

SNAPS

AL leader killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Potnitala upazila Awami League chairperson Shefali Akhter Banu, 60, was killed in the early hours of Friday at her house in Choudha Chandpatro village in Naogaon.

Police suspected involvement of caretaker Masud in the killing. "Masud's blood-stained clothes were found at the house," police said.

Shefali Akhter's son Dr Jummu said he found the body of his mother on the veranda of their house when he returned home from Dhaka at dead of night.

Dr Jummu said he talked to his mother Friday night and told her that he was coming home. "I will wait for you till you come," the mother had told her son over mobile phone.

Dr Jummu filed a case with Potnitala police.

UPDF man abducted by PCJSS

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A supporter of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) was abducted allegedly by activists belonging to Parbatitya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) from Shapmara village in Naniarchar upazila Friday night, a UPDF press release said here yesterday.

The victim is Jiotirindra Chakma, 50. Some 25 to 30 armed youths raided the village and took picked up Jiotirindra at gunpoint from his house, the release signal by Amrita Lal Chamma said.

UPDF opposes the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Agreement, signed by PCJSS with the government in 1997.

Landgrabbers eye prime 'preserved site'

Alleged move for demolition of 150-year-old Barisal collectorate building, selected by govt for proposed archaeological museum

AKTER FARUK SHAHIN, Barisal

A vested quarter allegedly with the help of a section of corrupted officials are trying to garb the 150-year-old Barisal old collectorate building though it has been declared as a 'protected site' by the archaeological department and selected for a proposed archaeological museum in the city.

On Saturday morning, some hoodlums allegedly sent by the vested quarter forcibly stopped renovation of building by archaeological department staff and threatened them to leave. They squandered construction materials worth several lakh taka kept at the site for renovation of the building. Allegations have it that some PWD (Public Works Department) men also accompanied them.

On the day before (Friday), some people along with some PWD officials went to the site in the afternoon and threatened them to stop work and leave the place, some archaeological departmental employees working there and witnesses said.

The vested quarter is trying to float tender for demolition of the building showing it unusable, sources alleged. Some ruling party men are behind the move, it is alleged.

Members of the elite, socio-cultural bodies and intellectuals in the city expressed deep concern over the matter and called upon

the authorities concerned to foil the attempt by the vested quarter to destroy a valuable heritage in the city.

The building stands on a 0.708 acres of land (Mouza No 49, Khatian No-111 and DagNo-752).

According to archeology department officials here, the department declared the building as a "preserved archeological wealth" under Section 10 of the Antiquities Act 14 of 1968 through a circular of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs on January 2, 2003.

It was also notified through a gazette notification (no 14 of 2004) on April 1, this year.

The offices the Divisional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner of Barisal and other divisional, district and departmental officials were also informed of the ministry's decision through letter on May 11 (Memo No Prot no: / Bari: 9/4/2002/976). Issuance of the letter was followed by a meeting of high officials, held on May 12, 2004.

After that letter and the meeting, another letter (Memo No Gha-1/2/83-98-akash/112(6) was sent by the regional office of the archeology department to the officials concerned on June 11, this year.

Meanwhile, the vested quarter, in collaboration with some unscrupulous officials and employees of the local PWD and the administration started a con-



The old collectorate building in Barisal city (left) and the notice of the Department of Archaeology on its wall not to harm it in any way (right).

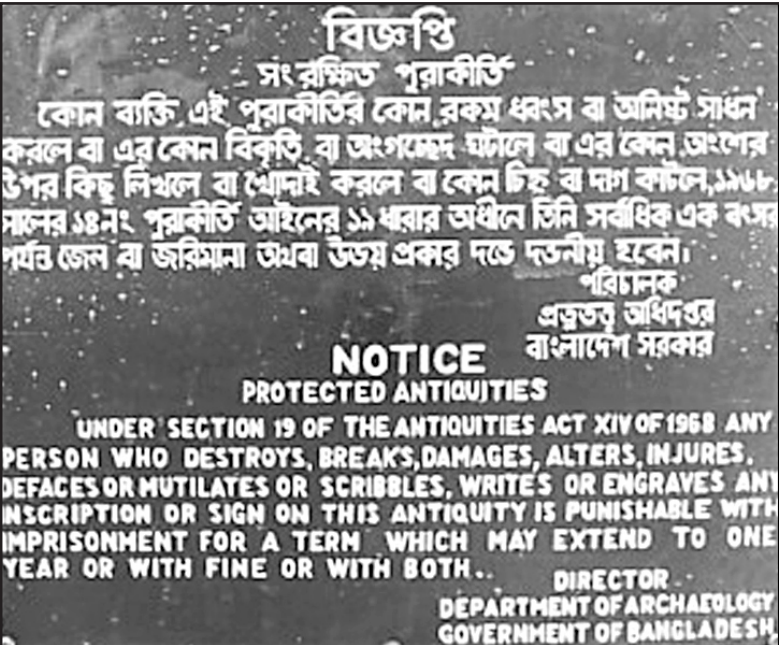


PHOTO: STAR

spiracy to float tender to demolish the building and grab the land, the sources claimed. Even the name of Barisal City Corporation was used in the purpose, they claimed.

