

# Women fall victim to acid attack as culprits go unpunished

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Although growing awareness about acid violence has started to pay off, many women like Ayesha Begum are still falling victim to acid attack as culprits go unpunished.

Two laws were enacted in 2002 to curb acid violence, but complexities of the procedure of case allow criminals to walk free. At the same time, the absence of forensic laboratory under the police department and the lack of proper mechanism to immediately collect evidence are responsible for weakening cases.

Ayesha Begum, who received acid burns recently, is now fighting for her life at the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH). The attacker is none other than her second husband for whom she deserted her first husband and children.

Rita Rani Das, 40, of South Chhatta, Comilla, who became Ayesha Begum after she eloped with grocer Abdul Kader, 47, now demands his punishment.

She wonders how the person who loved her most could throw acid on her following a dispute over money just after one year of their marriage.

"Is it possible to bring him to book?" Ayesha questioned.

When Ayesha with acid burns over 30 percent of her body was brought to the hospital, doctors feared that she might not survive longer. The attack took place on March 17.

A case has been filed with Kotowali Police Station in Comilla and the Investigation Officer (IO) Amar Chandra Das announced a reward of Tk 2,000 for information leading to the arrest of Abdul Kader.

The IO told The Daily Star that he has already sent the evidence to CID experts in Dhaka for chemical analysis.

"So far, no cases of acid attack have been disposed of within three months. The complainants often withdraw the case after either being persuaded or threatened by influential people. Sometimes, husband and wife ends the case mutually," said Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA).

A total of 349 people were convicted in acid attack cases between the period from 2001 to 2006, whereas a total of 270 people fell victim to acid violence in 2006 alone, according to a report of Acid Survivors Foundation.

According to the report, 11 percent of the convicts were sentenced to death while 42 percent to life imprisonment. The others were

jailed for various terms. But most of them, including all the convicts with death, remained at large.

Experts said chemical analysis of the evidence does not take place immediately in almost every case as the forensic department is under the health ministry and those who collect evidence from the spot work under the home ministry.

In foreign countries, the police department has forensic teams who collect evidence immediately after any accidents, they said, adding that but in our country, an investigation officer who has no forensic training at all goes to the spot and actually can do nothing much.

"The police department must have forensic teams, but we do not have such teams due to lack of government policy in this regard," said an assistant professor of forensic department of DMCH, preferring anonymity.

At the same time, the police department should also have forensic science laboratory, he said. Such a proposal was made a couple of years ago and Tk 20 crore was also sanctioned for this purpose, but the initiative came to a halt due to lack of more budgetary allocation, he added.

The doctors also cannot determine whether the burns are caused by acid or other chemicals, they just

identify them as chemical burns due to lack of facilities for chemical analysis, he said, adding that there is only one centre for chemical analysis in the country.

All such issues hamper proper treatment of acid victims and the absence of specific evidence creates obstacles to judicial process, said Programme Officer of Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) Palash Chowdhury.

The lengthy procedure of case and trial often lead to the destruction of the evidence of acid throwing and finally the case becomes weaker, said Dr Kishore Kumar Das, assistant registrar of Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of DMCH.

Although two laws have been enacted to prevent acid attacks, they failed to deter people from throwing acid because most criminals went unpunished.

The laws passed in 2002 are not implemented properly, the experts said. Moreover, political leaders and the influential people often gave shelter to the culprits, they added.

## lajuddin assures indigenous people of protecting their culture

UNB, Bandarban

President Iajuddin Ahmed paid a daylong visit to the hill district yesterday.

He was accompanied by his wife Anwara Begum, Chief of Army Staff Lt General Moeen U Ahmed, Chittagong GOC Major General Sina Ibn Jamil, the principal staff officer of army and other high military and civil officials.

The president flew in a helicopter to the newly established Nilgiri tourist resort in the panoramic hill range at noon. He went round the Nilgiri Tourist Centre and tribal Mro Empupara area.

Donating Tk 1 lakh for development of Mro tribes and Tk 50,000 for tribal cultural artistes, the president assured all-out assistance of protecting the culture and tradition of the indigenous people.

GOC Major General Sina Ibn Jamil also donated Tk 50,000 for the development of Empupara area.

The president left for the capital about 3:20pm.

## RU showcaused for decision to send 24 rare collections to France

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities were served with a show-cause notice yesterday for its decision to send 24 rare ancient treasures of Bengal from Barendra Research Museum (BRM) to France.

Assistant Judge Abdul Hannan asked RU Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain and BRM Director Mohammad Zakaria to answer within 15 days as to why the RU decision would not be cancelled and declared illegal.

Senior lawyer Muhammad Yahia, filing a suit on Thursday, sought a permanent injunction on the decision.

