

# Cases against Mayor Sarwar to be re-investigated

Two murder cases revived by complainants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal Metropolitan Police (BMP) will soon start reinvestigation of some cases including four for murder filed earlier against City Corporation Mayor Majibor Rahman Sarwar.

Sarwar, arrested in Dhaka on May 29, is now in jail.

Sarwar is the prime accused in four murder cases and accused in two other murder cases.

Twenty-nine cases were filed against Sarwar in last 29 years. The four murder cases were filed after 1979.

Some of the cases including the six for murder are unresolved as complainants did not pursue those because allegedly of threat or political pressure and non-appearance of witnesses. Some of the cases were dismissed as complainants became disinterested to continue trial. Other cases were for intimidation and threat terrorism, extortion, toll collection and repression, police sources said.

The home ministry has asked for all papers regarding sensational cases against Sarwar, according to BMP Commissioner Khan Sayed Hasan.

The cases would be reinvestigated if complainants want to revive those or if it is found that those were dismissed due to faulty investigation or political pressure, the BMP Commissioner said.

Police have started fresh investigation into the murder of Tera Shajahan following filing of a

new case by victim's wife Renu Begum. Sarwar is the main accused in the case filed on June 5.

Sub Inspector Mir Kashem of Barisal Kotwali police station said



MAJIBOR RAHMAN SARWAR

in primary investigation he found Sarwar's involvement in the murder.

Earlier, on September 16, 2003, another case was filed in soon after Tara Shajahan's murder in which Sarwar was not named in the list of accused. The case was dismissed terming it a politically motivated one, police sources said.

Police also said they are reviving another case against Sarwar for attempted murder of one Milton following a fresh complaint by his wife Mukta Begum with Barisal Judge court on Thursday. Tendons of Milton's legs were cut by some criminals during the fag end of Awami League rule. When the four-party alliance came to

power, the case was dismissed allegedly due to political pressure, sources said.

Majibor Rahman Sarwar is the prime accused in the murder of Kalam Nagashi of Barisal Textile Mills, in 1979. Kalam was hacked to death near Kalibari in Barisal city in broad daylight allegedly by Sarwar and his cadres.

Kalam Nagashi was a workers' leader at the mill and Sarwar was a worker there.

Kalam's mother Monesa Begum filed a murder case on March 29, 1979 with the Kotwali police station naming Sarwar as the prime accused.

She later withdrew the case due to alleged threat.

"I have two sons. I withdrew the case to save my other son Hiader Ali Kutty", Kalam's mother Monesa Begum told newsmen last week after Sarwar's arrest.

In February 1990, Barisal Textile Mills worker Aziz was killed. Sarwar was the prime accused in the murder case.

Another worker of the mill Abdus Salam was killed on April 12, 1990 on the compound. Sarwar is also the prime accused in the case.

The three murder cases were filed with Barisal Kotwali police station.

Sarwar's family came to Barisal town from Hizla after their house and lands were devoured Meghna river in 1950.

Sawar's father Saidur Rahman served the British army in undivided India. After partition of the

subcontinent, Saidur settled in Kaunia Sadhur Battola on the outskirts of the then Barisal town by purchasing lands abandoned by a Hindu family.

Starwar started life as a worker at Barisal Textile Mills under BTMC.

There he became involved in workers' politics and became known as a musclem.

After the murder of Kalam Nagashi in 1979, Sarwar was arrested from the Dhaka city residence of the then minister Abdur Rahman Biswas during Ziaur Rahman's rule. Biswas had lost his ministerial post for sheltering alleged killer Sarwar.

After Sarwar's release on bail, the case against him was dismissed as the complainants allegedly did not want to continue the trial.

Sarwar was also accused in cases for murder of Chhatra League leader Faruk and Kamal alias police Kamal during the four-party alliance government.

His party men alleged that Sarwar could not tolerate rivals in the party. Any body disobeying him was assaulted or tortured. Party man Habil, Darpon and Kayum Hossain Milton are now physically handicapped after torture by Sarwar's cadres, they said. Some party men including Dolon and Mahmud were forced to leave Barisal city during four-party alliance government.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Rains brought misery for people but smiles on faces of sellers of umbrella and raincoat. Rush of buyers at a shop at Reazuddin Bazar in Chittagong yesterday.

