

# Organised attempt to evict Tangail brothel inmates

14 injured as 'eviction body members' attack protesters who opposed the move without rehabilitation of sex workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

At least 14 people were injured in clashes centring on eviction of inmates of the 150 year-old Kandapara brothel in Tangail town yesterday.

The clashes took place between a section of clerics and people led by municipal chairman under the banner of 'brothel eviction committee' and members of Nagorik Mancha (citizens' committee) who opposed eviction without rehabilitation of sex workers.

The brothel could not be evicted. Tension mounted in the town after the clashes when eviction committee leaders declared that another attempt would be made today.

A large number of police men have been deployed in the town to maintain law and order.

Panic gripped the town as the eviction committee brought out big processions and held rallies before and after they attacked the Nagorik Mancha rally, held at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Witnesses said the eviction committee held a rally at Central Jame Mosque in the town at around 10am as per its previous declaration.

With Tangail Pourasabha chairman and eviction committee convener Jamilur Rahman Miron in the chair, the rally was addressed by, among others, Imam of the Central Jame Mosque

and member secretary of the committee Maulana Hafez Shamsuzzaman, Krishak Sramik Janata League leader Azad Siddiqui, Imam of New Bus Terminal Jame Mosque Maulana Abdul Jalil, Nurul Islam and Golam Mostofa.

After the rally, it brought out a big procession led by Jamilur Rahman Miron. The processionists paraded different streets of the town. On the other hand, the Nagorik Mancha organised a rally on Central Shaheed Minar premises, demanding that 1,200 inmates of the brothel could not be evicted before their rehabilitation. The rally was addressed by, among others, Poet Bulbul Khan

Mahbub, cultural and political personality Alamgir Khan Minu, Milon Sarkar, Prof Badal Mahmud, MA Sattar Ukil, Asaduzzaman Babul, Ivan Ahmed Katha, Somnath Lahiri, Mir Mehdi, advocate Al Ruhi and women's rights activist Mahmudakter Sheli.

Witnesses said that as the Nagorik Mancha rally was in progress with Sheli speaking, men of the eviction committee led by Krishak Sramik Janata League leader Azad Siddiqui attacked the rally. They tore down the pandal, snapped mike and damaged about 400 chairs and swooped on Nagorik Mancha members.

At least 14 people including cultural

activist Elen Malik, Mahmuda Akter Sheli, sex workers' leader Momotaz Begum and Poet Uzzal Khan were injured. As news of the attack spread, panic gripped the town and shopkeepers downed their shutters.

Police controlled the situation by charging batons on the attackers, the witnesses said. Later, the eviction committee held a brief rally at the Central Shaheed Minar by occupying the makeshift stage erected by the Nagorik Mancha.

It was addressed by, among others, pourasabha chairman Jamilur Rahman Miron and Krishak Sramik Janata League leader Azad Siddiqui.

They declared that inmates of the brothel would be evicted at any cost. The committee members and supporters then went to the Central Jame Mosque in a procession and held another rally there. At the rally, the committee leaders declared that they would hold another demonstration at the Central Shaheed Minar at 2pm today protesting the 'police attack' on them.

They will also bring out a procession in the town today and hand over a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) demanding immediate eviction of brothel inmates. Earlier, a meeting on the planned eviction was held at Tangail Central Jame Mosque on

Thursday after Zohr prayer.

Pourasabha Chairman Jamilur Rahman organised the meeting and invited all Imams and leaders of mosque committees in the town.

The meeting decided to evict inmates of the brothel, calling it a den of miscreants, drug addicts and criminals.

On the other hand, Nari Mukti Sangha, an organisation of sex workers, held a press conference at Tangail Press Club on Friday demanding authorities' step to stop the eviction. Its president Aklima Begum Akhi told the press conference that eviction of sex workers without rehabilitation was violation of human rights.

An influential member of the eviction committee wants to build an autorickshaw stand and a market by demolishing the brothel, she alleged. It would be injustice to sex workers, she added.

