

Sylhet magnate untraced for over 10 months

No headway in investigation for ‘mysterious’ police role

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Law enforcers have failed to trace whereabouts of Sylhet magnate Md. Habibur Rahman, ‘missing’ for over 10 months.

Different trade bodies and other organisations including the Chamber and ruling BNP on several times demanded rescue of the businessman, but to no effect.

Police officials repeatedly claimed ‘significant progress’ in investigation but nothing is known yet whether he is alive or not. They can not even say whether he was kidnapped or is missing.

Talking to this correspondent, a police official ruled out the possibility of involvement of any ‘criminal gang’ in the incident. Family members or relatives might be involvement, he said.

Property-related matter may be the cause, he added while speculating that ‘hired gangs’ could be involvement in the incident.

He however said the mystery would be unearthed soon. But another police official admitted that the investigation is ‘in a mess’ as different wings of police department were involved in the investigations.

“I doubt they investigators can make any headway even if they try sincerely because most of the ‘alamats’ (evidences) got destroyed

with the passage of time and change of investigators”.

The case was first investigated by Sylhet Kotwali police. Later, it was handed over to the Detective Branch and then to CID (Criminal Investigation Department), police sources said. Family members of



Habibur Rahman

Habibur Rahman are in doubt rescuing him alive.

Habibur Rahman’s 100 year-old father, Moulana Abdur Rahim took over his business as his brothers declined to look after his business fearing police harassment, family sources said. “I had to take over the business about a month after my

son’s disappearance as my other sons declined apprehending police harassment”.

On November 8 last year, Tipu Sultana Begum, first wife of Habibur, received a letter by post, which asked for sending Tk 18 lakh to a filling station at Islampur Dholai in Copmanyganj upazila on November 11, where a person wearing white pajama and panjabi will be waiting for the money. But nobody turned up.

Owner of Al-Rahman Trading Company in the city’s Kalighat area, Habibur Rahman is missing since the night of October 17 last year.

His brother Rafique Uddin lodged a GD with Kotwali thanan next day. Later, on October 21, he filed a case.

The case was transferred to Detective Branch only after two days. Inspector Shafiqul Alam was made the Investigation Officer (IO). Police on October 22 arrested three persons Habibur Rahman’s nephews Emad and Ashok and former car driver Manzurul Islam.

Earlier, on October 19, unidentified callers told the victim’s wife Sultana over telephone that Rahman was in good condition. Sultana also heard her husband’s voice over phone.

But, the callers on that day did not

make any demand, she said. The family members also allege that police investigators do not contact them now. The three arrested persons were taken on remand twice by Detective Branch police but they could not find any clue, they claimed.

They also raised question about arrest of two nephews, claiming that they are innocent.

But they said they are suspicious about driver Manjurul Islam, who was sacked weeks before Habibur Rahman’s disappearance.

Both the wives of Habibur Rahman claimed that there was no misunderstanding between them over the huge property of Habibur Rahman. The Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) and the Police Superintendent of Sylhet had visited the victim’s house several times after the incident and assured the family that habibur rahman would be traced out.

Earlier, the two wives of the victim also handed over a memorandum to the DIG to trace out Habibur Rahman. Traders in Sylhet held rallies and observed a half-day strike in the city’s wholesale market to press for rescue of the businessman. A human chain was also formed in the city.



Cow dung being poured into bio-gas plants in Shamim Re-rolling Mills in Jessore.

PHOTO: STAR

Godagari UNO office besieged for rapists’ punishment

RU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred indigenous people yesterday besieged the office of Godagari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the rapists of three women.

They also submitted a memorandum to the UNO containing their nine-point demand.

Before submission of the memorandum, a big meeting was held on the UNO office premises. The general secretary (GS) of Rajshahi district unit of Jatiya Adivasi Parishad, Shyam Kumar Duar presided over the meeting.

