

We want justice Rape victim's mother demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of about 30 hoodlums swooped on the house of Anil Kumar Shil of Purbo Delua in Sirajganj, beat the family members and then gangraped his daughter on October 8, before driving them out of their house, the victims alleged at a press conference in the city Saturday.

Anil Kumar Shil said the hoodlums attacked their house at the dead of night and first beat the family members mercilessly. The hoodlums then confined everyone but the girl in a room and brutally raped her for over two hours.

The ordeal did not end there. Fearing that the Shil family might lodge a case against them, the gang kept them confined in their house till October 9.

As the news of the atrocities spread in the village, local people took the victims to a nearby hospital. Mysteriously, local police refused to accept a rape case and instead recorded a case of assault.

A local journalist and convener of Sirajganj district Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee later helped the victim seek a check-up by the Civil Surgeon at the district headquarters.

The report of the Civil Surgeon confirmed that Anil's daughter had been raped.

According to leaders of the Nirmul Committee which organised the press conference, the girl was able to file a case on October 14 with a Magistrate's Court at Sirajganj. The Magistrate recorded her statement and directed police to arrest 15 alleged



Anil Kumar's wife displays her swollen arm at the press conference on Saturday.

rapists and produce them before the court. Till Saturday, police nabbed only one of the accused.

The victim's mother told the newsmen she seeks justice, not money.

Addressing the press conference, Nirmul Committee leader Shahrier Kabir said they would publish a 'White Paper' on attacks on the minorities across the country within three months.

He urged the government to ensure security of Anil Kumar Shil and his family members and said, "Fifty percent incidents of attack on the minorities were not published in newspapers."

He also called upon the Awami League and other political parties as well as Non Government Organisations (NGOs) to come forward in aid of the minority families attacked by hoodlums after the October 1 general election.

Janaza of ex-MP Mustafizur Rahman to be held today

UNB, Dhaka

The first *Namaz-e-Janaza* of Mustafizur Rahman, Chief Editor of Daikin Rupali and former MP, will be held today after *Johr* prayers at the Baitul Mokarram National Mosque.

Then his body will be taken to Sandwip and he will be buried on Tuesday at his family graveyard after a second *Janaza* at the Mustafizur Rahman College ground at 3 pm.

The *Qulkhawani* of Rahman will be held on Friday at his residence at Sandwip. His family members requested all relatives, political colleagues and admirers to attend the programme, said a press release.

ETV issue

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Hossain of the Department of Pharmacy and Prof. Abdur Rob of the Department of Geography of Dhaka University and President of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Gias Kamal Chowdhury jointly filed the writ petition.

The petition said international bids were invited for setting up of a private television channel on terrestrial band in the country. On July 9, 1998, the tender evaluation committee, after scrutiny, sent a list of bidders to the Ministry of Information saying the ETV was disqualified in the bidding. However, another list was sent to the ministry on the same day showing the ETV on top of the list.

They further alleged that the licensing agreement was forged with A S Mahmud despite the fact that he did not participate in the bidding at all. The license was subsequently transferred to the ETV Limited.

The ETV did not obtain any clearance certificate as per the Telegraph Act for functioning as a terrestrial channel. Moreover, it set up the key-point installation (KPI) at the BTV Bhaban without permission from the National Security Intelligence (NSI), they also alleged.

Barrister Ishiaque Ahmed, Barrister Rafiq-ul-Huq and Barrister Moniruzzaman Khan moved for the ETV, while Barrister Abdur Razzaque moved for the petitioners. Attorney General A.F. Hassan Arif represented the state.

AL: Oath-taking

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October 24 or 25, and Speaker Abdul Hamid, who has already taken oath as an elected MP from AL, would administer the oath-taking.

However, it is still not sure whether the AL lawmakers would join the first session of the 8th parliament that goes into motion on October 28.

"It is almost certain that AL MPs would take oath shortly as most party men are in favour of it," an AL presidium member told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

Sources said an overwhelming majority within the party fold favoured the party's playing a role in the parliament while building a movement against the new regime of Khaleda Zia.