As members of the Nagorik Mancha and the eviction committee held rallies clashed, panicked sex workers and residents in Kandapara readied themselves with babboo sticks and whatever they had to resist the attackers.



(Clockwise) The procession brought out by the 'brothel eviction committee' proceeding towards the Nagorik Mancha rally on Central Shaheed Minar premises and vandalised it while panicked inmates of Kandapara brothel prepare with sticks to resist the attackers.



The Bangabandhu Shishu Kishore Mela, after forming a human chain in front of Aswani Kumar Hall in Barisal city yesterday, assaulting an effigy of the director general of Bangladesh Television (BTV) protesting its recent distortion of history of the Liberation War.

## Outlaws kill Jubo Dal leader

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A Jubo Dal leader was shot dead by outlaws at Chandipur Bazar in Jhenidah Sadar yesterday morning.

Jubo Dal office secretary Lufar Rahman Shanto, 35, was attacked by two outlaws wearing lungi and shirt. Shanto was reading a newspaper sitting in front of a grocery of Akbar at about 11 am, witnesses said. After the murder, the armed killers left the scene.

Shanto was immediately rushed to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at about 1-30 pm.

On contact, Mofizul Islam, a sub-inspector (SI) of Jhenidah Sadar Police Station said they are yet to ascertain any motive behind the murder. 'Shanto was gunned down with a modern arm', he said

Shanto is the son of Jharu Munshi of Chandipur village.

## BSF kills cattle trader in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday night killed a Bangladeshi cattle trader at Panitar village in Basirhat Police Station under 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, India.

BDR sources said, BSF men caught Miraj Ali, 32, of South Kulia village in Debhata upazila inside the Indian territory at Panitar opposite Haroddah, a border village in Sadar upazila. At that time, he was returning home with cattles along with others from India. BSF chopped him to death and fell the body in the lchhamati.

Victim's brother found the floating body near Noakuni in Debhata upazila and recovered it with the help of local people.

BDR sent a letter to BSF protesting the killing.

On contact, 41, Rifles Battalion Second-in-Command Major Humayun, confirmed the incident.

## NETRAKONA-5 CONSTITUENCY

# BNP man calls party MP corrupt, seeks ticket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

A BNP leader has called party lawmaker from Netrakona-5 constituency (Purbadhala in Netrakona and Dhubaura in Mymensingh) 'inefficient and unpopular' and declared his candidature from the area in next election.

Abu Taher Talukder, former general secretary of Netrakona district BNP, at a press conference Friday evening alleged that lawmaker from Netrakona-5 Dr. Mohammad Ali has lost popularity due to his 'inefficiency, corruption and autocratic behavior'. He has isolated himself from people, Talukder claimed.

Mohammad Ali did little development work in the area during his tenure, he claimed.

A large number of BNP activists and supporters of Abu Taher Talukder were present at the press conference, held at Netrakona Press Club.

Talukder was students union vice-president at Netrakona University College in 1984-85, president of Netrakona district Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal (JCD) during 1984-1989, organising secretary of Netrakona district BNP from 1991 to 1994 and general secretary of Netrakona district BNP from 1997 to 2000.

Talukder criticised Dr. Mohammad Ali for what he called failing to fulfil aspirations of local people. Talukder also blamed the lawmaker for defaming BNP in the area.

He urged BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia to nominate him in next election 'to restore the party image' in the area.

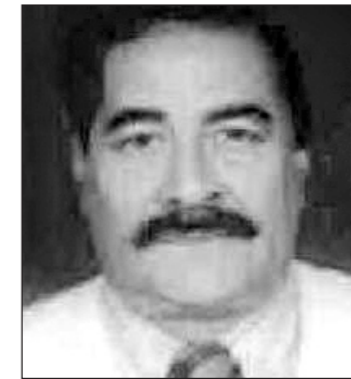
BNP will definitely lose the seat if D. Mohammad Ali is nominated by the four-party alliance, he claimed.

