

2 accused in journalist Chanchal Singh murder case arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Police have arrested two absconding accused in journalist Chanchal Singh murder case from their village home at Anulia in Assassuni upazila, 13 months after the incident.

The arrested accused are Abdul Mazid and Hamid Sardar.

Police said, police recovered the decomposed body of Chanchal Singh, son of Anadi Singh of Anulia village from a hotel at Nawabpur in Dhaka on May 5 in 2005.

Police had earlier said that he could be murdered by rivals in the area over a land dispute.

The victim's brother advocate Shambhu Nath Singh filed a case with Kotwali thana in Dhaka, accusing Abdul Mazid and Hamid Sardar and some others in the area.

A team from Dhaka led by the investigation officer (IO) of the case, Sub-inspector Abdul Aziz, with the help of Assassuni police raided houses of the accused and arrested them recently.

Assistant Police Superintendent (ASP) Delowar Hossain Sayeedi confirmed the arrest of the fugitives.

Sylhet city dwellers still being supplied with 'harmful' water

SCC using the plant declared 'unusable' in 1995

Iqbal Siddiquee, Sylhet

Residents of several areas in Sylhet city are using 'harmful' water supplied from the age old water treatment plant at Topkhana.

The plant was set up in 1918. A team of Asian Development Bank (ADB) during a visit in 1995 declared its water 'unusable'.

Users of the 'harmful' water are residents of Jamtala, Kazirbazar, Lamabazar, Mirzajangal, Taltola, Topkhana, Bandarabazar, Sheikhghat, Bandarabaza and Mogaltola areas.

The Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) supplies water from the plant by using some chemicals as alternative arrangement could not been made, its officials said when contacted.

The Topkhana plant supplies 6000 cubic metres of water out of 18,000 cubic metres supplied by the SCC against a demand for 48,000 cubic metres in the city per day. The rest of 18,000 cubic metres is supplied by 18 deep tube wells, an executive engineer of SCC said seeking anonymity.

Supplies are often interrupted by load shedding and mechanical fault in the plant and the deep tube wells.

"We have to use the 'harmful polluted' water since there is no alternative" said, Zakia Begum, a

housewife at Jamtala.

The SCC executive engineer also admitted that the water is not 'totally clean', since we have to depend on water collected from nearby Surma river.

However, it is not contaminated, he claimed.

The Civil and Environmental Engineering department at Shahjalala University of Science and technology (SUST) in tests at its laboratory also found the water 'harmful'. "We found some harmful elements in the pipeline water supplied from the plant ", said an official at the department.

Tests found that quality of Surma water is better during the monsoon than in dry season. The researchers collected samples from four points of the river at Masimpur, Kalighat, Topkhana and Kanishail passing through the city. The tests revealed that though the water contains sufficient quantity of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) during the monsoon, it goes down drastically during dry season. Such water can be used after treatment if Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) at its collection point is 3 mg/litre at the maximum. But the BOD level is much above 3 mg/litre, the tests found, according to sources. Such water should not be taken and used, the researchers said.

The Surma water also has high content of Fecal Coliform, which is harmful for humans, the test report said.

After ADB declared the plant unusable, one of the two tanks of the Topkhana plant was abandoned and the other is still in use due to rising demand.

The plant supplies water for three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. The SCC uses bleaching power twice a day to purify the water collected from Surma river, which flows just yards off the plant.

On the other hand, there are allegations of large scale irregularities and corruption by a section of staff in SCC's water supply department, now employing about 122 officials and employees.

An amount of Tk 13 crore is lying unpaid by consumers. A good number of consumers have stopped paying bills on the plea of supply of 'irregular, scanty and harmful' water by the SCC, sources said. On an average, only around Tk one lakh is realised against bills for about Tk 9

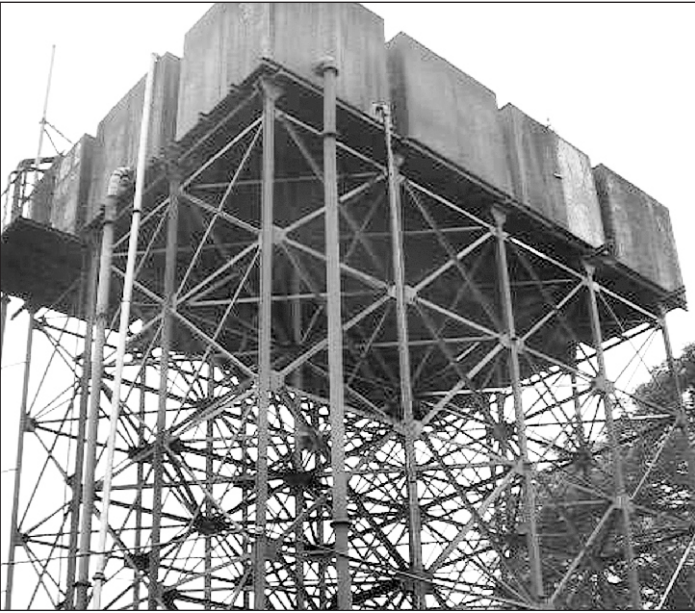


PHOTO: STAR

The dilapidated water treatment plant (above) and the overhead tank at Topkhana in Sylhet city that supplies 'harmful' water to city dwellers.

lakh per month, sources at SCC said.