Yahia's lawyers Ankur Sen and AKM Anwar told the court that unlike other museums, BRM is owned by the dwellers of Rajshahi and its treasurers cannot be transferred without their consent.

They pleaded that sending of most rare and valuable treasures of BRM would hamper research works and there is the possibility of irreparable loss or damage to them.

Following the government directives, RU authorities in February decided to get BRM a global exposure through an international display.

France's famous Guimet Museum in Paris is sponsoring a four-month-long exhibition styled 'Sonar Bangla' from Oct 24 of this year.

Some 120 objects, selected from the National Museum, Mahasthangarh, Paharpur and Mainamati Archaeological Museums and BRM will be displayed at Guimet Museum.

The BRM objects include two 5th century manuscripts and 22 seventh to 12th century-old sculptures including a unique gold-coated bronze statue of Manjusri, said BRM officials.



PHOTO: STAR

Maj Gen (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim speaks at a lecture on 'Administration, good governance and democracy' at Bangla Academy seminar room in the city yesterday. Bangla Academy organised the lecture.

## Sylhet mayor sent to Comilla jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran has been shifted to Comilla Central Jail from Sylhet Central Jail on Sunday night amid tight security.

He was arrested from his residence in the city's Chhararpar area early Friday after the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Sylhet issued a warrant on Thursday for arrest of the SCC mayor in the case filed for alleged irregularities in leasing out a kitchen market.

## Training on good governance in rural dev begins

A training programme on good governance in rural development began at Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Comilla yesterday with the participation of officials from Commonwealth countries in Asia.

The course aims at capacity building and experience sharing on good governance to strengthen rural development and poverty alleviation in the Asian countries.

BARD has been implementing the course with the financial support of Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) London, UK.

A total of 17 participants from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Malaysia and Bangladesh have been participating in the two week programme. This is the sixth in the series of COMSEC funded courses organised by BARC since 1993.

Director General of BARD Md Qamrul Islam presided the inaugural session while M Jashim Uddin, adviser, Asia Region, COMSEC, also spoke.

The speakers underscored the need for good governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Ensuring easy access to development supports and services through improved service delivery and their real participation in development programmes would bring about positive changes in overall socio economic scenario of the region, they added.

## 'Politicians need training on governance'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians need to be trained in the art of the governance if we want to establish good governance in the country, said Maj Gen (retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik at a lecture yesterday.

Muhammad Ibrahim was delivering the lecture on 'Administration, Good Governance and Democracy' organised by Bangla Academy at its seminar room in the city.

"Such training is particularly necessary for the persons who turned into politicians overnight", he observed.

"Politicians run the government and lead the countrymen, so their training would act as training of trainers (ToT)", he said.

Regarding the deplorable condition of Bangladesh state, he said public representatives are to be made accountable for the

malpractice.

"The inability to deliver proper services to the country may be excused, but their carelessness and negligence to duties can never be pardoned", he said.

Acting Director General of Bangla Academy Moinul Hossain stressed decentralisation to ensure a functioning democracy in the country.

He also spoke of transparency and accountability in administration, rule of law, mutual respect and patience, as they are core elements of good governance.

Chair of the programme Poet Muhammad Nurul Huda said the urge to serve the people is the spirit of democracy and good governance. "Unless the spirit is imparted to the people, good governance can not be established in the country", he noted.



## Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 37.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 19.6 degree Celsius at Sylhet.

**The sun sets in the capital at 6.18pm today and rises at 5:41am tomorrow.**

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.7	25.8	54	44
Chittagong	31.6	25.5	76	80
Rajshahi	37.0	26.0	41	32
Khulna	35.5	25.1	52	48
Barisal	34.0	24.3	69	63
Sylhet	28.9	19.6	88	72
Cox's Bazar	32.0	24.5	67	75

TERRESTRIAL FACILITIES

## ETV has no contract with BTV, says Mainul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the Ekushey Television (ETV), a private TV channel, has no contract with the state-owned Bangladesh Television (BTV) with regard to sharing the latter's terrestrial facilities.

"The ETV has obtained the High Court order regarding the use of terrestrial facilities by suppressing this fact. We will notify the court of it," he told reporters at his office.

The adviser also said the ETV even has no contract with the information ministry for the use of terrestrial facilities of the BTV.

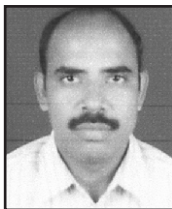
The information adviser's reaction came as the ETV authorities are claiming that they have a contract with the BTV for the use of its terrestrial facilities and that the High Court issued an order in favour of the ETV in this regard.

ETV, the country's first private TV channel with terrestrial facilities, went on air in April 1999 during the tenure of Awami League government.

But it was shut down following a Supreme Court verdict on August 29, 2002 that declared the ETV licence illegal by upholding a High Court verdict.

