

TANORE GANG-RAPE

Main accused sheltered by BNP bigwigs, victim threatened

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A local BNP leader, the main accused in Tanore gang-rape case, is escaping arrest 17 years after the incident using political influence while his men are threatening the victim's family to withdraw the case.

Police said, the accused- Tanore BNP Vice president and Chanduria UP chairman Mofiz Uddin- went into hiding since two of the four accused were arrested on December 16.

But sources claimed that Mofiz is staying at a hotel in Dhaka and visiting his home at Tanore several times in last two weeks.

"He is maintaining regular contact with local police over phone", said a source.

Habibur Rahman Hasibul, the victim's lawyer, claimed that Mofiz was often seen at a minister's house in Dhaka. He stayed at his house for five hours from 8am on December 18, the lawyer further claimed.

The rape victim's husband, Korban Ali, on Monday alleged that Mofiz's men went to his house and asked for settlement of the case through arbitration.

"Whenever they see me at market and streets, they warn me of dire consequences if I do not withdraw

the case", he said.

Korban married the victim as his second wife one and a half years after the incident.

Following threats on her life, the victim is on the run since early December last year. Rajshahi chapter of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association took the victim under their safe custody and sent her to their Dhaka 'safe home' on December 18.

A magistrate court on Monday rejected the bail prayers of the arrested two accused- Omar Ali and Yaad Ali.

The victim earlier alleged that Mofiz, Omar and Yaad had bribed her uncle Sayed Ali Satari and gang-raped her. She was an orphan, then 18.

Then they took her to the then UP chairman and village quack Abdul Mozid Mollah, who also raped her overnight.

Her ordeal did not end there. Her uncle Satari lodged a case accusing Muhammad Ali for the rape. Then she was kept confined to Mofiz's house for many days until police pressed charges against Muhammad.

But she unfolded the fact before a court that asked her for evidence.

Besides this, Mofiz is accused in

many other cases for women repression, anti-social activities and corruption, police sources said.

After the gang rape, Mofiz had also raped four other housewives at Deotola village, they said. Two of the victims did not dare to lodge any case.

Two other victims complained, but police in their reports could not bring any charge against Mofiz.

The people of the area sent a written letter to the Prime Minister on December 15, describing misdeeds by Mofiz.

Tanore people made such complaints many times before, but Mofiz's is always escapes punishment because of his political influence and close relations with a minister.

Some sources also claimed that that Mofiz developed relations with political big-wigs.

Army led joint forces arrested him during Operation Clean Heart. A police report after his arrest on January 1, 2003 said, "Mofiz, using his political power and influence of a minister used to beat government officials and captured tender works from different government offices".

After he was elected chairman of Soronjal Union Parishad in 1997, he

collected Tk 60 lakh lands of the council to Kaliganj College authorities at only Tk 8 lakh, said the police report.

The case was under investigation by the then Bureau of Anti Corruption and. But nothing more is known.

On July 10, 2002, local people roughed up and handed him over to police after they found him drinking and enjoying with girls at Barind Hotel in Rajshahi city. But police reported that he managed to flee away from the hotel as police reached there, said sources.

Mofiz chairman is a panic for many families in Tanore, particularly poor and aborigine families.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mofiz denied all the allegations against him and said, "None can prove any of the allegations against me".

"I have many enemies following family disputes, and so allegations are available against me", he said.

Mofiz denied meeting the minister, but said that he was staying in Dhaka for 'lobbying for the gang rape case'.

"As the case is in court, I must handle it legally", he said replying a question.

Answering another question, Mofiz said that he would seek bail from the High Court.

BDR-smugglers clash leaves 6 hurt in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) jawan and five smugglers were injured when a group of smugglers locked in a clash with BDR members near Khordobazaar in Kalaroa upazila on Sunday.

The injured smugglers included two women.

The injured persons are BDR jawan Abul Fazal and smugglers Rabiul Islam, Sobhan Ali, Nazim Rahman, Hafiza Khatun and Rizia Khatun.

BDR jawan Abul Fazal was admitted to Satkhira hospital while injured smugglers took treatment at a private clinic in the town, according to clinic sources.

