

Violence against women rises in 10 SW districts

82 killed, 90 commit suicide in last six months

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Violence against women has increased in ten southwestern districts, claiming at least 82 lives in last six months.

Most of the victims were housewives, killed in torture allegedly by husbands or their families. In most cases, demand for dowry was the main reason behind the torture, according to records with police and different NGOs.

Alongside, incidents of suicide by women also marked a rise. At least 90 such cases were detected during the period.

The incidents of killing, suicide and other forms of violence against woman marked a steady rise in the region.

The records show that 41 women were killed from January to June and 37 during July-December last

year. The figure was 65 for the whole of 2004.

Kushtia topped the list with at least 28 women killed. Nine women were killed in Khulna, 8 in Chuadanga, 7 in Meherpur, 5 in Jhenidah, 6 in Magura, 10 in Jessore, 6 in Bagerhat and 3 in Narail.

Husbands were responsible for violence in most of the cases. Other family members were also found involved in torture for dowry. In a few cases, poverty was behind family feuds leading to torture by husbands, NGO sources said.

They said violence against women increased in the region in last few years.

"Violence against women and death from torture is increasing day by day", Dr MA Munir, Chairman of SONO Hospital in Kushtia town, the largest private hospital in

Khulna division, told this correspondent.

A large number of deaths from torture or suicide remain unrecorded as cases are not filed by victims' relatives. Police recorded those as "unnatural deaths", police sources said.

NGO officials working on violence against women said victim's family do not lodge case fearing retaliation by killers and apprehending harassment and non-cooperation by police.

"They (victims families) also want to avoid unwanted trouble and harassment because in most cases, killers are protected by their influential patrons or a section of law enforcers", said MA Kader, executive director of SETU, a Kushtia-based NGO.

This correspondent also contacted several high police officials

in the region, who also shared similar views on the issue.

In Kushtia, only eight cases were filed against 28 incidents of killing in last six months, police sources said. Three cases were filed in Jhenidah and two in Chuadanga against five and eight incidents respectively, it was gathered.

Some police officials in Kushtia said perpetrators of violence against women including killing go unpunished due to intervention by local influentials.

"Killers escape punishment as victims' families do not dare to file cases due to intervention by local influentials including political party leaders", Meherpur Police Superintendent SM Rokunuddin said.

Stop land grabbing, harassment

Indigenous people in Dinajpur submit memo to DC



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Several thousand indigenous people from Chiribandar upazila, including women, yesterday brought a procession protesting the alleged false cases and repression on them by hired musclemen backed by some ruling party men in the area.

They submitted a memo to the Dinajpur Deputy Commissioner and the Police Superintendent to press their 9-point demand including withdrawal of the 'false' cases.

In the memoranda, they also alleged that at least 10 acres of their lands in Chiribandar were grabbed by some local influentials by engaging musclemen.

As they protested, false cases have been filed.

The musclemen are also threatening and harassing them in different ways, they alleged while talking to this correspondent. Mariam Hasda, an indigenous woman, said that on June 30, indigenous people of Chiribandar foiled an attempt by some musclemen to abduct a girl.

PHOTO: STAR

Several thousand indigenous people from Chiribandar upazila brought out a procession in Dinajpur town yesterday and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner protesting filing of 'false' cases for protesting land grabbing by some local influentials.

College teachers hunt for admission seekers

Fallout of mushrooming colleges in Patuakhali

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Teachers of non-government colleges in Patuakhali are moving door to door for students because of crisis of admission seekers this year.

The number of seats in the 57 colleges including two government ones is three times the number of students who passed the SSC examination this year in the district, sources said. This is because many of the colleges were set up violating rules and criteria, only on political consideration or for political gains, they said.

In the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination this year, 6,075 examinees passed in the district, the pass percentage being 61.25. About 14,250 students are needed to fill up seats in all the 57 colleges in seven upazila of the district.

Of the non-government colleges, 15 are in the Sadar upazila, 10 each

in Baulal and Golachipa, 7 in Dumki, 6 in Mirzagonj, 5 in Kalapara and 2 in Dashmina.

According to rules of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, at least 250 students have to be admitted to a colleges in each academic year.

To meet the condition, desperate teachers of all non-government colleges are moving door to door to lure students to their respective institutions.

They also urge guardians to sent their wards to their colleges, promising various facilities including free admission, free books and tuition fees waiver.

Abdul Kaleque, headmaster of Laukathi Shaheed Smritee High School told this correspondent that teachers from different colleges come to the school every day and request him to motivate his students who passed the SSC to get admission to their colleges.

Idris Ali, of Shreerampur village in Sadar upazila, said teachers from three colleges already visited his house and requested him to sent his son to their colleges. "They offered free admission and books and tuition fees waiver", he said.

"We face crisis of students as the number of colleges is much more than that required. We can not fulfil our demand," principal of a non-government college in Sadar upazila said seeking anonymity.

Sources in district the education office said, according to rules, a college should be set up covering an area of 10 square miles with 75,000 people.

At best 22 colleges can be set up for about 16 lakh people in the district but there are 57 now, they added.

District Education Officer (DEO) Anwar Hossain said his office has nothing to do in this regard as the Directorate of Education directly controls everything about colleges.

BSF injures two, kidnaps another in Sharsha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire injuring two Bangladeshis on Sharsha border and kidnapped another youth from the spot Sunday evening.

BDR sources and locals said some Bangladeshi youths of Panchbhulat village were catching fish in Isamati river. All on a sudden, BSF personnel opened fire injuring Mozfar Rahman, 25 and Khaibar Rahman, 30. Other youths escaped but BSF intruded into Bangladesh territory and kidnapped Ismail Hossain, 30.

