysteriously.

The report documented 21 child marriages, 142 cases of sexual violence and 61 cases of torture for dowry. Among the dowry victims, 45 were killed. Meanwhile, 207 women died by suicide during the stipulated timeframe.

Additionally, 38 females fell prey to cybercrime.

CANAL EXCAVATION

Four-storey building tilts in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Firefighters have evacuated people from three residential buildings after a four-storey residential building tilted last night in the port city's Bayezid's Shahid Nagar area.

Residents and a local councillor said the building was in the Paschim Shahid Nagar area where Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) was digging a canal.

The "Shital Jharna Canal" is situated just behind the building named "Khorshed Mansion".

Bayezid Bostami Fire Station's senior officer Md Kamruzzaman said, "Fire service went to the spot around 6:30pm. People from seven flats of the building were evacuated. For security reasons, we also evacuated two more buildings."

CCC ward-3 councillor Shafiqul Islam said the canal is being excavated by CDA to ease waterlogging.

Contacted Lt Col Md Shah Ali, project director of the CDA, said, "The building tilted due to weak foundation. We didn't start any excavation work at that point of the canal. However, we are looking into the issue," he said.



Sandhya Rani Paul, a 73-year-old clay artisan, checks if her pitha moulds are dried and ready for sale. She sells each mould for a wholesale price of Tk 8-10, which is available for Tk 20-25 at retail markets.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Pitha moulds in high demand

Clay artisans working round the clock to fulfil requirement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

'Tis the season of pithas (local traditional varieties of cakes and pies) and clay artisans in Barishal region are passing busy times making clay moulds (sanj) for preparing the seasonal delicacy.

Visiting Kalashkathi and Neyamati unions under Barishal's Bakerganj upazila recently, this correspondent found at least 24 clay artisan and potter communities working to prepare several lakhs of earthen pitha moulds and decoration items.

Sandhya Rani Paul of Baktia village under Kalashkathi is one such clay artisan, who was seen making clay moulds for preparing "Chitai pitha" on her yard.

Along with Sandhya, at least 10

families in the village are making 3,000-5,000 moulds daily. Each is sold wholesale at Tk 8-10, and at Tk 20-25 in the retail market.

"Now is the time to eat pitha, so the demand for moulds has increased. The clay moulds are sent to different districts, including Dhaka, from different areas in Barishal by trawlers," Sandhya said.

Kalipada Pal, 80, a resident of the village, said, "Preparing pitha during winter is a tradition of rural Bengal that dates back centuries. As winter approaches, local artisans begin making moulds using clay that takes around 8-10 days to dry and become ready for use."

Tamal Roy, member secretary of a clay artisans' welfare organisation, said about 1-2 crores of moulds are produced by some

two-dozen potter communities across Barishal division and sent to various places including Dhaka every year. This results in some considerable revenue generation in the rural economy."

Saidur Rahman Rintu, president of Barishal Chamber of Commerce and Industries, said, "There is still demand for clay products. The local artisans could have gone a long way if they received government's assistance."

Md Nazrul Islam, deputy general manager of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industry Corporation (BSCIC) in Barishal, said, "I appeal to the clay artisans to unite through various relevant associations and get registered for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises to avail loans and expand their operations."

A potentially harmful law

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empowers the sub-registry office to declare a document fraudulent. However, this law grants it such authority. This unclear provision will serve as a tool for harassing citizens."

Moreover, the jurisdiction to restore possession of a person who was illegally evicted was previously under the purview of civil courts. However, this law transfers it to the executive magistrate, he also said.

Ashraf Ali also questioned Section 8 (7), which states that "any such case filed or pending in any civil court, on the application of any party thereof or on its own consideration, the court can send it to the Executive Magistrate for taking action."

"It's a question of how a pending

case can be transferred to the executive magistrate, and how the executive magistrate can apply jurisdiction in such matters. It will also undermine the authority of the civil court," he added.

Prabir Niyogi, a senior SC lawyer, criticised the lack of a clear definition for land crimes or offenses within the law.

He said the law, by entrusting mobile courts and executive magistrates with almost all land-related crime cases, threatens to create anarchy in the administration of justice.

The law fails to meet constitutional standards accepted globally, he also said, adding that the mobile court system is an inadequate trial process that undermines constitutional rights.

Demanding complete repeal of the law, SC lawyer Tabarak Hussain said

the law is an example of bureaucratic overreach and is unsuitable for a civilised society.

Shamsul Huda, ALRD executive director, expressed concern about the potential ramifications of applying the law to the Chittagong Hill Tracts, particularly affecting marginalised and impoverished communities.

Tapan Kumar Das, chairman of Jahangirnagar University's law department, stressed the necessity of adding new clauses to the law, especially regarding land rights in CHT.

Sultana Kamal, lawyer and rights activist, rejected the law and called for its immediate repeal. She also said the law falls short of legal standards with its unclear provisions. It is also potentially harmful to many, she added.

They embezzled Tk 50cr in six months

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information retrieved by hacking their devices.

Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of DMP, disclosed the findings yesterday at a press briefing.

"We recovered 29 mobile financial services [MFS] account details from the arrestees, in which there has been transactions of Tk 50 crore total in the last six months," he said, adding that the syndicate embezzled and then laundered at least Tk 200 crore out of the country in last two years.

Primarily investigation revealed that around 1,400 to 1,500 people in the country became victims of the syndicate, he added.