The building is in the prime city area where offices of the Deputy Commissioner, Police Superintendent, Judge Court and City Corporation are located.

Altaf Hossain, head mason of

archaeological department staffs working at the site alleged that some PWD officials and hooligans forced them to stop the work leave the place.

"I worked in at least 50 archaeologically important sites in Bogra, Rangpur, Rajshahi and other parts of the country. Compare to those, condition of the Barisal old collectorate build-

ing is better and if it is renovated, it can be used for more than fifty years", he told this correspondent.

Aminul Huq, an engineer from the Khulna regional office of the archeological department said, "PWD, the administration or any other department or person has no right to interfere in the work of the archeological department".

"Our work is to preserve history

and heritage of the country for the sake of the nation and from the hands grabbers and looters", he added.

When contacted, PWD high officials said some of their staff went to the site on Friday afternoon to see the condition of the building as it is.

"The site is owned by PWD and we were not informed in any way

about the work archeological department is doing" one official said.

Barisal Deputy Commissioner Sheikh Abul Kalam said he did not order to stop the renovation work. "PWD said the building is risky and so I suggested for doing work on the ground floor first", he told this correspondent yesterday.

Proshika chief's release demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Different socio-cultural and professional organisations in Manikganj in a joint statement have demanded release of Proshika President Quazi Faruque Ahamed and alleged police harassment of its employees.

Signatories to the statement include district Bar Association President Md Meheruddin, its Secretary Kholilur Rahman, Sangskritik Oikya Jote Convenor Gazi Kamrul Huda Selim, Bangladesh College Biswabidyalay Shikhhak Samity President Principal Azharul Islam Arju, Manikganj Bazar Banik Samity President Gazi Khairul Huda Faruque, Provat Sangha President Advocate Dipak Kumer Ghosh, Secretary Advocate Nazrul Islam Badsha, Khela Ghar Secretary Meer Moksedul Alam, Udichi Secretary Prodip Kumer, Bangladesh Shikhhak Samity Manikganj district unit Secretary Kashi Nath Sarker, Manab Kalyan Sangstha President Biplob Chakrabarty, its Secretary Motiur Rahman, former president of Manikganj Press Club Suruz Khan, former president of Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity Sabbirul Islam and Manikganj ADAB President Abdul Majid.

RU DORMITORIES

Ruling party men get work, lowest bids ignored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Rajshahi University authorities has awarded the Habibur Rahman Hall construction work involving about Tk three crore to the fourth lowest bidder, allegedly to favour a ruling party man.

Prof Abu Daud Hossain, a member of the tender committee and Dean of Arts Faculty resigned protesting "irregularities in the process".

"The university that is facing Tk 20 lakh deficit budget for last several years will suffer a loss of Tk nine lakh for favouring the BNP leader", said a highly placed official at RU.

Seven construction companies dropped schedules within June 10, the last date for bidding.

Among them a firm from Gaibandha was the lowest bidder proposing completion of the Tk 2.78 crore work at Tk 2.24 crore.

The second lowest bid was Tk 2.24 and the third Tk 2.25 crore, sources said.

The company given the work was in the fourth position with Tk 2.33 crore.

It was gathered that an influential BNP leader had dropped the schedule on behalf of the company.

RU authorities have also ordered re-tender of the Tk 20 lakh electrical work at Zia Hall. In the first tender, the lowest bidder proposed to do the work at Tk 19.94 lakh, sources claimed.

The Tk 20 lakh electrical works at Habibur Rahman Hall was later given to a firm owned by a JCD leader at Tk 21 lakh, said the sources.

The tender committee president and RU Treasurer talking to newsmen denied any "political influence" and said the decisions on awarding works were taken "unanimously by all committee members".

RU Chief Engineer Abdur Rahim denied talking on the ground, but admitted that some of the authorities' decisions "went against each other".

Alleged attempted sexual abuse: Victim testifies to AIG

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from Kishoreganj

NETRAKONA: AIG Prison (development) Abdul Mannan, probing the allegation of attempted sexual harassment of a female visitor to Kishoreganj jail by the jailer, recorded testimony of the victim on Thursday.

The female visitor had complained that the jailer tried to harass her when he went to the jail on June 3 to see her husband, put behind bars in an arms case.

The AIG recorded her testimony at the office of the jailer. The jailer was reportedly present at that time, sources said.

When asked later, the AIG told newsmen that the probe result would be made known later.

The woman said she told the AIG how the jailer tried to harass her.

Earlier, Additional District Magistrate of Kishoregonj Mohammad Momraj Mia probed the matter on June 16 but nothing was made public about the findings.

Who are these 'ghost' teachers?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Fourteen teachers of Damnash College in Bagmara upazila have sued the local ruling party lawmaker Abu Hena as they did not find their names on the government PMO (payorder) list.

Abu Hena MP is the chairman of the college governing body. The teachers along with the principal, SM Nazrul Islam, are in the college since it was set up in 1999, they claimed while talking to this correspondent here on Saturday.

