

Woman sues three over gang rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 35-year-old woman filed a case yesterday accusing three men of gang raping her in a forested area of Sreepur on May 20.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mohammad Abdul Barik, officer-in-charge of Sreepur Police Station, said the incident took place around 11:30pm on May 20, when the woman was returning home from work.

The accused -- Alamin, 27, Shanto, 25, and Sumon, 26 -- have been on the run since the incident, said Inspector Nayan Kar, the investigating officer.

According to the victim's husband, the men blindfolded her, dragged her into a nearby forest, and raped her until 5:00am, before releasing her in the morning.

Police are trying to arrest the accused, OC Barik said, adding that the victim has been sent to hospital for medical tests.



A child cries as Palestinians gather at a food distribution point in the Nuseirat camp for refugees in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. The United Nations chief Antonio Guterres said Palestinians are enduring “the cruellest phase” of the nearly two-year-long war in Gaza due to the Israeli blockade and bombardment.

PHOTO: AFP

US strike on Yemen kills al-Qaeda members

AFP, Dubai

Five Al-Qaeda members have been killed in a strike blamed on the United States in southern Yemen, two Yemeni security sources told AFP yesterday.

“Residents of the area informed us of the US strike... five Al-Qaeda members were eliminated,” said a security source in Abyan province, which borders the seat of Yemen’s internationally-recognised government in Aden.

“The US strike on Friday evening north of Khabar Al-Maraqsha killed five,” said a second source, referring to a mountainous area known to be used by Al-Qaeda.

The second security source added that, though the names of those killed in the strike were not known, it was believed one of Al-Qaeda’s local leaders was among the dead.

Washington once regarded the group, known as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), as the militant network’s most dangerous branch.

Born in 2009 from the merger of Al-Qaeda’s Yemeni and Saudi factions, AQAP grew and developed in the chaos of Yemen’s war, which since 2015 has pitted the Iran-backed Huthi rebels against a Saudi-led coalition backing the government.

Earlier this month, the United States agreed a ceasefire with the Huthis, who have controlled large swathes of Yemen for more than a decade, ending weeks of intense American strikes on rebel-held areas of the country.

Yunus to stay the course

FROM PAGE 1

interim government, said a statement.

“The future of the country depends on this task, and we must keep going despite the obstacles,” Mahmud said.

The advisory council later issued a statement, calling for national unity to ensure a fair election and stability. The council also expressed concerns over attempts to hamper the functioning of the administration.

The statement said that “unreasonable demands, deliberately provocative and jurisdictionally overreaching statements, and disruptive programmes have been continuously obstructing normal functioning environment and creating confusion and suspicion among the public.”

Despite these challenges, the government said, it would continue to carry out its duties, placing national interest above all else.

“However, if – under the instigation of defeated forces or as part of a foreign conspiracy – the performance of these responsibilities becomes impossible, the government will present all reasons to the public and then take the necessary steps with the people.”

While briefing reporters after the unscheduled meeting of the advisory council, Mahmud said, “The chief

adviser will be with us. He has not said he will resign. The other advisers are also staying. We have been given responsibilities, and we are here to fulfill them.”

Mahmud said the advisers discussed the obstacles hindering the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

He said the government’s primary task is to establish the framework for the upcoming election and the transition to a well-governed democratic system on a broader scale.

“We have tried to identify the obstacles and their sources. We call upon all forces supporting the popular uprising, all state institutions, to assist us in achieving this goal. This is not solely our responsibility. We seek the cooperation of all political parties, administrative bodies, various institutions, and the judiciary in reaching this objective.”

Asked about demands for resignation of several advisers including himself, Mahmud said that the remarks made against him were not official party statements. “So, if it were truly a party decision, any of us could have resigned,” he said.

According to multiple sources present at this and Thursday’s advisory council meeting, several advisers requested Prof Yunus to present a

roadmap for the next national election as soon as possible.

The chief adviser had not expressed his opinion on the matter, they added.

The first meeting was held on Thursday morning at the CA Office.

Election roadmap figured high at both meetings. But Mahmud declined to comment when asked whether the roadmap was discussed at yesterday’s meeting.

A source said that during Thursday’s meeting, an adviser opined that the national election could be held in either February or April next year.

The adviser said the announcement of such a tentative timeline could help calm the current political situation and reinforce the chief adviser’s earlier statement that the election would be held within June 2026.

The adviser added that political parties may respond positively when there is clarity. He further emphasised the importance of going ahead with the trial of July killings and the reform process.

Another source said the advisers grew concerned as the BNP and several other parties are demanding the election be held by December.

If Prof Yunus hints at holding elections in any specific month after

December this year and before June next year, it could offer a middle ground, said the source quoting the adviser.

Such an indication would prevent criticisms that the government’s election roadmap was announced under political or non-political pressure, while also meeting the expectations of political parties, added the source.

