

TALE OF ANOTHER ACID VICTIM

Sabina's wedding night turns into nightmare

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Only hours after all marriage rituals were over and newly wed Sabina and Khairul were in their room, a piercing scream ripped through the dead of night, waking up everyone. No one had ever heard such a scream from a bride's room on her wedding night.

The bride, Sabina Yasmin, 20, did not have a nightmare. Someone had just poured acid all over her body while she and her husband were asleep.

Just 12 hours of entering conjugal life, Sabina fell victim to the revenge of some people who had long dispute with her husband's family.

When she was supposed to spend happy moments amid the in-laws, acid victim Sabina--with 55 percent of her body burnt--is now fighting for life on the second floor of the Burn Unit of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Daughter of Giasuddin of Dighol Kolla under Karimganj upazila of Kishoreganj, Sabina was married to Khairul Islam of Tumni Pitua of the same upazila on January 18.

With severe acid-burns she was rushed to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital in the early hours of January 19 and was later shifted to DMCH.

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, project director of DMCH Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit, told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "It is a

major acid burn injury. The patient has 55 percent of her body burnt. Her right eye is seriously affected. Even if she survives, she will face a lot of complexities."

The treatment will cost a huge amount of money, hospital sources said.

Meanwhile, Nadia Akhter, Sabina's sister-in-law who is attending Sabina at DMCH, said while a large amount of money has already been spent for the treatment, they could not buy many medicines due to financial hardship.

Sabina's husband, whose hands were also burnt, said he woke up hearing Sabina's scream

around 2:00am.

He said he saw three men having "physical similarity" with neighbouring Milon, Golap and Manju--three brothers--exiting from the room through a hole they had dug to sneak into the room.

Nadia said Khairul had illicit affairs with neighbouring Hawa Begum, wife of Milon and mother of three children. When their relationship became known Hawa's family was about to break, but she was finally able to escape a divorce.

The two families also had land-related feuds for a long time, Nadia said.

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PHOTO: STAR

SAVAGE REVENGE: Severely burnt by acid thrown on her wedding night by her husband's enemies, Sabina Yasmeen, left, is struggling for life in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

2 JMB men held in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail,

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two cadres of outlawed Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Kalihati upazila yesterday.

The arrestees are Mohammad Nazmul, 18, son of Mohammad Asaduzzaman, and Abdur Rahman, 17, son of Abdus Samad of Balla village under the upazila.

Earlier on Wednesday, Kalihati police arrested JMB cadre Mohammad Shipon, 30, son of Abdur Rashid Lebu of Balla village.

Following Shipon's lead, a special team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-12 raided the village at around 3:00pm yesterday and arrested Nazmul and Rahman.

Rab-12 official Saifuzzaman Faruki said the Daily Star that arrested Nazmul and Rahman are class ten students of a school at Balla and they are actively involved with the banned militant outfit.

The Rab officials are quizzing the arrested JMB cadres in their custody.

Baghdad market blast kills 15

AFP, Baghdad

A bomb hidden in a pigeon carrier box tore through Baghdad's famous pet market Friday, killing 15 people as part of an insurgent campaign targeting shopping areas that has killed more than 150 people in the past week.

The mayhem in the Al-Ghazil market of central Baghdad came as embattled Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki vowed to crack down on insurgents and militiamen who have unleashed a reign of terror in the capital.

Insurgents hid the bomb in a pigeon box which had air holes punched in it and blew it up in the animal market, killing at least 15 people and wounding 35, a security source said.

The explosion ripped through the market, which centuries ago was known for textile spinners selling different kinds of threads and yarns.

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PHOTO: STAR

Occupied by Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Railway Sramik Karmachari Dal, the railway warehouse near Tejgaon Railway Station is being used by the BNP front organisation as its office.

Illegal party, election offices escape demolition drive

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Several thousand offices, clubs and makeshift election camps constructed illegally across the capital under the banner of political parties still remain intact despite allegations that those are breeding grounds for crime.

Law enforcers have knocked down illegal roadside shops and structures during their ongoing eviction drive, but they overlooked such clubs and camps constructed on sidewalks, by the sides of roads and on open spaces not designated for them, sources said.

Clubs and camps under political parties' banners mushroomed across the city in the run-up to the cancelled national elections slated

for January 22. These structures have seriously impeded pedestrians and vehicles.

The clubs are mostly visible at busy business places in the city where rates of extortion and toll collection are high.