According to police and BDR sources, BDR jawans ambushed the Khordobazaar Road and seized smuggled goods worth Tk 1.5 lakh from smugglers.

Later, the smugglers regrouped and attacked the BDR jawans to snatch away seized goods. They hit BDR jawan Abul Fazal with lethal weapons. BDR jawans opened fire on the smugglers leaving five of them injured.

When contacted, Captain Kazi Zahir of 12 Rifles Battalion told this correspondent BDR opened nine rounds of shots to disperse the smugglers.

BDR VIGILANT Smuggling of Indian cattle down

BSS, Fulbari (Dinajpur)

Smuggling of Indian cattle has decreased due to constant vigilance of the members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in the border areas.

Change in attitude of importers also led to the situation.

According to BDR sources, at present most of the cattle traders show interest in importing Indian cattle legally through corridors in the northwestern border instead of smuggling in. The corridors are situated at Khanpur border in Sadar upazila, Koira border under Panchbibi upazila in Joypurhat, Harinam border under Balladangi upazila in Thakurgaon and Islampur border under Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat district.

Lack of coordination main obstacle to project work

Gaibandha Workshop on National Working Plan for Women told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Speakers at a day-long workshop on the role of WID Coordination Committee on 'working plan for women development' said lack of proper coordination among different government agencies is the main cause for slow implementation of projects.

Approval of projects and their proper implementation are often delayed in absence of proper coordination among the women affairs ministry, government agencies and NGOs, they said.

This also gives rise to corruption and wastage of funds.

They suggested creation of a cell in the ministry to monitor implementation of projects.

Held at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room on Monday, it was organised jointly by the administration and the district women affairs department.

The plan is jointly implemented by UNDP and the ministry.

The workshop was attended by district and upazila level officials, teachers and officials of NGO implementing different welfare projects

for women.

It was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Tapon Chandra Majumder. The speakers included Begum Dil Afroz of the district women affairs department, Brown Peter from Netherlands, Hamida Begum and Efaat Ana Eva.

The speakers discussed objec-

tives of WID coordination committee for development of women, the present scenario in Bangladesh and the lack of proper coordination between the ministry and other organisations in implementing the development programmes.

The workshop was followed by an open discussion.



A partial view of the workshop

PHOTO: STAR

UTTARA HOUSING PROJECT

Tension mounts over allotment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Tension mounted again in villages around Uttara Housing Project at Saidpur as the banglees became agitated over the government's latest policy on allotment of the houses.

The villagers have become panicked as rumour spread that police would again launch a massive arrest in connection with a case filed last year following attack on police and alleged arms snatching.

As per the policy, 30 per cent of the houses will be allotted to Banglees and 70 per cent to Biharis, sources said. This is opposed by the Banglees, who are claiming more.

Formal announcement of allotments was deferred twice, fearing agitation by Banglees.

The latest date, fixed on December 28, was cancelled. State Minister for Education and Minister-in-Charge for Nilphamari ANM Ehsanul Haq Milon was supposed to inaugurate the allotment.

The earlier schedule was on March 14 last year, when it was announced that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would formally inaugurate the allotment. But it was cancelled 48 hours before the programme.

Visiting some villages around the housing project, this correspondent found dissatisfaction among Banglees people on the allotment

policy. They demanded that all the houses be allotted to poor Banglees because the Biharis worked against the independence and killed people.

On March 21 last year, local Banglees clashed with police as they batoned a demonstration protesting government allotment policy. At least 60 people including 11 policemen and the UNO of Syedpur were injured.

After that police filed a case accusing 3000 people for attacking police and snatching arms.

The Uttara Housing Project was constructed at a cost of Tk four crore near the Saidpur town to accommodate 1000 families.

Most medicine shops in Netrakona have no licence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Over 1000 medicine shops are doing business without drug licence in Netrakona district, according to Drug Superintendent In-charge Akib Hossain.

He was talking to newsmen at the Netrakona Drug Association office.

He said there are about 1200 medicine shop in ten upazilas of the district, but only 240 have drug licences.

The government is incurring a huge amount of revenue due to this.

Akib Hossain said it is not possible for the Drug Control Department to inspect all the illegal shops because of shortage of manpower. He however said a drive will be launched soon to identify the uillagal shops.