Speakers criticised the police administration saying ‘the rapists are moving under the nose of police but they are not arresting them’.

Earlier, they brought out a big procession chanting various slogans. Police intercepted the procession but no untoward incident happened.

A group of miscreants gang-raped three indigenous women on August 17 and 18.

Rivals stab JCD activist on RU campus

RU CORRESPONDENT

A Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist was stabbed on the university campus in a factional feud yesterday.

Abdullah Al-Mamun, a first year student of Political Science Department was attacked by a group of JCD cadres led by Mamun and Shohel after an altercation near Shahid-ullah Arts Building, sources said.

Mamun and Shohel are two leaders of JCD Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Hall unit.

Critically injured Abdullah Al-Mamun was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) immediately after the incident.

Sources said, Mamun and Shohel threatened the victim on several occasions not to join the procession and meeting of their rival Aslam Reza faction.

Bio-gas magic saves mill, brings fortune

MD ABU BAKR SIDDIQUE, Jessore

Akbar Ali did a great job when power crisis and galloping oil price were crippling small industries. He installed two bio-gas plants to run his re-rolling mill, which has turned his losing concern into a profitable one.

Akbar claims he is the first man at least in Jessore to run a mill by using bio-gas.

He now even thinks of marketing bio-gas in cylinders for cooking, at a price lower than LNG cylinders now available in the market.

Akbar’s Shamim Re-rolling Mills on three acres of land at Sujalpur near Jessore town was set up in 1996. But he had to close it down with a bank loan of about Tk 6 crore as production cost was high due to use of furnace oil at high prices.

He installed two bio-gas plants in March this year at a cost of about Tk 10 lakh.

Prior to installation of the bio-gas

plants, the mill needed 1,80,000 litres of furnace oil a month, which cost him around Tk 16 lakh.

The quantity has come down to around 88,000 litres now, which costs about Tk 11 lakh, reducing the production cost by about Tk 5 lakh a month, Akbar said.

The bio-gas plants cost him around Tk 15,000 per month for purchase of cow dung and maintenance, he told this correspondent during a visit to the mill on Saturday.

“This is a great relief for me and an eye-opener to all. My losing mill has now turned profitable”, a beaming Akbar said.

“I do not have to worry for power supply and furnace oil. Cow dung, the only raw material for producing bio-gas, is found in plenty in nearby villages”.

The mill produces 30 to 40 tonnes of iron rod a day. The bio-gas is used mainly for furnaces producing lumps of iron, which are shaped into rods.

Bio-gas produced from cow dung

was so long used as fuel for cooking, albeit in a limited scale in rural areas. “My innovation will now lead to diversified use of bio-gas to the benefit of small industries in the country”, he said.

The two plants need around 15 drums of cow dung a day, each bought at Tk 100.

Akbar said his plants produce bio-gas in excess, which has to be burnt out. The excess gas can be marketed for domestic use. But it needs special type of cylinders and filling machines.

For commercial production of bio-gas, Tk 1.5 crore is needed to produce the cylinders and buy filling machines.

If the investment is made, at least 500 bio-gas cylinders can be supplied per day he claimed. Each cylinder will cost between Tk 200 and Tk 250, he estimates.

The cow dung used in the plant is also a good compost fertiliser for use in croplands, he said.

An educated youth shows the way

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Perseverance of an educated youth has given fish cultivation a new dimension in Mymensingh.

A K M Nurul Huq, who obtained Masters degree in Mathematics from Dhaka University in 1990, started fish farming in 1992 in a 50 decimal pond. Now he cultivates fish in 60 ponds covering 2000 decimal waterbodies.

But his road to success was not easy. The greatest obstacle came from his family members, who opposed his plan, saying fish culti-

Nurul Huq’s determination gives fish cultivation a new dimension

His approach was different from others. He thought how to protect the indigenous varieties of fish, which are threatened due to cross-breeding and large scale commercial cultivation of foreign varieties.