Besides, diplomats also strongly advocated in favour of the opposition's constructive role-playing in the parliament for the nascent democracy to flourish.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Hasina and AL presidium member Abdur Razzak, both of whom have won in more than one constituencies in the October 1 parliamentary elections, would soon vacate the extra seats after retaining one each.

Hasina

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Copies of the FEMA communiqué, signed by its Secretary General Ferroj M Hasan, were distributed among newsmen attending Hasina's press conference in the city yesterday.

When contacted over telephone last night, Ferroj M Hasan, however, denied issuing any communiqué showing Noor Ali as winner in Dhaka-2 constituency.

AL will publish white paper

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Abdur Razzak, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Abdul Jalil and Sajeda Chowdhury at the news conference. Hasina first read out a written statement for 45 minutes and then replied to queries put up by journalists.

Hasina observed that during the maiden address to the nation, the new prime minister dished out deceitful propaganda against the AL. She noted that Khaleda's speech was devoid of minimum democratic norms and political decency.

The AL chief came up with a huge volume of statistics to draw a comparative picture of the key economic indicators during the rule of her immediate past government and that of Khaleda.

She contested the prime minister's claim that Bangladesh, which used to be an 'emerging tiger' before, had been reduced to a 'sick cat.' "How come the country becomes a sick cat when we left office with granaries full of food stock and banks full of money," Hasina wondered.

She said her government left a food surplus of 26 lakh MT (metric ton) against a food deficit of 40 lakh MT during the previous BNP government.

"When BNP had left office in 1996, there was only Tk 800 crore in the country's banks whereas when we left, banks had a reserve of Tk 5,000 crore."

During the previous BNP rule, the country's GDP growth and inflation stood at 4.5 per cent and over 6.6 per cent respectively. "But my government pushed the GDP growth up to 6.6 per cent and kept inflation as low as 1.59 per cent."

Hasina also said her government saw a rise in national savings and investment both in public and private sectors. Export earnings also doubled during the tenure of the previous Awami League government.

Giving a vivid description of developments her regime had undertaken, she also wanted to know the sources of money that built huge industries and business owned by the family members of late president Ziaur Rahman. She pointed her fingers at the Dandy Dyeing, Marshal Distillery and Coco launches.

The AL chief alleged that Khaleda's brother Sayeed Iskandar had Tk 12 crore in loans he had defaulted on waived and Tk 36 crore the Dandy Dyeing had defaulted on rescheduled by exercising 'unauthorised powers'.

She also expressed doubt over whether the new government will allow unruined progress of investigations into 54 cases filed against Khaleda Zia, her son and her brother and ministers, whips and lawmakers of the previous BNP government.

She came down heavily on the new coalition government for abruptly holding off the ensuing NAM Summit to be held in Dhaka. "This (postponement) has tarnished Bangladesh's image before the eyes of the international community."

She was equally critical of Khaleda's claim that Bangladesh was not getting water as per the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty. "She (Khaleda) can go to the river and see for herself whether we are getting our due share of water."

Hasina also criticised the new prime minister for "threatening" the AL about the street agitation. "I condemn her fascist attitude and like to make it clear that the AL cares a fig about any threats when it comes to protecting people's rights."

She censured the first 100 day's agenda of the new government saying that the plan missed out on some vital election pledges the BNP had made in its election manifesto, especially the Special Powers Act, Public Safety Act, autonomy of the

electronic media, and separation of the judiciary from the executive.

The former premier took the opportunity to once again raise the issue of unabated attacks on the minorities across the country. She alleged that hundreds of girls and women were being raped while thousands of people rendered homeless in recent incidents of violence against the minorities.

Responding to a query about the export of gas, Hasina said, "They (BNP) vehemently opposed gas export while in the position. What has happened now that they are moving fast to reach that goal? We made our policy on the issue of gas export clear, putting priority on domestic consumption but BNP kept the issue in its manifesto unclear to confuse the people."

Asked whether the AL was convinced that the immediate past caretaker government had played a partisan role and whether it would sue advisors of that government, Hasina evaded a direct reply. "Will filing of cases ensure justice," was all she said.

