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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Govt promises speedy probe and trial

Vows instant arrests in incidents of mob violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid vigorous protests by different quarters demanding women's safety and the administration's accountability in handling incidents of sexual assault, the government has promised steps to speed up judicial processes in such cases.

It has also vowed increased vigilance against mob violence in the wake of concerns over a rise in incidents related to angry crowds.

The government is set to amend the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act to mandate that rape case investigations be completed within 15 days instead of 30, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said at a press briefing yesterday.

Flanked by Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury and Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam, Asif told reporters at the Secretariat that the trial duration for rape cases would also be halved, requiring completion within 90 days.

Under the existing law, rape suspects' bail is possible if the trial is not completed within 180 days, but delays in



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Dhaka University students hold a rally in front of the Raju sculpture, demanding maximum punishment for rapists. Last night's demonstration was one of many across the country against the spate of rape incidents and violence against women.

Four girls, two women raped

STAR REPORT

Reports of rapes and other types of sexual violence against women and girls continued to come yesterday after a barrage of similar incidents were reported on International Women's Day on Saturday.

The latest rape victims included two pregnant women and four girls aged between five and 14, police said, as protests spread across the country, especially on university campuses, against violence against women and girls. Another girl was sexually assaulted.

In a shocking turn of events, two of the accused were fathers of the girls while another was a foster father. Two other accused are elderly, aged 60 and 70.

One of the pregnant women, a homemaker from Chandpur's Matlab upazila, was allegedly gang raped in South Keraniganj of Dhaka on Saturday night after he came to Sadarghat from Chandpur by launch following a quarrel with her husband.

She was admitted to the One-Stop Crisis Center of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and a case was filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Mazharul Islam, officer-in-charge of SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Govt to amend Women and Children Repression Prevention Act to fix 15 days for completing rape case probes and 90 days for finishing trials.

completing the trial within the 90-day period would not be grounds for granting bail under the amended law, the law adviser said.

The government has also directed law enforcement agencies to make a list of all incidents of violence against women that occurred during the tenure of the interim government. They will have to submit the list to the court. They have also been instructed to speed up the investigation of these cases, according to Asif.

"Women must be able to work at home and outdoors without any fear. Those who attempt to obstruct this with violence will be brought under the law. No leniency will be shown in this regard," he said.

The law adviser said the government planned several measures to prevent rape and violence against women. "These will soon be finalised, and necessary legal changes will be introduced."

Regarding the possible legal changes, Asif said, "Previously, if the investigating officer in a case of violence against women failed to complete the investigation within 30 days, they would be replaced. This practice will be changed. The designated investigating officer must complete the investigation within the stipulated time."

Condemning the rape of an eight-year-old girl, Asif said that rapists have no place in Bangladesh. "All those accused in the Magura incident have already been arrested. The government is working to ensure the maximum punishment for them through the legal process."

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RAPE OF 8-YR-OLD This is the highest level of injustice: HC

STAR REPORT

The High Court yesterday expressed its outrage over the rape of an eight-year-old child in Magura, stating that the incident represented the highest level of injustice.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury made the remarks after hearing a writ petition in connection to the case.

The judges said they were at a loss for words. They emphasised the need for collective steps to prevent brutal incidents like rapes from ever happening again.

In response to the writ petition, the HC directed the police to complete the case investigation in 30 days and ordered the Magura's Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal to dispose of the case within 180 days of accepting the chargesheet.

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'We can't stay silent anymore'

Students erupt in protest nationwide, demand justice for violence against women, children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women took to the streets across the country with demands for justice for rape, stricter punishment for offenders, and resignation of the home affairs adviser.

There has been a recent spate of sexual violence across the country, and the rape of an 8-year-old girl — now fighting for life — by a middle-aged man particularly incensed the nation, triggering protests that began on Saturday night.

In the capital, students of seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University marched with lit torches in the Nilkhet area around 7:00pm yesterday. They later held a candlelit vigil.

Protests rocked the DU campus throughout the day. Resident women students marched and held a rally calling for an end to sexual violence and demanding exemplary punishment for the offenders last night.

Umama Fatema, spokesperson of Students Against Discrimination, announced the

formation of the Anti-Rape Platform and said the main demands are immediate establishment of a special tribunal to expedite the trial proceedings and the punishment of the man accused of raping the 8-year-old girl from Magura.

"As women, we suffer every single day. We are not safe, even in our own homes. The interim government must ensure our safety."

SAMARITA NAG, a student of Rajshahi University

harassing her.

The man she accused is Mostafa Asif Arnob, a bookbinder, who has now been suspended.

Police must also be held accountable for not taking action when Arnob spread sexually abusive remarks about the victim, the teachers said.

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Cop uses police car for robbery

Current, former law enforcers among 5 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Five individuals, including current and former members of the police and navy, have been arrested for allegedly committing robbery using a Bangladesh Police vehicle.

The arrests were made during a joint operation by Rab and the police on Saturday in Narayanganj's Rugganj and Dhaka's Mirpur, said Liakat Ali, officer-in-charge of Rugganj Police Station.

The arrestees are Constable Md Rubel, currently serving at the police headquarters; dismissed constable Rajol Islam; dismissed navy member Riayul Jannat; and two civilians — Siyadat Raj and Rahmat Ali.

"The gang used an official police headquarters vehicle to rob an expatriate in Dhaka's New Market area on Saturday," the OC said.

Later, the victim and his associates, with the help of locals, intercepted the vehicle in Rugganj's Purbachal area, he added.

Upon receiving information, a team of police and Rab arrived at the scene and arrested two individuals. Three more suspects were later apprehended in Rugganj and Mirpur, according to the OC.

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India clinch another global silverware

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Dubai

In less than nine months, India once again found themselves on the champions' podium — this time in the ICC Champions Trophy — after defeating New Zealand by four wickets in the final in Dubai yesterday. The victory also saw India become the first team to win the prestigious title three times, in 2013 and when they were named joint-champions with hosts Sri Lanka in 2002.

Despite a few hiccups, India rarely looked in trouble as they chased down the 252-run target set by New Zealand with an over to spare, backed by a passionate Indian crowd at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

In stark contrast to their 11-year drought in ICC events following their second Champions Trophy title in 2013, the

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Skipper Rohit Sharma holds aloft the trophy alongside his teammates after India beat New Zealand by four wickets in the ICC Champions Trophy final in Dubai yesterday to become the first team to win the major ICC event three times.

PHOTO: AFP

AUXILIARY POLICE FORCE DMP appoints 500 security guards

Experts emphasise supervision

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has appointed around 500 security personnel working in various residential areas, markets, and shopping centres across the capital as members of the "Auxiliary Police Force".

The appointments were given under Section 10 of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance, 1976, by DMP Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali.

The ordinance, under its "Constitution and Organisation of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police" section, empowers the police commissioner to appoint auxiliary officers to assist law enforcement when additional support is required.

Subsection (2)(b) of Section 10 further stipulates that auxiliary officers, upon appointment, shall have the same powers, immunities, duties, and authority as regular police officers.

The designated auxiliary members will be legally protected, similar to regular police officers.

"If anyone obstructs an auxiliary member from performing their duties or attacks them, legal action will be taken against the offender," SN Nazrul Islam, additional commissioner (crime and operations) of DMP, told The Daily Star.

The auxiliary members will be able to make arrests: they will hand over detainees to the designated police patrol team or the nearest police station, and the police will then

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