Later, the ETV, under its new ownership, made an attempt to obtain fresh licence from the authorities concerned, but to no avail. The ETV management then went to the higher court, won the legal battle and got the frequency for satellite transmission.

## Appeal for help



Mehedi Hasan, 39, an affectionate father of two children and a teacher of Mirpur Cadet Coaching, has been suffering from kidney disease and hepatitis C virus.

He is now undergoing treatment under the supervision of Dr Shahidul Islam Selim, associate professor of the nephrology department of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College.

He needs a kidney transplant and immediate recovery from hepatitis, requiring treatment which involves Tk 10 lakh. But his family is not able to bear the cost.

In light of the dire situation, his family has made a fervent appeal to the well-off people of the society to come forward extending financial help to save his life.

Financial assistance can be deposited with savings account no 1220000517-6, First Security Bank, Mirpur Branch, Dhaka.

He can also be reached over the phone at 01711639045 and 01711168172.

## Shahajada Malek Khan passes away

Shahajada Abdul Malek Khan, former state minister for industries in the cabinet of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, passed away at Lab Aid Hospital due to old age complications in the early hours of yesterday (Monday) at the age of 83, says a press release.

Shahajada, also a freedom fighter, hailed from Kaunia under Barisal. He was elected member of parliament twice.

He left behind his three sons and one daughter.

His body was flown to Kaunia yesterday by helicopter for the people to pay their last respects.

He will be buried at Muktiyoddha graveyard at Mirpur in the city after Asr prayers today (Tuesday).

Tofail Ahmed



Tofail Ahmed, assistant foreman instructor of pattern shop, foundry, welding and sheet metal of DAERS office of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, passed away at Birdem Hospital in the city early hours of yesterday at the age of 55, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son and three daughters.

## Death anniversary



Today is the 16th death anniversary of Md Shamsud Doha, an eminent singer and music director, says a press release.

On this occasion, a Quranikhani and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 15/5, Tajmahal Road in the city after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of the departed soul.



PHOTO: STAR

Giasuddin Al Mamun, left, a close friend and business partner of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, and former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed being taken to court yesterday.

# BRF mobile info service for farmers soon

## Rice Data Bank launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rice Foundation (BRF) is going to start a mobile information service soon to provide updated knowledge to farmers in rural areas.

In association with agriculture ministry, the service will be launched on an experimental basis to protect the farmers from the grip of brokers.

This was stated by BRF Chairman M Syeduzzaman while launching the Rice Data Bank at the Agriculture Information Services (AIS) Centre at Farmgate in the city yesterday.

He said by using the network of Grameen Telecom, BRF would provide various information to farmers including price of agricultural products, fertilisers and seeds.

Under a pilot project, the service will start initially in Jessore, Bogra, Narsingdi and Comilla for a period of two years, he added.

About the data bank, Syeduzzaman said information will be available on global rice data, rice trade and rice mills in Bangladesh, cost benefit analysis of rice production, emerging

technologies for rice in the country including reports and publications. Its website is: www.ricefoundation-bd.org.

"In the 60s and 70s, Bangladesh achieved green revolution and its benefit was seen till 80s. In the middle of 90s we came to near self-sufficiency. But now again we are facing shortage in rice production as land and man ratio has decreased due to increased population, infrastructure development and natural disaster," he added.

Syeduzzaman said BRF is also working on promoting production of quality rice by conducting research and awarding prizes to innovative farmers.

This year the foundation rewarded one Abdul Basith (Salim) for his endeavor in producing aromatic and fine rice Chinigura and Kataribhog in Sylhet which are normally cultivated in Dinajpur.

Using natural fertiliser, Salim yielded over one hundred kilograms of rice per bigha of land than what was harvested in Dinajpur.

BRF Chairman handed him cash, certificate and medal.

"The farmers sometimes get wrong information that cause an adverse effect in production. So they should be provided with right information," said Salim on receiving the award.