The college was enlisted under MPO on June 3, but mysteriously, the teachers who were teaching at the college so far did not find their names on the MPO list.

Instead, names of a new principal and other teachers, not seen at the college, were seen on the PMO list, they said.

The 14 teachers then filed a case with the court of a Senior Assistant Judge here. The education secretary, director of Education Directorate and the new teachers on the PMO list have also been charged in the case.

Some local people, guardians and students of the college said that they never saw the principal and teachers now on the MPO list.



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of the workshop on breastfeeding, held at Nilphamari Health and Family Planning Centre yesterday.

WORKSHOP ON BREASTFEEDING TOLD

Int'l code on baby food sale defied in Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The 'International Code on Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes' is being violated in Bangladesh to promote sale of canned powdered milk and other baby food.

This was stated by Dr. Abu Ahamed Mortuja, child specialist at Nilphamari Hospital, at a workshop held here yesterday to create awareness about the need for breastfeeding of babies.

This code was recommended by the World Health Assembly to curb propaganda by baby food producers, he said.

The workshop was held at the Sadar upazila health and family planning training centre.

Jointly organised by the Civil Surgeon's office, Nilphamari and

Breast Feeding Foundation (BBF), the workshop was also addressed by, among others, BFF Co-ordinator from Dhaka Dr Rifat Ara Hossein Lucy, Nilpharmari Deputy Commissioner Shafiqul Alam, Deputy Director of Nilphamari Health and Family Planning Department Tawfiqur Rahman and Dr. Selina Begam. Civil Surgeon Dr Nazrul Islam presided.

The speakers said mothers, specially educated and working ones, despite knowing that breastfeeding is the best, prefer canned baby food for their babies because of illusion and propaganda by the multinational baby food producers. The country also incurs crores of taka for importing baby food.

They called upon the government to limit import of baby food to popularise breastfeeding.

Dr Rifat Ara said there is nothing superior to god gifted mother's milk. It gives the best nutrition, protects babies from diseases and helps them grow intelligent, she said.

Dr. Mortusa said the main obstacle to breastfeeding is the aggressive marketing policy of the multinational companies.

Staff at many hospitals also encourage mothers to use baby food for their babies. They get attractive presentations from those companies. It is unlawful.

The workshop decided to launch a national organisation that will encourage mothers in breastfeeding.

Maternity hospitals should be turned into 'baby friendly hospitals' to help mothers develop the habit, the workshop suggested and urged the government to frame laws in this regard.

NATORE JUBO DAL LEADER MURDER

AL men among 20 chargesheeted

A CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Naldanga police on Saturday submitted charge sheet against 20 people included Naldanga thana Awami League Secretary SM Firoz to the Sadar upazila magistrate court in connection with the murder of Jubo Dal leader Sabbir Ahmed Gama, nephew of Deputy Minister for land Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu.

SI Sahanul Bari submitted the charge that also includes Firoz's brother Fazlul Haq and some other AL activists.

Gama was murdered on February 7. Outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in telephone calls to Rajshahi Press Club and leaflets distributed in the area had claimed responsibility for the murder.

Gama's father Rafiqul Islam Talukder field a case with Naldanga thana accusing 16 AL men included Firoz on February 8.

Police arrested five suspected outlaws including Firoz's brother SM Fazlul Haq.

Seven of the chargesheeted persons including Firoz obtained bail from the High Court.

Following the murder, 44 houses and 15 shops included the houses of Firoz and some of his relatives at Shahpara village and Amtali Bazar were ransacked and torched, allegedly by local BNP activists.

After the vandalism, nine cases were field with Naldanga thana accusing 125 BNP activists including Dalar and Dalim, Razzak, Ratan and Rentu. Dalar and Dalim are nephews of Dulu.

The cases were field by Firoz's father Foyes Uddin, Safura Khatun, Jayeda Bewa, Champa Khatun, and Amena Begam.

After investigation, SI Abdus Sattar submitted final reports in five cases, saying the incident had actually happened but no witnesses could found to prove involvement of the accused.

But Foyes Uddin claimed that, asked by the investigation officer (IO), he had gone to the police station with witnesses and testified to the IO.

Natore district AL Secretary Hanif Ali Seikh alleged that the charge sheet was false and demanded judicial inquiry into the murder.

Custodial torture protested in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The Satkhira unit of the Task Force Against Torture (TFT) organised a discussion meeting here yesterday on custodial torture in observance of the United Nations International Day, Supporting Tortured Victims.

Held at the official of Satkhira Unnayan Kendra, a local NGO, it was presided over TFT Satkhira Co-ordinator Prof Pabtra Mohon Das. The discussants included principal Sheikh Abdul Wadood, Dr Shushanto Ghogh, Prof Abdul Hamid, schoolteacher Ashraf Ali Siddique, journalist Anisur Rahim, advocate Mostafa Asaduzzaman, Prof Quazi Abul Kashen.

The speaker said custodial torture is a slur on democracy and called upon law enforcers to shun this practice. They also called upon the people to protest this to institutionalise democracy.

Earlier, the TFT brought out a procession in the town. It terminated in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office.

A memorandum was submitted to the DC to take steps to stop custodial deaths.