Talukder also claimed that party workers in the two upazilas support his candidature.

Dr. Mohammad Ali was elected twice from Netrakona-5 with BNP tickets in 1996 and 2001 - by defeating Awami League candidate



Abu Taher Talukder



Dr. Mohammad Ali MP

Waresat Hossen Belal and Mosharaf Hossen.

When contact Dr. Mohammad Ali MP said, 'Abu Taher Talukder is not well-wisher of the party and is isolated from the party workers. He said "I have implemented

many development works in Purbadhala and Dhubaura upazilas and I am still popular in my constituency".

## 30 hurt as JCD rivals clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Thirty people were injured, five of them seriously as two rival groups of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) locked in a clash at Hajiganj yesterday.

Witnesses said, a jubilant procession was parading the streets of the upazila town following formation of a new Hajiganj JCD committee led by its new president Md Sumon.

All on a sudden, its rival group led by ex-JCD President Md Billal swooped on the procession in front of the local Pourasava office.

As Sumon's supporters launched counter-attack, both the groups locked in a bloody clash for about an hour. Seriously injured were admitted to the local health complex.

Both the groups used sticks, country-made weapons and bricks during the clash, witnesses said. As they engaged in chase and counter-chase, all the shops were shut down and road link on the busy Chandpur-Comilla Highway was suspended for over an hour.

The new committee was formed on September 18.

# LPG crisis deepens as bottling plant shut for 11 days

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The LPG bottling plant at Golapganj remained shut for the 11th day yesterday as production of LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) in Petrobangla's processing unit remained suspended.

Petrobangla's Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Limited (RPGCL) that produced LPG is idle as there was no supply of NGL (Natural Gas Liquid) because the MSTE (Molecular Sieve Turbo Expander Plant) is being overhauled since September 26.

However, the MSTE plant went into trial operation on Thursday and production may resume soon, sources said yesterday.

NGL is produced as a by-product in Kailashtila gas well and taken to

the RPGCL for producing LPG.

The sudden suspension of production deepened crisis of LPG, a number of petroleum dealers said. Owner of Rahim & Rahim, a dealer in the city's Shibganj area said yesterday that the authorities stopped gas cylinder supply without giving any prior notice.

"We are empty for 10 days", he said, adding, none can say when the crisis would be over.

A cylinder was selling at Tk 720 at Golapganj upazila headquarters.

LPG production in RPGCL fell drastically in last one year as supply of NGL from Kailashtila went down on technical grounds. An official said, since the beginning of January, RPGCL reduced LPG supply to the bottling plant to three days a week against five days

earlier. It dipped further last week, he LPG supply to dealers of four state-run companies--Padma, Meghna, Jamuna and Standard Asiatic Oil Company-- was reduced to one third about a year ago, the official said. He also admitted commotion among dealers due to the recent supply cut while demand is rising.

The RPGCL, as per a decision of energy ministry, supplies about one third of the LPG to some private companies, who market those in northern districts and other regions except Sylhet, the sources said.

The dealers also alleged that LPG was being supplied in larger quantities to some districts, violating official decisions.



Khagrachhari district unit of Citizens for Good Governance (Sujon), an NGO, formed a human chain in front of Shaheed Minar in the town yesterday with the slogan 'fruitful dialogue needed for fair election'.

## Wife beaten to death for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A woman was beaten to death allegedly by her husband for dowry at Brahmarajpur village in Sadar upazila last night.

Quoting local people police said, Monjuara Khatun, 23, was killed by her husband Safikul Islam for failing to manage dowry of Tk 5,000 from her mother.

Safiqu, son of Sahiluddin of Brahmarajpur village took Tk. 25,000 as dowry during his marriage with Monjuara, daughter of late Bholu Sardar of Raispur village in Sadar upazila a few years ago, locals said. Recently he was pressing for the rest of the amount.

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the body to morgue for autopsy. They arrested Safiqu's father Sahil Uddin and mother Ayesha Khatun, but the accused fled away.

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