

HARASSMENT BY SP MASUD MIA, BANGLA BHAI

Probe team returns without talking to victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Rajshahi

The two-member home ministry probe team left Rajshahi for Dhaka yesterday evening without interviewing Bagmara villager Abdul Bari, who says his family has been hiding out for the last year in fear of abuse by the former Rajshahi police superintendent Masud Mia and Bangla Bhai.

Headed by Abdur Rouf, the deputy secretary of the home ministry, the committee came to Rajshahi on Saturday to investigate allegations against Masud Mia of misuse of authority and abetment of criminals.

"We are acting on certain guidelines to look into departmental irregularities and the misuse of power by the former SP. We didn't speak with anyone among the Bagmara villagers as we were not told to examine people who claim to have been harassed by the SP," said the probe team leader Abdur Rouf.

Talking to The Daily Star at the Rajshahi circuit house, Rouf also said

their investigation has yet to conclude. "We have only recorded the testimony of policemen at various levels. Now we will grill Masud Mia in Dhaka."

However, the team, which also includes an AIG of police headquarters Hasanul Haider, spoke with the Rajshahi range DIG Noor Muhammad, Additional DIG Aminul Islam Chowdhury as well as district-level senior officials, including ASP Moazzam Haque and ASP Kabir.

The top-level police officials submitted to the team in writing that the former SP earned a widespread reputation - from a cross section of people including his own subordinates, members of the general public, political leaders, businessmen and journalists - for abusing his power and supporting criminals.

The interviewed policemen also told the team the SP used a broker named Abdul Khalil to collect bribes over their transfers and postings, and that he also held meetings several times with smugglers.

However, the team did not speak with those journalists who obtained

records of the SP's close relations with smugglers.

Many of the interviewed policemen told this correspondent they were overcome with panic after submitting their testimony against the former SP. "If the SP is rewarded despite the investigation, which is normal in our country, we might face retaliations," said a senior police official.

Meanwhile, Abdul Bari, a small businessman of Bagmara, waited a whole day with his wife Shafmin Nahar, his four-year-old daughter Suborna and his mother-in-law Shahida at the Rajshahi SP office on Sunday to be interviewed by the probe team. In the evening, however, the family was told that the team was informed of their predicament by the concerned officer in-charge before returning.

Bari told journalists that Bangla Bhai and the former Rajshahi SP, influenced by Jagrata Muslim Janata leaders Muhammad Ali Khamaru and his son Mahtab Ali Khamaru, chased and harassed his family.



PHOTO: STAR
Rahul Bhattacharya speaks at the publication ceremony of his book "Pundits from Pakistan" at the Etc library at Gulshan in the city yesterday. On his left is Picador India Editor Shruti Devi. Etc organised the publication ceremony.

Singapore orchid named after Khaleda Zia

BSS, Singapore

A new orchid has been named after Khaleda Zia as a mark of respect to her visit to the Singapore Botanical Garden, the National Orchid Garden.

The orchid was named "Dendrobium Begum Khaleda Zia" yesterday when Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visited the Singapore Botanical

Garden, established in 1859.

This attractive hybrid orchid has arching inflorescence bearing many fragrant flowers. Each flower measures 4.5cm across.

Khaleda Zia planted the sapling of the orchid and went round the garden. She also signed the visitors' book there.

Ex-UP chairman shot dead in Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

Unknown assailants on Sunday night gunned down a former Union Parishad (UP) chairman at Kutukchhari Bazar under Naniarchar upazila of the district.

Police said former Shuvolong UP chairman Biru Kumar Chakma, 45, came under attack at around 7:30 pm when he was on his way to in-laws' house. A gang of up to 15 gunmen sprayed him with bullets to the head, abdomen and back.

Locals rushed him to the Sadar Hospital in the district headquarters at around 9:00pm. The doctors there referred him to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital.

But on the way to Chittagong Biru died due to excessive bleeding near Thandachhari Tea Garden in the early hours yesterday.

Biru's elder brother Susheel Bikash Chakma yesterday filed a case with Kotwali Police Station. He however did not mention anyone's name as accused in the First Information Report (FIR), said Assistant Sub Inspector Abdus Sattar.

Fearing rival attack, Biru fled his

native home in Shuvolong a year ago and took shelter at his in-laws' house in Kutukchhari area, said sources close to Biru's family.

Meanwhile, United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in a statement yesterday blamed

PCJSS for the killing. The statement signed by Milton Chakma of UPDF Rangamati district unit said that "PCJSS terrorists" Bijoy Chakma, Milon Chakma and Baaitya Chakma led the attack.