Investigators said the app was made in China, but its server is in Singapore.

The syndicate runs two call centres -- one in Bangladesh which communicated with Indian nationals, and another in Pakistan which communicated with Bangladeshi nationals, they said.

According to the FIR filed with Hatirjheel Police Station on November 18, a victim was forced to pay Tk 8,00,000.

Mohidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of DB, said, "The arrestees used to hire people to open accounts in different banks using the details, in exchange for Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000, which they later used to receive money."

"We are trying to know in which country the money was laundered to," he added.

Need multi-pronged steps

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26.4 degrees Celsius. Between 2011-2022 the average temperature rose by 0.4 degrees to 26.8 degrees Celsius. That's one of the main reasons for the severe dengue outbreak," he said.

"There is no taskforce, no emergency meeting on dengue. If dengue outbreak starts in a country, it does not end very easily, but it will be controlled. However, in Bangladesh, there are no emergency integrated steps to control dengue. There is no public involvement. Even the government doesn't want any help from the development partners, although we are always ready to work with the government," said World

Health Organization official SM Alamgir.

Tahmina Shirin, director of Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research, said, "Various levels of initiatives are needed to control dengue. It's not just the health department's job. It's become a year-round crisis now. Therefore, coordinated and multi-pronged measures are needed to control it."

"Public involvement in health issues is not an easy task. Public involvement in elections is easy. Some countries also have laws to involve people," said Akhtaruzzaman, additional secretary (Public Health) of the health ministry.

Public health experts, doctors, high officials from Directorate General of Health Services, and entomologists participated in the seminar.

However, no one from the two city corporations of Dhaka was present. The organisers of the event said they did not come although they were invited.

Meanwhile, at least 12 more people died from dengue in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday. Of the 12 deaths, nine were reported in the capital.

At least 759 dengue patients were hospitalised in the 24-hour period, according to the DGHS. Dengue has so far claimed at least 1,595 lives this year.

3 killed as prime mover

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driver fled the scene.

Meanwhile, two people were killed and three injured as a pickup rammmed into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Fulgazi upazila of Feni yesterday, reports BSS.

The deceased were identified as auto-rickshaw driver Saiful Islam, 25, and Anas, 8-month-old, son of Akram Hossain, of Cumilla.

Quoting locals, OC of Fulgazi Police Station Abul Hasim said a speeding pickup van rammmed into an auto-rickshaw in Shaniurhat area, leaving two dead on the spot and injured three others.

The pickup driver has been arrested over the incident, the OC added.

In Mymensingh, two people, including a child,

were killed as a private car fell into a ditch beside the Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road after hitting a child in Ishwarganj upazila of Mymensingh yesterday evening.

The victims were identified as car passenger Babu Pal, 65, of Kishoreganj, and pedestrian Jannatul Adon, 11, of Ishwarganj.

Quoting locals, OC Farid Ahmed of Ishwarganj Police Station, said a Mymensingh-bound private car hit Jannatul in Chour 5:00pm while she along with other children was crossing the road.

The car then fell into a roadside ditch.

On information, police recovered the bodies and seized the vehicle but its driver managed to flee.

A case was lodged with the police station, the OC added.

In Gazipur, a police constable was killed and two others were injured as a lorry hit a police vehicle at Rajendrapur intersection in Gazipur Sadar upazila yesterday morning. The deceased was identified as Bitan Barua, a constable of Sadar Police Station.

The incident took place around 4:00pm when the police vehicle was taking a U-turn and was hit by a lorry, Sadar Police Station's duty officer Sub-inspector Swapna Begum told The Daily Star.

SI Moshabbir and constables Bitan and Akkas Uddin, who were patrolling from Salna to Mymensingh, were injured in the accident.

Awareness must to prevent thalassemia

Speakers tell discussion

CITY DESK

Speakers at views exchange yesterday stressed the need for creating awareness to prevent thalassemia.

They also suggested making blood test mandatory before marriage, said a press release.

Amjad Khan Chowdhury Memorial Hospital (AKCMH) organised the event at Amjad Khan Chowdhury Nursing College and PRAN Agro Ltd's factory in Natore in collaboration with Bangladesh Thalassemia Samity Hospital.

At the programme, speakers focused on creating awareness, prevention tools and protocol for treatment of thalassemia. Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder caused when the body doesn't make enough of a protein called hemoglobin, an important part of red blood cells.

Uzma Chowdhury, chairman of AKCMH and director (corporate finance) of PRAN-RFL Group presided over the programme. Dr AKM Ekramul Hossain, executive director of Bangladesh Thalassemia Samity Hospital, and Dr Kabirul Islam, chief medical officer, were also present.



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

IFIC hosts seminar

CITY DESK

IFIC Bank recently hosted a day-long seminar on Raising Awareness to Eliminate Violence Against Women in Bangladesh.

This seminar, conducted in collaboration with the Faculty of Law at Dhaka University, coincided with the observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2023.

The seminar was conducted by Mahfuza Liza, superintendent of police, Special Branch, and Taslima Yasmin, associate professor of law at DU.

Faculty members from the law department including Dr Shima Zaman (acting dean); Dr Md Rahmat Ullah; Dr Mohammad Nazmuzzaman Bhuiyan; and Dr Borhan Uddin Khan, along with senior officials from IFIC Bank PLC such as Md Rafiqul Islam, DMD & Head of Branch Business, and SM Alamgir, head of legal affairs, attended the event.



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