About two Jamaat leaders' getting two important portfolios, Hasina said, "Agriculture and social welfare portfolios were given to the Jamaat so that it can expand its network further. It's a deep-rooted conspiracy."

In a lighter vein, the AL chief said she was surprised that the new prime minister did not bring any charges of corruption against her in regard to the purchase of MIG-29s and the Frigate. "I like to see her filing cases against me regarding these deals. If charges were proved, I'm ready to go behind the bars."

Hasina expressed deep concern at the price rise of essentials. "Edible oil was selling at Tk. 190 per five litre can while I left office. Now the price has gone up to Tk. 220. Bitter gourd was selling at Tk. 14 per kilo (gram), now it is Tk. 30."

Nomination papers

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Khulna-2, three for Laxmipur-2, two for Feni-1, three for Moulvibazar-3, five for Bogra-5 and 11 for Manikganj-2 constituencies.

Our Staff Correspondent from Khulna adds: Two persons filed nomination papers for contesting the by-election in Khulna-2 constituency (Sadar and Sonadanga).

The candidates are Alhaj Ali Asgar Lobby of the four-party alliance and Advocate Mohammad Mahtabuddin of the Jatiya Party (Ershad).

Khulna-2 parliamentary seat fell vacant following resignation of BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia. She was elected from this seat by defeating city Awami League President Advocate Manjurul Islam.

According to election officials, a total of 21 persons including those from Awami League and Jubo League collected nomination papers, but only two of them finally remained in race.

Our Laxmipur Correspondent adds: A total of three candidates have filed nomination papers to

contest the parliamentary by-election in Laxmipur-2 constituency.

Abul Khair Bhuiyan, a central leader of BNP, filed his candidature on behalf of 4-party alliance, Maulana Mesbah Uddin filed from Islami Jatiya Oikkya Front (JOF) while Mohammad Mahmudul Huq Nanu filed his candidature as an independent candidate.

The Laxmipur-2 constituency fell vacant after Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia vacated the seat.

Our Feni Correspondent adds: Two candidates filed nomination papers to contest in the Feni-1 constituency. Maj. (ret'd) Sayeed Iskandar, younger brother of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and a central leader of BNP, filed nomination paper to contest for the seat. Mohammad Israfil of Jatiya Party (Manju) also filed nomination paper to contest for the seat.

In Bogra-7 constituency, a total of five candidates filed nomination papers to contest the November 12 by-polls.

Envoy tells PM

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victory of BNP at the internationally accepted free and fair election.

"The victory reflected the trust of the people of Bangladesh in the present government," the envoy was quoted to have told the PM.

He recalled the significant contribution of shaheed president Ziaur Rahman who had laid the foundation of the Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relationship.

China also recalled the contribution of Khaleda Zia toward further strengthening the bilateral relations, with particular reference to her visit to China in 1991 and 1995 as prime minister and as leader of the opposition in March 2001.

Describing the bilateral ties as "excellent," he expressed his government's determination to work together not only for strengthening bilateral relations but also in the international fora, including UN, to establish global peace and security.

The Chinese ambassador further expressed his government's eagerness to identify areas of cooperation and extend possible economic assistance in those fields.

He further elaborated that the Chinese government would welcome economic cooperation between state-owned companies of the two countries as well as prominent private-sector companies.

In reply, Prime Minister Khaleda

Alleged terrorist

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was shot at.

Fatally injured Nasir was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Syedur Rahman, victim's elder brother, said Nasir was an Awami League (AL) activist and alleged that terrorists Kala Motin, Jahangir and Tuhan had killed him.

The reason for the killing could not be known immediately.

Rahman filed a case with Ramna police station but none was arrested so far.

Biman

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be set up at every airport and he himself would keep the keys of the boxes, he said adding drastic action would be taken against the persons responsible for passenger harassment.

Motels and rest houses of the Parjatan Corporation in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and three hill districts would be renovated and equipped with modern facilities to cope with the present demand, he added.

