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SUBARNACHAR RAPE

## All three accused arrested

### AL leader placed on 4-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Police yesterday arrested another accused in a case filed over the rape of a woman and her minor daughter in Noakhali's Subarnachar upazila early Tuesday.

With the arrest of Md Harun, a 42-year-old cattle trader of Charkazi Makhles village in the upazila's Charwapda union, all three of the accused were nabbed, said Noakhali Superintendent of Police Md Asaduzzaman.

"After the rape, Harun fled to different places and even tried to escape to India through the Benapole border. We were tracking his movements and finally arrested him from Dhaka early today [yesterday]."

Meanwhile, the prime accused, Abul Khair alias Munshi, recently-expelled president of Charwapda Union Awami League and a former union parishad member, was placed

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7



## BRAINS OF THE SEA

A *Lobophyllia corymbosa*, or brain root coral, spotted around 10ft under the surface of the Bay of Bengal on Saint Martin's Island. This fascinating species of large polyp stony coral occurs on reefs in shallow waters of the Red Sea, off the coast of East Africa, and in other parts of the tropical Indo-Pacific. These corals have large polyps that each secrete a corallite around itself, which forms the skeleton of the coral. The corallites tend to be shaped like hourglasses with thick and fleshy polyps inside. The corallites normally remain retracted throughout the day and are extended at night for feeding. The symbiotic algae zooxanthellae, hosted within its own body, provides much of its nutritional requirements through the process of photosynthesis. They also feast on micro-planktons from time to time. Though this coral species has been listed in the "Least Concern" category by the IUCN due to its wide range, it is, however, still subject to the reef degradation that threatens all corals due to rising global temperatures and ocean acidification.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

## Key accused of rape at JU a drug trader

### Rab says he had close links with BCL men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 44-year-old man accused of raping a woman at Jahangirnagar University used to sell drugs on the campus and its adjacent areas, according to Rab.

Mamunur Rashid Mamun, the key accused, colluded with some "senior students", including the Chhatra League leaders arrested over the rape, said Rab.

He has been supplying yaba pills to the campus and its nearby areas since 2017. He also catered to various illicit and immoral requests from the "senior students" to continue his drug-related activities.

At the request of JUBCL leader Mostafizur Rahman, 28, the prime accused in the rape case, Mamun allegedly drew up a plan and tricked the woman into entering the campus where he and Mostafizur raped her after confining her husband to dorm room on Saturday night, Rab Director (legal and media wing) Commander Khandaker Al Moin told a press briefing at its Media Centre in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar yesterday.

On Wednesday, Rab arrested Mamun from the capital's Farmgate and Murad Hossain, 22, an abettor in the rape and also an assistant secretary of JUBCL.

"It's not the first time Mamun had brought a woman to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

## Australian law allows workers to ignore after-hrs work calls

REUTERS, Sydney



Australians yesterday cheered new proposed laws that give workers the right to ignore calls and messages from their bosses outside of work hours, but some business leaders slammed it as overreach.

The "right to disconnect" laws proposed by the federal government under a parliamentary bill introduced in parliament. The bill was passed in the Senate yesterday but will need to go back to the House of Representatives to vote to approve some amendments.

"I think it's a wonderful idea," said Sydney resident Colvin Macpherson. "We all need to relax, we all need to be able to switch off and not be disturbed by emails and phone calls in the middle of the night. Both of my kids are lawyers as well, so they work horrendous hours as it is and you get things coming in at night time," he said.

Similar laws giving employees a right to switch off their devices are already in place in France, Germany and other countries in the European Union.

The bill also includes other provisions like a clearer pathway from temporary to permanent work and minimum standards for temporary workers and truck driver.

## SEATS RESERVED FOR WOMEN IN JS

# Race tougher than that of AL ticket for nat'l polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As it seems, the race for securing Awami League tickets for election to the reserved seats is much more intense than it was in getting AL nominations to contest the national polls.

The number of aspirants seeking AL tickets in each reserved seat is nearly three times higher than that of the AL nomination seekers in a constituency during the last election.

A total of 1,549 nomination papers were sold against 48 seats, indicating that on an average, 32 women are competing for an AL ticket for a seat whereas an average 11 aspirants sought the party ticket in a seat ahead of the polls.

For the January 7 polls, the ruling party sold 3,362 nomination forms for 300 constituencies.

Speculations are rife over the potential nominees and the criteria under which AL President Sheikh Hasina would consider nominating.

Meanwhile, Hasina, also the prime minister, during a meeting with independent lawmakers on January 28, said descendants or spouses of veteran and devoted party leaders and some professionals who have contributed to the party would be considered for the reserved seat.