With only Tk 40000 in hand, Nurul Huq set up a hatchery-- Brahmaputra Fish Seed Complex-- at Puliamari in Sadar upazila in a 50

2002 without any technical support from any quarter. “I was the first man in the country to breed Koi fish in pond”, he said.

Now he earns around Tk 10 lakh a month after meeting all expenditures and employs 70 people.

Nurul Huq took training on fish farming at the Fisheries Faculty in Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU) and the Youth

Fish farming has become popular in Mymensingh district now. Fish fries and eggs are produced in several hundred hatcheries in Sadar, Gouripur, Trishal, Bhaluka and Phulpur upazilas. These are supplied to other districts. Over one lakh fish farmers including some women are engaged in fish cultivation in 113000 ponds in 12 upazilas of Mymensingh district. This has created jobs for several lakh people.

There has been a ‘silent revolution’ in fish cultivation in the district, said Tayed Ali of Ragabpur village in the Sadar upazila, a fish farmer who also received national award.

Ali, owner of “Bhai Bhai Hatchers and Fish Seed” said about one-third of the demand for fish fries in the country is now met by hatcheries in Mymensingh. Buyers from different districts visit hatcheries in Sadar and Gouripur upazila every Friday to buy fish fries and eggs, he said.

Ali, who started fish farming as a pauper in 1990s, now cultivates fish in 18 ponds covering 17 acres.

District Fishery Officer (DFO) Md Abdul Khaleque said annual demand for fish in Mymensingh is about 66,000 tonnes. The production has reached 95,000 tonnes. If this trend continues, annual production will reach 1,50,000 tonnes by 2010. The country’s total annual demand for fish is about 8,00,000 tonnes, he said.

The number of ponds and waterbodies under fish farming is increasing every year, creating more jobs. Over 23000 women are also involved in fish cultivation, he said.

Replying to a question, the DFO said they only provide short training. Over 12000 fish farmers were trained in last two years. “We have also started training for hatchery owners so that they can do cross breeding, rear brood fishes and collect eggs scientifically”, the DFO added.

Many hatchery owners are doing cross-breeding from mother fishes without knowing its bad effects in future. To stop such practice, we have trained over 100 hatchery owners in Mymensingh, Netrakona, Jamalpur and Tangail districts in last two years, he said. They have learnt how to scientifically collect eggs from brood fishes.



PHOTO: STAR

Nurul Huq (extreme left wearing white shirt) examining koi fish grown in one of his ponds.

vation is not befitting for any one after obtaining the highest university degree. They pressed him to look for a job.

“But I was determined to do something which will bring me fortune and create employment for others”, he said while talking tot this correspondent.

Nurul Huq’s determination helped him not only fulfil his mission. This also earned him laurels. He got national awards in 1997 and 1998. He is well known among fish farmers in greater Mymensingh now.

decimal pond.

“Now he produces fish fries including that of endangered varieties which are supplied to fish farmers in different areas of the country. Fries of endangered varieties like koi, magur (cat fish), chitol, pabda and khailsa are being produced in his hatchery.

“I want to breed and preserve all kinds of endangered varieties”, he said.

Nurul Huq said, after repeated attempts, he was successful in breeding Koi fish in his hatcheries in

Development Directorate. But he alleged that the Fisheries Research Institute (FRI) in Mymensingh was of little help.

About his present condition, Nurul Huq, a father of two children, told the Daily Star that he is very happy as he got national awards twice and also wealth from this profession.

“Many educated youths now come to me for advice on fish farming.

“I cordially receive them”, said Nurul Huq.

Pride of Netrakona in peril

JAHANGIR ALAM, Netrakona

The famous giant fish ‘Mohashol’, found mainly in Netrakona, is now on verge of extinction.

Once Netrakona was famous for this delicious fish, which was found in Someswari and Kongsa rivers. Fishermen would supply this fish to other districts but it is rarely found now.

