

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.

Yunus to stay the course

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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



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

Nagar Bhaban still padlocked

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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, Dhakabshi Coordinator Moshirul 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

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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 HSIA 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 HSIA, 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

Security Intelligence (NSI) and a Grade-1 general staff officer of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), as recorded in the GD.

She also contacted the additional deputy inspector general and deputy inspector general of the immigration police.

Sources within the civilian intelligence agency confirmed that the NSI assistant director sought clearance through his chain of command.

Following these developments, Tahsina Arif has been removed from her post. Another officer withdrawn is Mohammad Hasan Chowdhury, superintendent of Kishoreganj police.

Notably, former president Hamid was named in a murder case filed in Kishoreganj relating to the July-August massacre.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Tahsina said she followed due procedure.

"I took clearance from both NSI and DGFI and I also checked the no-fly list. His name was not there. I informed my superiors and was told to let him pass through. I physically came down to the immigration desk to make sure that we get all the necessary permissions."

Security footage confirms her presence at the immigration counter with her sub-inspectors as Hamid was wheeled away.

Contacted for comments, SP Chowdhury declined but requested prayers from well-wishers for his return to service.

The investigation officer of the case, Assistant Sub-Inspector Azharul Islam, and Assistant Trainee Sub-Inspector of the Special Branch of police Md Solaiman were also suspended.

An investigation committee was formed on May 11, 2025, to look into the circumstances surrounding Hamid's exit. The committee is headed by Education Adviser Prof CR Arbar and includes Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan and Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain. The report is expected next week.

US strike on Yemen kills al-Qaeda members

APP, 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 Houthi rebels against a Saudi-led coalition backing the government.

Earlier this month, the United States agreed a ceasefire with the Houthi, 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.

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

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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

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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, TIB's executive director of TIB, in a statement issued yesterday.

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 lawbreakers accountable to prevent further capital flight and ensure transparency in financial governance.

BB may issue redesigned bank notes before eid

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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.