## ASSAULT OF CID MEN SI closed in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Sub Inspector Sarwar Hossain of Kalaroa police station who assaulted and threatened two inspectors at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) office on Saturday was closed to Satkhira police lines yesterday.

On Saturday, at about noon, SI Sarwar burst into the CID office and assaulted Inspector Lutfur Rahman and CID Inspector Hari Pada Biswas when they were probing an allegation of bribery against him.

Sarwar also snatched away recorded statements given by the complainants, CID office sources said.

After the incident, the two inspectors lodged two separate general dairies (GDs) with Sadar police station accusing Sarwar for assaulting and threatening them. They also informed higher authorities about the incident.

After the incident, Satkhira Police Superintendent Mirza Abdullal Baki asked ASP Zakir Hossain Khan to probe into the matter.

Sarwar was closed after the inquiry report was submitted, police sources said.

The SP said action will be taken if investigation proves Sarwar guilty.

Meanwhile, MA Hakim of Jhhikra village in Kalaroa, who was one of complainants present at the CID office during probe of the allegation against Sarwar alleged at a press conference at Satkhira Reporters Club yesterday that Sarwar threatened him with dire consequences for giving statement against him.

## BNP leader jailed for extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Kamalganj Upazila BNP general secretary and chairman of Kamalganj Poursabha Hasin Afroze Chowdhury has been sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for extortion.

First class magistrate Abdul Wadud Chowdhury of the Speedy Tribunal Court here delivered the verdict yesterday.

The convict was also fined Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer six months RI more.

Prosecution story, in brief, is that Hasin Afroze extorted money from a party promising to settle a depute in Kamalganj.

Joint forces arrested him on April 29.

It is the first ever court verdict against a political leader here.

## Body recovered from hotel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police yesterday recovered body of an unidentified person from a residential hotel here, police sources said.

Police officials quoting the hotel manager said two young men identifying them as Md Mokbul Rahman, 23, son of Mofizul Haque and Kamol Chandra Roy, 21, son of Rabindra Chandra Roy of Tunirhat village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila rented a room of Hotel Al-Rashid on June 7.

Police officials suspected that one of them might have poisoned and killed the other one at night and fled away from the hotel without informing any hotel employee.

# The lure of Madhabkunda can be fatal for tourists

No step yet for safety at the waterfall

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

Madhabkunda waterfall in Baralekha in Moulvibazar often becomes a death trap for tourists. The picturesque hills and the country's biggest natural waterfall attract tourists but they go there unaware of dangers mainly due to lack of authorities' attention to their safety and security.

Hardly any tourist season passes without an incident of

drowning in the deep ditch of the waterfall as there is no cautionary warning about the danger. Locals and forest officials said at least 20 people drowned in the ditch over the years, most of them children and youths.

They said the authorities were alerted about dangers before every tourist season but it always went unheeded. Tourist season begins there with the onset of rains as the waterfall becomes more lively, they said.

Forest Department officials said, tourist like to take bath and swim in the water down the hills. They often go to the deep danger area of the ditch just to be trapped. Tourists also climb the 200 feet hill risking death from fall.

The latest incident took place on May 25 when Anisur Rahman, a fourth year BBA student of South East University drowned in the ditch of the waterfalls. Anisur went there with his 12 classmates. His body was recovered next day.

Earlier, two students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet slipped from the 200 feet hill and died. Seven tourists including five students drowned in the ditch since 2004, forest officials and locals said. They include school student Tahmina Harun Chaudhury of Zakiganj; Mohammed Ali Minu, an employee of British American Tobacco Company; Farzana Islam Bahmi, a student of Sylhet Osmani Medical College; Nazrul Islam, a student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET); Shahidur Rahman Shahed, a student of Khulna University.

Talking to this correspondent, young tourists Abu Nayeem, Saiful Islam and Nazmul Shams said the main problem for them was absence of guide at Madhabkunda. Marking danger areas and construction of security wall could also serve as warnings for tourists.

A lessee looks after the waterfall area. Local people said Madhabkunda should be handed over to the tourist or forest department for maintenance and security.

Sub Divisional Forest Officer Saidul Islam in Moulvibazar readily said work on marking danger zones, construction of security wall and barbed wire fence will be started soon. Appointment of a guide is also under consideration, he said without giving any timeframe.



PHOTO: STAR

Enchanting Madhabkunda waterfall in Moulvibazar.