Officials at the Estate Department of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) could not provide any specific figure of how many such illegally built clubs existed, but estimated that there are several thousand such structures in the 100 wards of DCC.

City residents complained that the clubs harbour local criminals -- especially criminals having links with BNP and Awami League (AL).

A number of city residents alleged that criminals associated with these clubs extort money from

local businesses and city dwellers. Club leaders also make enormous amounts of money by getting people out of police custody, using their political influence.

Leaders of the clubs are selected in accordance with the wishes of local criminals. The criteria for selection have more to do with the individual's ability to extort money rather than their political activities.

Pursuit of supremacy over the clubs by political leaders has led to many killings. For example, in the past decade, in Karwan Bazar, Tejgaon in the city, around 20 political activists and listed criminals have died in such disputes.

The victims include Rana, the then convener of Jatiya Tarun Party, the youth wing of Jatiya Party (E),

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Yunus leaves for Delhi tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus leaves for Delhi tomorrow to attend a two-day conference in observance of the centenary of Satyagraha movement at the invitation of Sonia Gandhi, president of All India Congress Committee.

The conference will begin on January 29 in New Delhi, where the theme is "Peace, Non-violence and Empowerment: Gandhian Philosophy in the 21st Century."

A hundred years ago, Mahatma Gandhi launched the historic Satyagraha movement in South Africa to fight racism and colonial oppression in that country.

Later, he used the same principles of non-violence and mass civil disobedience in India, which eventually paved the way for the country's independence.

To acknowledge the historic contribution made by Gandhi and the values espoused by him, the Indian National Congress will commemorate the centenary in a befitting manner.

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'Extortionist' beaten up by mob dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged toll collector beaten up by mob at Shyamoli Ring Road in the capital died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday evening, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) said.

In the afternoon, the mob handed over the critically injured victim, Mahabub Alam, 35, to Rab who rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Rab said, adding that the on-duty doctors declared Alam dead at around 6:00pm.

There were injury marks on the legs and hands of the body, hospital sources said.

Contacted at 8:45pm, the duty officer of Mohammadpur Police Station said they came to know about the incident from journalists and were yet to know the details.

Poor eviction victims live under open sky

PINAKI ROY

Several thousand slum dwellers of all ages, who lost their shelter due to the ongoing eviction drive of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Bangladesh Railway, are passing their days amid utter suffering as they are yet to get any help from any quarters.

The evicted slum dwellers in Bhasantek, Mirpur Kalshi, and near Karwan Bazar and Mohakhali railway tracks are passing the cold nights under the temporary shelters made of corrugated tin or polythene sheet.

However, the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) distributed old clothes and rice among the dwellers of Mohammadpur Bashpatti slum that was gutted on Monday night.

In Bhasantek slum, eviction-affected shopkeepers were seen sitting on the street with their groceries or vegetables for sale yesterday. They spent the last night under the open sky after DCC bulldozers knocked down their houses and shops to widen the Mirpur-Bhasantek road.

"I came here from Bhola in the year of the Liberation War. Since then different governments demolished my houses here for five times," said elderly Maleka Begum, who was sitting in front of her demolished house.

Staring blank with her cataract-affected eyes, Maleka said, "Last time I voted for BNP and got nothing but house demolishing and price hiking. This time I will not vote for anybody."

The problem of Minara Begum, Monti Mia, Ratan Mia and many others is more severe. As they took loan from NGOs under micro-credit programme, they have to pay Tk 175 every week although their small businesses are gone.

"I could not go for work leaving

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Russia-India summit ends with pomp but few deals

AFP, new Delhi

Russian President Vladimir Putin wrapped up a two-day summit here yesterday that was marked by much pomp but little substance, as both sides said commercial ties should be much greater.

Putin's visit, together with a raft of Russian ministers and businessmen, was meant to breathe new life into a Cold War-era friendship based on billions of dollars in arms deals.

But the traditional strong point of bilateral relations has shifted in recent years as India looks increasingly to the United States and other Western countries for its huge military needs.

Putin's trip, which culminated Friday in an elaborate Republic Day parade exhibiting India's largely Russian-made military might, brought a 250-million-dollar contract for joint production of jet

engines.

But other deals were few and far between.

On the key area of energy cooperation, India's state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) and Russian state oil giant Rosneft agreed to jointly bid for exploration and refining projects in India, Russia and other countries.

ONGC and Rosneft said in a joint statement they would build on their existing partnership in

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Prayer Timing		
January 27		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		