IT centre opens at Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

An Information Technology Centre was opened at Gaibandha Public Library on Sunday for rendering services to the people.

The Gaibandha Deputy Commissioner inaugurated the centre.

A discussion meeting was held on the occasion. It was addressed by Police Superintendent Bhanu Lal Das; M Abbas Salam, Chief Executive Officer of Gano Unnayan Kendro, an NGO; Khalilur Rahman; Kamruzzaman Salim and Amitav Das Himun.

The IT centre, set up jointly by Gaibandha Public Library and Gano Unnayan Kendro, will provide internet and e-mail services.

Madaripur hospitals ailing for lack of manpower

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Patients suffer a lot due to shortage of manpower in all the hospitals in the district.

Sixty-six posts are lying vacant in Madaripur Sadar Hospital and other upazila health complexes in the district for a long time. Of these, 22 posts are lying vacant in the Sadar hospital, 10 posts are vacant in Kalkini Upazila Health Complex (UHC), nine posts are vacant in

Shibchar UHC and seven posts are vacant in Rajoir UHC. Besides, five posts are lying vacant in the TB Hospital.

In Shibchar upazila, nine posts are lying vacant. One post of Medical Officer and one post of Pharmacist are lying vacant in Bandorkhole Union Health Sub-centre.

One post of Pharmacist and one post of Health Assistant are lying vacant in Dattapara and

Nilokhi Sub-health Centres.

The post of junior Consultant is lying vacant in Shibchar UHC.

The posts of Dental Surgeon, Medical Officer (Gynaecology) and Resident Medical Officer are lying vacant in Kalkini UHC. Two posts of Medical Officers, one post of Office Assistant and one post of Store Keeper are lying vacant in Gopalpur Union Sub-health Centre in Kalkini upazila.

'Listed criminal' escapes from custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A handcuffed 'listed criminal' and alleged drug trader escaped from police custody in the district on Monday. Sources said police arrested Russel from Talipara area of the city at about 11am.

Russel jumped from the police van when it started for Sadar police station and ran away. Police failed to nab him again.

Police said Russel was a drug trader and accused in several cases filed with the Sadar thana. Earlier, Russel was arrested by Rab (Rapid Action Battalion). He was released on bail.

'Build movement to combat crime'

A CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Speakers at a discussion meeting here on Saturday stressed the need for building a strong mass movement to wipe out criminal activities once for all from the society.

They were speaking at a peace rally organised by Thakurgaon Bar Association at the Bar Library.

Speakers called upon the people to join the anti-crime peace movement launched by the Bar Association.

Teachers, journalists, lawyers, NGO workers, human rights organisations and others participated in the rally.

They are all thieves!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Curious people thronged the Sadar thana on Monday as news spread that police arrested 90 thieves (!) from different areas in the district town in two days. It was a surprise for them as many in the crowd asked whether all were really thieves.

Police sources said they swung into action following complaints by citizens about menace by thieves for the last several months. They also claimed that they have a list of thieves.

The alleged thieves were nabbed during raids in different areas including Haqpara, Baganpara, Muktipara, Ralipara, Colonipara, Mutchpara, Majherpara and Daulatghat.

But allegations have it that police also arrested many innocent people and released them after realising money from their relatives. Police however denied the allegation.

Discussion on Aids prevention held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

The district information department held a view exchange meeting on HIV/AIDS on Monday at its office.

Magura Civil Surgeon Md Fariduddin Ahmed, District Information Officer ASM Kabir and local journalists attended the meeting.

Ershad's rule saw only development JP SG claims at Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Jatiya party (Ershad) Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader has said the nine-year rule of HM Ershad was a 'period of development' in the country. There was no terrorism, no killing, no anarchy.

People's life and property is insecure since the Ershad gave up power.

He was addressing a biennial conference of Netrakona district Jatiya Party (Ershad), held at a community centre in the town.

The conference was presided over by Advocate Liakat Ali, convener of Netrakona district JP.

It was addressed by, among others, JP Presidium members MA Hannan and Fakir Ashraf, central vice-president Anisur Rahman, organizing secretary Ali Asgor and former lawnmakers Golam Rabbani and Ali Osman.