# Mobile use rampant in Banderban despite ban

JASIM MAJUMDER, back from Banderban

Brisk cell phone business is going on in Banderban district though its use is banned in the three hill districts for security reasons.

The ban is however strictly enforced in Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts.

The caretaker government imposed a ban on mobile phone use and business in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) on February 4. But owners of cell phone centers are doing brisk business by using high powered antenna in Bbandaraban.

Most of the officials, business-

man and journalist in Banderban are using cell phone. The service providers and even some users are also using antenna. This correspondent during a recent visit to the four upazilas in Banderban found several hundred cell phone service providers in upazila headquarters and even in villages markets.

Owner of a cell phone centre at Banderban market said, "We use mobile phone secretly by managing the administration officials".

Another mobile phone service provider at DC Office Road at Banderban market said most of his consumers are officials and law

enforcers.

An engineer at Banderban BTB office seeking anonymity said, he heard that a good number of cell phone centers are operating in different upazilas of the district defying the ban.

"I have no right to take action against illegal traders", he said.

When contacted over telephone Additional District Magistrate Partho Pratim refuted the allegation that officials were allowing cell phone operators to run their business. He said he will investigate the matter and take necessary action.

## Two outlaws killed by rivals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two cadres of Janajuddho faction of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) were killed at Azampur village in Mirpur upazila Saturday night, police said.

Janajuddho cadres Miraz Uddin and Abdul Quddus, both of Shrirampur village in the aforesaid upazila, were shot dead by their rival Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) cadres at a field. They dead were also listed criminals, police said.

Earlier, the two were picked up from a shop at gunpoint at about 10.30:pm on Saturday, local people said.

After the killing, Shimul Biswas identifying himself the general secretary of GMF claimed responsibility for the killing to local journalists over telephone.

As a reason of the murder, Shimul said the Janajuddho cadres killed Awami League (AL) activist Korban Ali on May 21 for not paying toll to them. They were involved in various crimes including rape and abduction in the area, Shimul said. He also faxed a letter to local daily newspapers claiming responsibility of the murder.

Local people found the bodies yesterday morning and informed the matter to police. Police sent those to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy after recovery.

# Violence against woman on rise in Kushtia

19 killed in May against 32 in previous 4 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 19 women were killed in Kushtia district last month due to alleged domestic violence. Most of the victims were housewives and demand for dowry was the main cause.

Of them, eight were allegedly tortured to death by their husbands or their family members and the rest 11 committed suicide, according to records with police, NGOs and women's rights activists.

The death toll from violence against woman in the district was 14 in the previous month. Six of them were killed allegedly by husbands or their families and the rest were incidents of suicide, the records showed.

Torture by husbands or their families forced the victims to commit suicide, police sources said.

Of the murders last month, five were in Kushtia Sadar upazila, two in Khoksa, three in Kumarkhali, five in Bheramara and four in Daulatpur upazila.

Talking to this correspondent,

police at the five police stations in the district admitted that death of women from violence increased alarmingly in the district.

As per records, 32 women were killed in previous four months in the district. This was the highest number of death of women in the 10 districts in Khulna division.

Violence against women and deaths are increasing, said a doctor at Kushtia General Hospital where autopsy of victims are done.

In most cases, husbands were responsible for violence leading to death of housewives or incidents of suicide, an official of Mollah Foundation, a research organisation in Khoksa upazila, told this correspondent.

Other family members were also found involved in physically or mentally torturing housewives, he claimed. Demand for dowry was the main reason for torture, he said.

In a number of cases, poverty was behind family feuds leading to torture by husbands, according

to findings by Mollah Foundation.

The actual number of deaths from violence would be far more as many incidents were not reported to police deliberately by the victim's relatives and cases were not filed to avoid hassle.

In such cases, police have no alternative to recording unnatural deaths, said a police official in the district.

NGOs working on violence against women said in many cases, victim's families did not lodge case fearing retaliation by the killers and apprehending harassment by police.

"Poor families of victims also want to avoid trouble and spending money on legal battle," said Dewan Aktheruzzaman, executive director of FAIR, an NGO in Kushtia.

There were instances where victim's family even declined to take help when we wanted to extend legal support, Aktheruzzaman said.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Traders and garden owners with boatloads of jackfruit at a market in Rangamati town. A good yield of the fruit this year did not bring smiles for farmers as the price is lower.