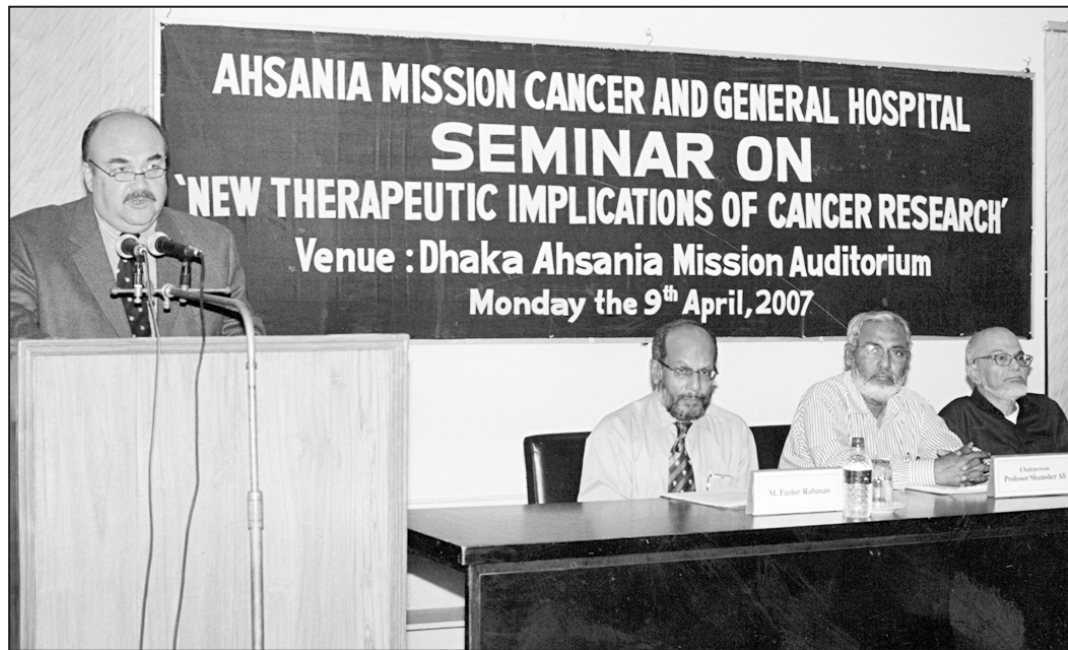
AIS Director Dr Shahidul Islam, BRF Executive Director Mazharul Huq, Information Officer Jahangir Alam, Agriculture expert Rezaul Huq, Planning Officer of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) Golam Hossain and former vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Agriculture University Shah Mohammad were present on the occasion.

## College of Textile Tech classes begin Apr 17

Classes of the first phase of BSC in Textile Technology under 2006-07 sessions at the College of Textile Technology will begin on April 17, says a press release.

Their orientation session will be held at 10:00am on April 16.

The students have been asked to report on time.



Prof Mehmet Ozturk speaks at a seminar on 'New therapeutic implications of cancer research' organised by Dhaka Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital in the city yesterday.

## 'Possibility of cancer medicines in hilly flora bright'

A professor at a seminar said possibility of finding cancer medicines in the flora of the hilly regions of Bangladesh is very bright, says a press release.

Medicines for treatment of various kinds of cancers may be extracted from trees, plants and herbs of these areas, he said, adding, all we need to do is to undertake extensive research in this field.

Professor Mehmet Ozturk, chairman, Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics of the Bilkent University of Turkey made the observations in a research seminar titled "New Therapeutic Implications of Cancer Research" organised by Dhaka Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital (AMCH) at the Mission Bhaban in the city yesterday.

The Bilkent University is interested to work with Dhaka Ahsania Mission to carry out research activities on the issue in Bangladesh, the professor said.

Presided over by Professor Dr Shamsheer Ali, president, Bangladesh Science Academy, the seminar was addressed among others by M Fazlur Rahman, managing director of AMCH and Ahmed Shamsul Islam, professor (retd), Department of Botany, Dhaka University.

National Professor Dr Nurul Islam and a number of oncologists, doctors, pharmacists and researchers were also present on the occasion.

DHAKA TODAY

### Award giving ceremony

Acid Survivors Foundation will award the interns who successfully completed training under three of its projects and the acid survivors who are doing well at their respective educational institutions. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

### Discussion

A discussion will be held to mark the 82nd birth anniversary of Rokonuzzaman Khan Dada Bhai. Venue: Kochi Kacha Bhaban. Time: 4:30pm.

### Exhibition

The inaugural of a handicrafts exhibition with the works of Afroza Akhtar Rosy will be held. Venue: Desh Gallery. Time: 4:30pm. The exhibition will continue till April 20 from 9:00am to 7:00pm.

### Conference

The plenary session of the 4th National Conference of Bangladesh Society of Allergy and Immunology will be held. Venue: Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons

auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

### Seminar

Homeopathic Foundation Bangladesh organises a seminar titled 'Homeopathy in the health service of Bangladesh' to mark the 252nd birth anniversary of Dr Samuel Hahnemann. Venue: Government Homeopathic (Degree) College. Time: 2:30pm.

### Baishakhi Mela

The inaugural ceremony of a five-day Baishakhi Fair organised by Jatiya Mahila Sangstha will be held. Venue: Sangstha complex, Baily Road. Time: 10:30am.

### Seminar

University of Development Alternative (UODA) organises a seminar on 'Vegetable marketing system in Dhaka City'. Venue: UODA campus, Dhanmondi. Time: 12:00noon.

### Roundtable

Shushashoner Jonno Nagarik (Shujan) organises a roundtable on 'Development, self rule and local government'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am.