About 500 leaders and activists of BNP and Awami League led by BNP leader Nurul Haque Shantu and AL leader Abdul Fazal Chowdhury Maznu joined JP during the conference.

The conference elected Fakir Ashraf and advocate Moazzam Hossen president and secretary of Netrakona district JP.

The Bangladesh-Zimbabwe Series (Test & ODI) is about to start. Take this chance to form your own team. Among the 28 players from the two teams, choose 6 of your favorite, form a team & send it to us by SMS. After every match, the highest scoring first 15 teams will win attractive prizes.

Rules of the Competition:

Your team's point will be based on individual player's performance on the field. Every team must have **2 batsmen, 2 bowlers, 1 wicket-keeper & 1 all-rounder.**

After every match, you can change the players of your team.
Your team's name must be in one word.

Points will be counted in the following ways:

- Every run by a batsman on your team will earn you 1 point
- Every wicket taken by a bowler on your team will earn you 25 points
- Every catch (not applicable for wicket-keepers) taken by a player on your team will earn you 5 points
- Each caught & bowled by a player on your team will earn you 30 points
- Every dismissal (catch & stumping) by the wicket-keeper on your team will earn you 10 points
- Every run-out by a player on your team will earn you 5 points
- If the Man of the Match is from your team, you will earn 10 points

Name	Category	Keyword	Name	Category	Keyword
Habibul Bashar	Batsman	BB1	T. Duffin	Batsman	ZB1
Md. Ashraf	Batsman	BB2	D. Ebrahim	Batsman	ZB2
Nafis Iqbal	Batsman	BB3	H. Masakadza	Batsman	ZB3
Javed Omar	Batsman	BB4	V. Sibanda	Batsman	ZB4
Rajin Saleh	Batsman	BB5	B. Rogers	Batsman	ZB5
Khaled Mashud	Wicket Keeper	BW1	T. Taibu	Wicket Keeper	ZW1
Manjarul Rana	All-rounder	BA1	E. Chigumbura	All-rounder	ZA1
Aftab Ahmed	All-rounder	BA2	P. Utseye	All-rounder	ZA2
Talha Jubair	Bowler	BL1	S. Matsikenyeri	All-rounder	ZA3
Enamul Haque Jr.	Bowler	BL2	C. Mpofu	Bowler	ZL1
Md. Rafique	Bowler	BL3	M. Nkala	Bowler	ZL2
Mashrafe Bin Mortuza	Bowler	BL4	B. Taylor	Bowler	ZL3
Tapash Baishya	Bowler	BL5	T. Panyangara	Bowler	ZL4
			D. Hondo	Bowler	ZL5
			G. Cremer	Bowler	ZL6

How to register your team
(For the 1st Test register your team before 7 a.m. of January 6, 2005)

How to change cricketers in your team
(From the end of one match till 1 hour before the next match)

How to know your team's score
(Score will be updated after each over)

Register your teams for the first test before 7 a.m. January 6, 2005

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SNAPS

Barguna BNP leader arrested by Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A team of Rapid Action Battalion arrested Shahidul Islam Shahid, secretary of Talait upazila BNP in Barguna, on Sunday. RAB sources claimed, Shahid was the chief of notorious Shahid-Bahini accused in different extortionist activities, looting, toll collection and terrorism and even he did not bother local administration and police. The arrested BNP leader was handed over to police after primary interrogation.

Discussion on poet Kader Nawaj held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A discussion meeting on the life and works of poet Kader Nawaj was held at his village home in Muzdia in Sreepur upazila. Kazi Kader Nawaj Smriti Samsad organised the discussion. With Sheikh Najrul Islam in the chair, the discussion was participated by, among others, lawyer Mohsin Halder, Khondokar Erfan Ali, Mofizur Rahman, Khondokar Shoful Ali, Mahabubur Rahman and Abdul Malin. Kader Nawaj also wrote many books including 'Ostader Kadar' and 'Harano Tupi'. He was born in 1909 at Talebpur village in Murshidabad district in India. After the partition, he migrated to the then East Pakistan in 1947 and joined Dinajpur Government High School as headmaster. He died in 1983.