Besides, a section of SCC employees earn illegal money by providing unauthorised water connections. Otherwise, the monthly revenue could easily go up to Tk 15 lakh, which would be enough for taking up new water supply projects, the sources claimed.

SCC Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran said a project for improving water supply, sanitation and drainage system in Sylhet city was approved by the ECNEC (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council) on July 12 last

year. It includes Tk 25 crore for water supply, which, if implemented, will meet about 90 per cent of the demand by city dwellers, he said. It includes two water treatment plants and eight deep tube wells, he added.

The project took four years to get ECNEC approval and there is no move yet to start work on it. The mayor admitted that bureaucratic tangles delayed implementation of the much-awaited project.

Strengthen Union Parishads

Kushtia roundtable told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Speaker at a roundtable yesterday called for steps to strength local government institutions for development of the country.

They said Union Parishad, the lowest tire of local government in rural areas, is the only institution to implement development programmes initiated by the government. The programmes will not be implemented unless these are strengthened, they said at the roundtable titled Campaign for Strengthen Local Government, organised by Governance Coalition, a forum of several grassroots NGOs, working with assistance from the European Union. It was held at Kushtia Zila Parishad hall.

The speakers said Union Parishad is in existence for over 100 years in the country. But successive governments always used those to serve interest of ruling party men and vested quarters.

Shamsuzzaman, district coordinator of the coalition, chaired the roundtable, addressed by professionals and NGO representatives including Mamataz Rumi, Executive Director of Mukti Nari-O-Shishu Unnayan Sangstha; Shamyul Kumar, Executive Director of PIPASA; Salma Sultana of Nikushimaj.

Kushtia Chamber Director Parvez Mazmadar, Mokarram Hossain, research fellow on local government and The Daily Star Kushtia Correspondent Amanur Aman addressed the roundtable. Elected members of different Union Parishads in the district, journalists and lawyers also took part the programme.

A good gesture by Star Readers' Club in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Members of The Daily Star Readers' Club, Bogra, have so far distributed blankets among distressed people in slum areas in the town.

They collected funds and blankets from people including teachers and students of Government Azizul Haque College in the town under the guidance of Md. Osman Ghani, president of the club. Those who participated in the programme include Altaf Hossain, Ariful Islam (Sujon), Liton, Saikat, Arup, Shahidul, Rani, Mahbub, Awaul, Mijan, Simi, Sumi, Zakir and Santona, all members of the club.

Talking to this correspondent, some of them said they got good response from people to help the poor.

THAKURGAON, DINAJPUR BORDERS

BDR, BSF trade fire five times in six days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

After Friday's exchange of fire, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) traded shots again yesterday on Thakurgaon border, BDR sources said.

Yesterday's cross-border firing took place on Beurjhari border in Baliadangi upazila in Thakurgaon.

BSF of 47 Battalion from Krishanganj camps in India fired at least 10 shots without any provocation, forcing border guards of 20 BDR Battalion to reply with three shots, the sources said.

BDR and BSF exchanged bullets on five occasions since Sunday last on borders in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts, creating panic among the people. Two Bangladeshis were killed by BSF during the cross-border shooting.

On Friday in the morning, BSF troops from Barogharia camp fired at least five shots toward Bangladesh territory on Paria border in Baliadangi upazila in the district. BDR fired 25 shots bullets.

On Thursday, the border guards exchanged 30 rounds on Haripur

border after a Bangladeshi national was killed on the spot by BSF. BSF is yet to return the body.

The dead was identified as Anwarul Islam, 25, son of Abdul Maleque of Khorla village in Haripur.

On Wednesday day, BSF troops killed another Bangladeshi on Enayetpur border in Dinajpur district and abducted one, who is yet to be returned.

On Sunday last, BSF and BDR exchanged shots on Mazhipara border in Tetulia upazila in Panchagarh, creating panic among villagers.

However, officials of 14 Rifles Battalion yesterday said that a flag meeting was underway and they body of Bangladesh would be handed over 'this evening or tomorrow morning'.

BDR officials seeking anonymity said BSF intensified patrol along the 400 kilometre border in the district after proclamation of state of emergency in Bangladesh.

Frequent cross-border shooting have panicked people along the border.

BDR official said they have protested 'unprovoked' firing by BSF.

7X2

3.5X2



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Local youths led by Roopganj Press Club President Mir Abdul Alim distributed warm clothes among poor people in Roopganj in Narayanganj yesterday.

Corruption allegations against PBS officials

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The consumers of Mymensingh Palli Biddut Samity-3 (PBS-3) yesterday brought allegations of corruption against the officials and employees of the Samity.

The consumers, most of them, farmers of Char Boravilla village in Sadar upazila alleged that they had paid Tk 20,000 to the PBS officials in July as per their demand but they they did not supply electricity to the farmers in the ongoing Boro season.

The farmers brought the allegations at a press conference held at Mymensingh Press Club auditorium in the evening.

Yeahia Hossain Shaheen read out a written statement on behalf of the farmers at the press conference.

In his statement, Yeahia also brought allegations against the president of the samity who amassed massive wealth illegally in the last seven years.

They also alleged that the PBS employees usually supply electricity in exchange of bribe depending on the type of connection.

Farmers Md. Ali Akbar, Abu Bakar Siddique, Md. Shahab Uddin, Md. Shahjahan Rahmat Ali of village Char Boravilla were present at the press conference.

9.5X4

6X3