Mir Nasir, also president of Chittagong city BNP, said he has already asked the officers-in-charge (OCs) of different police stations of Chittagong Metropolitan Police not to gossip with any leaders of the ruling party in their rooms and to keep the door of law-enforcement agencies open to all victims.

"We will not compromise in establishing the rule of law in all spheres of national life and in fulfilling the expectations of the toiling masses who made a silent revolution in the last election against social disorders," he said adding the BNP has to struggle hard to preserve the victory of the people.

He said three ministers of the cabinet would jointly work for development of Chittagong and to build it up as the commercial capital of the country. Mir Nasir urged the journalists to explore the prospects of Chittagong and to identify its problems to help take necessary steps for development of the port city.

General Secretary of city BNP Alhaj Dastagir Chowdhury and other senior leaders of the four-party alliance attended the meeting.

JCD factions

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two rounds. Both the groups then fired more gunshots in the Mall Chatter area and chased each other.

Later, a police bid to conduct a raid at Surya Sen Hall failed due to resistance from JCD activists.

When asked, Mamun denied that he led his group during the clash and said, "It was nothing but a silly feud between junior level JCD workers."

Meanwhile, two activists of 'Mamun group' were ousted from Jasimuddin Hall after the incident.

Civil society: Minority

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ing more repression on the Hindus after they celebrate the festival without spontaneity.

Placing reports of incidents of repression that its leaders found to be true they also made their observations from their investigation:

* On excuse of voting for a certain party, terrorist acts were unleashed to evict the Hindus in a bid to capture their houses and property. The acts included extortion, loot, damaging houses, arson, armed attacks, killings and indiscriminate repression on women.

* Such incidents began since the caretaker government took over and increased after the election in different areas, like Bhola. Activists of the party defeated at the election also became targets.

* Terrorists with identity of the winning political party have been continuing the medieval atrocities.

* Affected people do not think that common Muslims are involved

in the anarchic acts, rather terrorists patronised by the winning party are involved.

* No political party came forward in this crisis to save the minority. Neighbours in some cases provided shelters, but they had no courage to resist.

* Administration did not take any preventive measures to check such atrocities on Hindus unleashed for at least one week after the election, country's law system was silent.

* It is the most inhumane statement that some incidents might happen during transition of power. However, the new government gave assurances several times without any measures taken by the administration and checking the terrorists in the rural areas.

* The evicted people want to go back home. They want support from local MPs and leaders of ruling party. But they did not get it.

Puja begins today

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amid apprehension in some areas because of deteriorating law and order.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Water Resources Gautam Chakravarty called upon the Hindus to celebrate the Durga Puja in a festive mood, since the government has already extended its "all-out support" to the greatest religious festival.

"Upon the directive of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, I keep on making every effort to help Hindus celebrate the puja in a secure and ceremonial manner," said Gautam, the lone Hindu minister in the present government, on the eve of the festival.

He said Tk 40 lakh donated from the prime minister's fund has already been distributed through the DCs and the TNOs among

them on the basis of Hindu population.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Puja Uddhayan Parishad has called upon the Hindus to keep the Durga Puja low-key due to continued tortures and attacks on them in many areas.

President of the Parishad Anil Chandra Nath and its General Secretary Basudev Dhar in a joint statement yesterday said the Hindus are frustrated with the panicky situation arising out of attack and torture.

The situation did not improve because of negative comments by the ruling party leadership about the extent of violence, they pointed out.

The untoward incidents ahead of the Durga Puja this time is against the spirit of the traditional Bengali spirit, the statement said.

Dhaka faces IMO ire

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ferred to the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications. As the post and telecommunications ministry did not have adequate technical know-how and manpower, the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone (BTB) was assigned to implement the project.

The project envisaged installation of a VHF and several remote repeater stations at suitable locations, HF subsystem, NAVTAEX sub-system, INMARSAT-C sub-system, Satellite EPIRB or VHF EPIRB, COSPAS-SARSAT, automatic identification system, harbour management system and vessel traffic management system.

The BTB, meanwhile, paid no heed to the shipping ministry requirements and prepared the technical part of the project in consultation with the Spanish supplier, and invited tender in a hurry, sources said.