The injured youths were rushed to Jessore General Hospital and then shifted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Earlier on Saturday, the BSF vowed at a flag meeting at Satkhira they will not to open fire on innocent Bangladeshis.

OWNERS IN DISCORD Buses go off 8 routes in Tangail, Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Buses are not plying on eight routes from Tangail and Mymensingh for four days since Thursday due to rivalry between bus owners in the two districts, causing sufferings to passengers.

The feud began when Mymensingh bus owners association objected to bus services on Tangail-Netrokona, Tangail-Kishorgonj and Madhupur-Mymensingh routes, introduced recently by Tangail bus owners association, sources said.

Clashes took place at many points on the routes between transport workers belonging to the two associations.

After the clashes, the bus owners associations are not allowing entry of passenger busses of one district to the other.

Movement of all kinds of buses is stopped on Tangail-Mymensingh, Tangail-Netrokona, Tangail-Kishorgonj, Mymensingh-Bogra, Mymensingh-Pabna, Mymensingh-Rajshahi, Mymensingh-Jessor, and Mymensingh-Khulna routes since Thursday.

Storm victims' bodies still floating on coastal waters

Fishermen who returned home say

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Some fishermen who returned to Galachipa from the Bay yesterday said they saw bodies of many storm victims still floating on coastal waters.

They claimed at least 40 bodies were floating near Char Montaz, Char Gangamoti, Char Panshi, Sonar Char, Shipar Char, Rugar Char and adjacent areas.

M A Matin, chairman of Char Montaz Union Parishad, when contacted over cellphone, said also he heard that some bodies were floating in the coastal waters. Matin was at Galachipa upazila headquarters. He said he was preparing to go to the shore to verify the news and recover the bodies.

Galachipa Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mezbahuddin said, on hearing the

news, he ordered Officer-in-Charge of Galachipa police station Abdul Mazid and the local Union Parishad chairman to go to the spots and take necessary steps.

Meanwhile, 13 Bangladeshi fishermen, who were missing in the during storm last week, returned to their homes in Barguna on Saturday, according to a delayed report reaching here yesterday.

The returnees were Mustafa, Ismail, Faruk, Amzad, Azam Ali, Selim, Idris, Altar, Jahangir, Kabir, Sagir, Shahjahan and Dulal, all residents of Badurtala village in Patharghata upazila of Barguna district, sources said.

They had gone to the Bay on board FB Zahir Sikdar, which, caught in a storm, capsized on June 30.

Braving the sea for three days, they

were drifted to a shoal in Kakkdip in West Bengal coast under Chabbispargana district.

After passing five days without food and water, they were rescued by some Indian fishermen on Monday last.

After nursing and providing with food, the Indian fishermen sent them to Koikhal Char under Shayamagar police station in Satkhira on Thursday.

After a day-long walk they reached Koira police station on Friday and returned to Pataharghata Saturday afternoon, the sources said.

Mustafa Chowdhury, president of Barguna district trawler owners association, when contacted over cellphone yesterday, confirmed the incident and thanked the Indian fishermen for rescuing the Bangladeshi fishermen and sending them back home.

Hunger strike in Srimongal for student's release, OC's removal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Student activists belonging to Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Chhatra League and other parties, joined by cross-sections of people, began a mass hunger strike here for release of madrasa student Omar Faruk Tipu and withdrawal Srimongal thana Officer-in-Charge Abdul Majid Bhuyan for arresting him in a 'false' case. The hunger strike, being staged at the Chowmuhuni Square in the town, will continue until Tipu is released and the OC withdrawn, the organisers said.

Tipu, son of retired primary school teacher Abdul Gafur of Bangabir Road in the

town was arrested on July 3 on a 'false' charge of theft, they claimed. Tipu is a student of Srimongal Anwarul Ulum Fazil Madrasah.

After Tipu's arrest, students people formed an action committee, which gave the authorities a 48-hour deadline for his release. But Srimongal police sent him to Moulvibazar jail on July 5.

Prisoner dies at hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A convicted prisoner of Dinajpur Jail died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) Sunday night.

Md Ripon, serving rigorous imprisonment for one year for drug peddling, fell sick Saturday afternoon. As his condition deteriorated, the jail authorities sent him to RMCH, where he died Sunday night, jail sources said.

Election officials take their share!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Election officials in the district are illegally deducting money from the remuneration of voter enumerators.

The allegation was made by some enumerators while talking to this correspondent.

They alleged that the officials are deducting amounts between Tk 50 and Tk 200 from their remuneration paid for preparing the draft voter list which was declared null and void by the High Court. But the officials do not give any explanation for that.

The draft voter list was completed on March 12. The Election Commission sent about Tk 35 lakh and each enumerator was supposed to get at least Tk 1000, they claimed. The money reached Nilphamari on May 10. The amount is about half of the remuneration they had got for preparing the draft voter list in 2000.

District Election Office sources said 2,677 data collectors, 724 supervisors and 74 assistant supervisors were

engaged to prepare the draft voter list.

Seeking anonymously, a data collector said, "I got Tk 800 after officials deducted Tk 200".

In 2000, Tk 6 was paid to each data collector and Tk 1.25 to each assistant supervisor for collecting data on each voter, when each of them collected data on 300 voters. This time, each data collector collected data on 400 voters, and as such, should get Tk

2400 as remuneration, she said.

Some officials at Nilphamari Sadar Upazila Election Office admitted that Tk 30 to Tk 100 was being deducted from remuneration of data collectors to "meet office expenses".

When contacted, District Election Officer Faridul Islam said none submitted any written complaint to him in this regard.

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