A high-level government source said Prof Yunus had expressed frustration because in his opinion, the political parties showed a lack of patience even after he announced a probable timeline.

It was out of disappointment that Prof Yunus had earlier expressed his wish to step down, said the source.

However, at the meeting yesterday, the chief adviser told his colleagues to forget what he had said in anger.

“We must meet the people’s expectations and complete the necessary tasks with full responsibility,” Prof Yunus was quoted as saying.

A source said the chief adviser appeared much more relaxed compared to the last two days. However, traces of the intense pressure he had been under were still visible on his face.

UN fears 427 Rohingya perished at sea on May 9-10

FROM PAGE 12

Nearly 1 out of 5 people attempting perilous sea movements in this region have been reported as dead or missing so far in 2025, making the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal waters amongst the deadliest in the world.

“The dire humanitarian situation, exacerbated by funding cuts, is having a devastating impact on the lives of Rohingya, with more and more resorting to dangerous journeys to seek safety, protection and a dignified life for themselves and their families,” said Hai Kyung Jun, director of UNHCR’s Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

With the annual monsoon season having already arrived in the region, bringing strong winds, rainfall and rough seas, these boats were travelling at a particularly dangerous time, reflecting the desperation of those making such journeys, UNHCR said.

UNHCR called on authorities

in the region to take urgent action to prevent future tragedies, saying that saving lives and rescuing those in distress at sea is a humanitarian imperative and a longstanding duty under international maritime law.

UNHCR also called on the international community to stand in solidarity with the countries in the region that have been hosting Rohingya refugees.

Until the situation in Myanmar’s Rakhine state is peaceful and conducive to safe and voluntary return, the international community must continue to support efforts to provide life-saving assistance to Rohingya refugees.

UNHCR requires \$383.1 million in 2025 to stabilise the lives of refugees and their host communities across Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and those displaced inside Myanmar.

So far, only 30 percent of this amount has been received.

UK freezes assets worth £90m of Salman’s son, nephew

FROM PAGE 1

Islands, Isle of Man and Jersey, were purchased for sums ranging between £1.2 million and £35.5 million, reports the British daily, citing Companies House records.

The two are the son and nephew of Salman F Rahman, Hasina’s adviser for private industry and investment in the former regime.

He was arrested while reportedly trying to flee Bangladesh after the mass uprising that led to the regime’s downfall last year. Salman is currently facing corruption and murder charges.

A joint investigation by The Guardian and Transparency International last year found that Hasina’s allies owned UK properties worth £400 million.

One of the frozen assets includes a property in Gresham Gardens, where Sheikh Rehana, Hasina’s sister and the mother of former UK City minister Tulip Siddiq, has reportedly lived, according to the Financial Times.

Tulip Siddiq, who stepped down as minister amid the controversy, is now the subject of an arrest warrant issued by the interim government. She has denied any wrongdoing.

TIB LAUDS, URGES OTHERS TO FOLLOW

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has welcomed the property freezing orders, terming it a “hopeful first step” in the global fight against money laundering.

“This should not be viewed as an isolated incident; rather, the frozen property is merely the tip of the iceberg,” said Dr Iftekharuzzaman,

executive director of TIB, in a statement issued yesterday.

“Many more individuals, blessed by the fallen authoritarian regime, have laundered massive amounts of wealth. Similar actions must be taken against each of them,” he said.

TIB expressed hope that this action would set a precedent for stronger mutual legal assistance between Bangladesh and the destination countries of siphoned wealth, enabling swifter investigations and the eventual recovery of laundered assets.

Calling for coordinated global action, TIB urged other countries like the US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and the UAE, to follow the UK’s example.

TIB pressed both foreign governments and the Bangladesh government to take proactive steps through mutual legal assistance, expert collaboration, and other international mechanisms to identify, seize, and repatriate illegally acquired wealth.

“The return of stolen assets can only be expedited through legal cooperation and political will,” Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, adding that the recovery of these assets is vital not only for economic justice but also for accountability and the rule of law.

TIB urged the Bangladesh government to actively engage with international partners, utilise existing legal tools, and hold launderers accountable to prevent further capital flight and ensure transparency in financial governance.

BB may issue redesigned bank notes before eid

FROM PAGE 1

a body hanging from a rickshaw, and the emotional image of a body being thrown from a police van are likely to be featured on the new bank notes, Khan said.

The Sixty Dome Mosque, Ahsan Manzil, the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sundarbans and deer are also likely to be featured on the new bank notes.

Officials at the mint said it takes around one to one-and-a-half years

to print newly designed bank notes.

The decision to redesign the bank notes was taken in December last year. Following that decision, the printing of the new notes began this month.

The BB on March 10 asked banks to halt the exchange of new bank notes featuring the image of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

No decision has yet been made regarding bank notes featuring Mujib’s image.