But people of the district still consider Mohashol a pride of Netrakona.

It looks like a mrigel fish and its colour is a bit golden. It grows up to 30 kilograms and beyond. There are two varieties of Mohashol-- Tortor and Tor Putitora.

It is sold at a very high price because of its taste and attractive colour. A Mohashol weighing 20 to 30 kilograms can fetch Tk 25,000 to 30,000 for a lucky fishermen.



Two big Mohashol fishes netted from Someswari river on Thursday were sold at Tk 20000 each in Netrakona town.

Milon's cheque for brilliant Joy's father

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon on Thursday handed over a cheque of Tk 10,000 to a rickshaw-puller whose son secured GPA-5 in this year’s Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination from Nilphamari Government High School.

The cheque donated by Nilphamari Zila Parishad, was received by Manmoh Roy, father of Narayan Chandra Roy (Joy) at a function at Nilphamari Girls’ High School.

Milon, also the Minister In-Charge of Nilphamari district, praised Manmoh for sending his son to school instead of engaging him in petty jobs ‘realising the importance of education.’

PUBLIC MEETING IN SUNAMGANJ 14-party to form next govt: Jalil

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday said the 14-party alliance will win the next general election and form government.

“We will make the country free of terrorism and corruption”, Jalil declared while addressing a big public meeting at DeraI upazila headquarters in Sunamganj district.

Upazila Awami League (AL) organised the rally, held at the BADC Maidan with Altafuddin in the chair. AL Presidium members Tofael Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, Sylhet district AL chief ANM Shafiq and general secretary Ittekkhar Hossain Shamim, Moulvibazar district AL chief Syed Mohsin Ali and its Sunamganj district unit vice-president Golam Rabbani and former bureaucrat MA Mannan also addressed the rally.

The AL general secretary also said the 4-party alliance came to power on the back of a commitment to root out terrorism and a corruption.

“But the nation has been branded as the number one corrupt country in the world under its rule”, he alleged.

MOVE AT MOULVIBAZAR NAP, GP agree to work ‘under one banner’

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

Moulvibazar district units of left leaning National Awami Party (NAP) led by Prof Muzaffar Ahmed and Gonotontri Party (GP) led by Azizul Islam Khan have decided to work ‘under a single banner’ in Moulvibazar.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of district executive committees of the two parties, held on Friday at Julia Shopping Centre of Moulvibazar with former NAP leader Advocate Gojanfar Ali Chowdhury in the chair.

Most of the senior leaders including presidents and general secretaries of the units were present at the meeting.

This is the proper time for unity of “patriotic and progressive forces” to save the country from “reactionary rights wing forces” who are out to undo democracy and plunge the country into great crisis, Moulvibazar GP General Secretary Abdul Moyeen told this correspondent after the meeting.

The reactionary and anti-independence forces have raised their heads again. They will snatch people’s rights, he said.

The meeting also resolved to

send a proposal to the central committees of the parties to work out a ‘unity programme’ so that their units across the country can work under single banners”, he said.

“We will also put pressure on the central bodies of NAP and GP towards this end”.

District NAP General Secretary Niharendu Home Chowdhury said the initiative is good, but we (NAP workers) are awaiting central committee’s instruction in the regard.

Taking to this correspondent, District NAP President Golam Mostafa Chowdhury said, “We think Gonotontri Party should merge with NAP as it does not have any prominent central leader after the death of Peer Habibur Rahman, Ahmedul Kabir, Syed Altaf Hussain and Chowdhury Harunur Rashid.

“We support the initiative for unification but that does not mean that NAP will be abolished”.

Local initiative for unity will not be fruitful if the central committee does not approve it, he said.

After the meeting the two parties also issued a joint statement on expressing their resolve to work under a single banner.



PHOTO: STAR

The Poursabha Road in Sirajganj town is virtually unfit for vehicles to ply and pedestrians because of lack of renovation for long.