Two Spanish company participated in the bid and only M/S Sainse's bid was found technically responsive. However, the company proposed for additional payment and some of its terms and conditions were not acceptable to the BTB, sources said.

The BTB later abandoned the first bid and planned to float another

bid, which the company as well as the Spanish government strongly opposed.

In a communiqué to the Spanish government, the BTB explained that since the tender in question was an international competitive bid, it was desirable that companies other than eligible Spanish manufacturers should participate.

The BTB also requested that provisions be made so that international companies can participate in the bidding.

It is learnt that several others international companies have submitted proposal to supply required equipment for the project including modernisation of coastal stations in Mongla and Chittagong and COSPAS-SARSAT ground stations.

In a latest development, the External Resource Department (ERD) of the Planning Commission has conveyed a meeting to set modus operandi for the project on Sunday last.

The meeting has asked the BTB to make a decision with in ten days as to whether it will accept the Spanish government proposal or consider fresh proposals, meeting sources said.

APEC declaration silent on strikes

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"We came in here hoping to strengthen the war on terrorism, and we did so," said a senior US official.

He told reporters it was "not a setback at all" that the statement did not specifically mention the bombing or bin Laden. "We're thrilled with this statement," he said, adding that it "does everything we wanted it to."

After expressing deepest sympathy to the United States, the statement called for "increased cooperation to bring perpetrators to justice." It pledged a coordinated crackdown on groups involved in terrorism by choking off their funds, stepping up electronic surveillance of travellers and tightening customs controls.

The statement also called for beefed-up security at airports and ports and on board aircraft.

At the end of the two-day summit in Shanghai, Chinese President Jiang Zemin took a firm stand against terrorism.

"We condemned in the strongest terms the attacks as an affront to peace, prosperity and the security of all people, of all faiths, of every nation," he said.

The Chinese leader, who spoke in English, was wearing a crimson silk jacket. Behind him stood the other APEC leaders -- including US President George W. Bush and Russia's Vladimir Putin -- all in similar embroidered jackets in vivid red, blue, brown or green.

On day two of APEC summits, lead-

ers traditionally wear a jacket or shirt reflecting the host country's culture and style.

The declaration goes into greater detail about action that APEC should take to contain the economic damage, saying "it is more important than ever" for members to achieve their so-called Bogor Goals of free trade by 2020.

"Terrorism is also a direct challenge to APEC's vision of free, open and prosperous economies and to the fundamental values that APEC members hold," the draft says.

The accord, however, glosses over differences on US tactics in the war on terrorism, making no mention of the strikes on Afghanistan which have caused unease among several APEC members.

The leaders in the declaration called for measures to boost growth in a region suffering its worst downturn in decades.

"It is important for all economies to take timely policy actions to strengthen markets and facilitate an early pick-up in global economic activity," the text said.

Jiang, host of a glittering dinner on Saturday which culminated in a spectacular fireworks display that lit up the art-deco buildings of Shanghai's waterfront Bund, greeted leaders yesterday at the wedge-shaped Science and Technology Museum.

It was chosen to reflect APEC's emphasis on technology and show off China's economic prowess as it awaits entry into the World Trade Organisation,

expected by year-end.

In his opening remarks, Jiang stressed the damage to stock markets and aviation, insurance and tourism industries as a result of the September 11 attacks.

"All this has made the already grave economic situation even worse," he said. Leaders have sought to boost business confidence by talking up the future of a region that accounts for almost half of world trade and 60 per cent of output.

The summit brought Bush and Jiang face to face for the first time, and despite their age difference -- Bush is 55 and Jiang 75 -- the two leaders appeared to hit it fairly well.

Bush has been gushing about Shanghai, a city that was a dreary socialist backwater the last time he visited in 1975 when his father, former President George Bush, headed the US liaison office in Beijing.

His adjectives to describe China's showcase city have stretched from "miraculous" to "mind boggling". But yesterday, state media said Chinese analysts were concerned about "lingering divergencies" on Taiwan, arms proliferation and missile defence.

APEC groups Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the United States and Vietnam.