Nagar Bhaban still padlocked

FROM PAGE 1

phone, which was put through a PA system, Ishraque expressed gratitude to his supporters and urged them to continue fulfilling responsibilities.

“We are giving the government one more day. In the meantime, everyone must carry out their duties. Eid-ul-Azha is approaching. After the Qurbani, it’s our collective responsibility to keep the city clean and liveable. I hope government inaction doesn’t lead to public suffering,” he said.

In a Facebook post, Ishraque called for the immediate resignation of “three non-neutral and dangerous advisers”.

They must either step down or give an undertaking that they would not take part in the next election.

Ishraque earlier said National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, local government Adviser Asif Mahmud and Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam must resign.

Addressing the demonstrators in front of Nagar Bhaban, Dhakabashi Coordinator Moshir Rahman said the government would face consequences if it delayed Ishraque’s swearing in.

The High Court ruled last Thursday that there were “no further legal barriers” to Ishraque’s swearing-in. Following the ruling, his supporters temporarily suspended a road blockade in Kakrail, giving the authorities 48 hours to initiate the process.

However, the demonstrators reoccupied Nagar Bhaban early yesterday morning, locking all the entrances.

Only trucks carrying cleaning supplies for Eid preparations were allowed to enter the premises. A handful of officials handled operations from the emergency control room on the ground floor.

DSCC Public Relations Officer Rasel Rahman said, “Nagar Bhaban remains locked. Our regular administrative functions are at a standstill.”

The disruption has taken a toll on citizens. Latiful Islam, a resident of Bakshibazar, went to Nagar Bhaban around noon to collect a his father’s death certificate. “I came here three times in a week, but had to return empty-handed every time. One of my brothers came from abroad, and we were planning to settle property matters. Now everything is stalled,” he said.

The story of Hamid’s exit

FROM PAGE 1

The man in pink approached the car directly. The other in the blazer came from the side -- a white ID card hanging from his waist became visible.

Several aviation security personnel, speaking on condition of anonymity, claimed the two men were from a specialised intelligence agency. However, The Daily Star could not independently verify this, as their faces are not visible in the footage.

The gate operator promptly raised the barrier, allowing the car to proceed to the VIP terminal’s drop-off/pick-up point.

A frail Hamid, using a cane, was transferred onto a wheelchair while his son Barrister Riad Ahmed followed behind with two small trolley suitcases. Hamid, wearing a lungi and sandals, entered the terminal at 12:51am.

On May 15, Riad wrote on Facebook that his father was too weak to stand for even two minutes or sit for more than two hours. “He has lost so much weight, he now weighs 54 kilograms and none of his pants fit him anymore, so he has to wear lungis,” he posted.

Speaking to The Daily Star from Bangkok on May 21, Riad said, “The doctors detected cancer in his [Hamid’s] right lung. There are a few more spots in other places. They extracted tissue from those places yesterday for a biopsy to test if they are cancerous. They did another test yesterday to judge whether or not he would be able to survive the stress of a surgery. He is not well. The weakness has intensified. The doctors will decide on Saturday [yesterday] if he will need chemotherapy or radiotherapy.”

Once inside the terminal, Hamid was taken through the terminal-side scan and seated inside the VIP lounge as per protocol.

At 2:21am, after about an hour and a half, he was wheeled out past the police immigration desk towards Gate 33.

The Daily Star confirmed the gate number by speaking with Group Captain Muhammed Kamrul

Islam, the airport’s immediate past executive director, who was present that night and left his post the following day.

There was, however, a procedural anomaly -- it is highly irregular for any passenger to proceed directly from the VIP lounge to Gate 33.

“Gate 33 is exclusively for secure airport personnel,” said current HSA executive director Group Captain S M Ragib Samad. “After exiting the VIP lounge, passengers go to the second floor where they undergo security checks.”

This security check includes a comprehensive scan of the body and hand luggage -- a process standard at major airports globally before passengers enter duty-free and boarding zones. At HSA, such checks occur immediately before boarding.

Senior airport officials, also speaking anonymously, said only the head of state and the sitting president are exempt from these checks.

After security clearance, passengers are usually directed either to a boarding bridge or taken by vehicle from a gate known as “Alpha” if the plane is parked remotely. Even Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus followed this process.

But both the CCTV footage and witness accounts confirm that Hamid was wheeled straight from the VIP lounge to Gate 33, skipping the mandatory security check.

The Thai Airways flight -- TG340 -- was parked away from the terminal. According to Riad, Hamid was transported in a car and lifted onto the plane along with his wheelchair.

INSIDE THE VIP LOUNGE

During his 90-minute stay in the lounge, Hamid’s immigration was completed. A leaked and subsequently verified general diary (GD) entry reveals that upon his arrival, the terminal-in-charge informed the immigration police officer-in-charge.

The OC -- Additional Superintendent of Immigration Police Tahsina Arif -- then alerted two state intelligence agencies: an assistant director of the National