According to the Jatiya Sangsad (Reserved Women's Seats) Election

- » AL sold 1,549 nomination papers for 48 seats
- » On average 32 women vying for one AL ticket
- » Celebrities among the nomination seekers
- » 3,362 AL nomination forms sold in last national polls

Act, a party or coalition gets one reserved seat for securing every six seats.

As the AL won in 223 constituencies and the 62 independent MPs have given AL President Hasina the power to elect members of the reserved seats on their behalf, it means the AL can place 48 MPs in reserved seats, while Jatiya Party will have the other two.

The election to the 50 reserved seats is slated for March 14.

On the last day of the nomination paper sale yesterday, a good number of nomination seekers gathered at the AL headquarters in the capital's Gulistan to collect and

submit nomination forms.

The number of nomination paper submission was higher than purchase as yesterday was the final day of sale and submission.

Among the aspirants there are leaders of different AL committees, celebrities, and wives of ministers, MPs, and lawyers.

According to sources of the party's central office, leaders of AL and its different associated bodies were the highest in number of nomination paper collection.

At least 15 celebrities who collected the nomination forms are Lucky Enam, Suborna Mustafa, Tarin Jahan, Apu Biswas, Nipun Akhter, Shimla, Shahnoor, Tanvin Sweetey, Meher Afroz Shaon, Shomi Kaiser, Rokeya Prachi, Sohana Saba, Urmila Srabanti Kar, Mahiya Mahi, and Shamima Tusty, the sources added.

The AL started selling nomination forms on Tuesday and the party earned Tk 7.74 crore from the nomination paper sale.

Party sources said the AL Parliamentary Nomination Board will hold a meeting on February 14 to finalise the party's nominees.

The AL won by a landslide in the January 7 national election that was boycotted by BNP and its like-minded parties demanding the polls be held under a non-partisan administration.

## They trafficked people for organs

### Says DB after arresting gang member; 100 girls sent to India, ME

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Police have arrested a member of a transnational syndicate that is trafficking women from Bangladesh to India and the Middle East.

The syndicate used to lure victims by promising lucrative jobs via online apps, Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (detective branch) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said yesterday.

If someone fell into their trap, they used to send the victim first to Satkhira only to be trafficked later to India, he added.

"These victims were then exploited for different purposes, including organ trade," he said, adding that the syndicate has been in operation for a long period.

"At least 100 girls have fallen victim to their activities so far," he added.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested the syndicate member, Kabir Hossain, 36, near the Bangladesh-India border in Satkhira on Tuesday.

During the drive, police rescued two victims, Shima Akter, 27, and her son Nabab Sheikh, 10, who were in the process of being trafficked to India.

Detectives made the breakthrough while investigating a case filed with the Hazaribagh Police Station in Dhaka regarding two missing girls, aged 14 and 15, on February 4.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

**The syndicate members used Indian phone numbers to call the targeted victims to make the job offer believable.**

## Rejected by woman, man drowns her brother

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man drowned his four-year-old cousin in Cox's Bazar, Rab officials said.

Tarek Aziz, 26, killed his cousin Abid after the parents of the latter refused his proposal to marry Abid's elder sister, said Anwar Hossain, additional superintendent of police of Rab.

A Rab team arrested Tarek, a three-wheeler driver, in Junchhori area of the town on Wednesday night, and he later told officers that he killed his toddler cousin on February 1, the officer told a press briefing yesterday.

That afternoon he took Abid to a quiet area on the banks of the Bakkhali river and tied his hands, legs and stuffed his mouth.

He then left the boy in a bush and went to Abid's house, pretending to look for him, said Anwar.

Tarek then went to the Link Road and called Abid's father Mohammad Ishaq from somebody's phone and demanded a ransom of Tk 3 lakh for Abid's release, the officer added.

Tarek seemed to have panicked after that as he went to the palace where he left the boy and drowned him in a pond, said Rab.

After Abid's body was recovered on Friday, his father Ishaq filed a murder case.

**Tarek then went to the Link Road and called Abid's father Mohammad Ishaq from somebody's phone and demanded a ransom of Tk 3 lakh for Abid's release.**



Local residents stand among debris of a residential building partially destroyed by a missile attack in the town of Selydove, Donetsk region yesterday, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

## No way to fight disinformation from abroad: Arafat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat yesterday told the parliament that the ministry, right now, doesn't have the means to fight against disinformation on social media from abroad.

He, however, said a Fact Checking Committee under the Press Information Department which is working continuously to prevent rumours and propaganda against the country at home and abroad.

The state minister said this in response to a query from ruling Awami League MP Chayan Islam.

The state minister said that there is an opportunity to take action under the existing law if any subversive activity or propaganda is carried out against the country from inside Bangladesh. However, the ministry doesn't have the means to fight disinformation coming from foreign soil.

"We are working on it. This will require the cooperation of the Ministry of Law, Home Affairs and ICT. We have already taken some initiatives," Arafat added.