

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON THE RISE IN KUSHTIA

19 women take life, 65 attempt suicide last month

AMANUR AMAN, *From Kushtia*

Alleged suicide by women due to domestic violence is increasing in Kushtia.

According to records with police and Kushtia General Hospital, at least 19 women took their life and 65 attempted to commit suicide in six upazilas in the district last month.

Eleven of the 19 victims died during treatment at the hospital.

The number of suicide incidents would be more as many were not reported to police while a good number of women attempting suicide were treated at different upazila clinics, which went unrecorded, police sources

said.

Most of the victims were housewives, allegedly tortured by their husbands or their family members for dowry or family feuds, said different NGOs monitoring violence against woman.

Of the 19 suicide incidents, 5 were in Kushtia Sadar upazila, 2 in Khoksa, 3 in Kumarkhali, 5 in Bheramara and 4 were in Daulatpur upazila.

Talking to this correspondent, police officials in the six police stations in the district admitted that suicide and murder of women due to violence increased in the district.

As per police records, 32 women committed suicide in

previous four months (January 1 to April 30) in the district. This was the highest number of unnatural death of women among the 10 districts in Khulna division.

In most of the incidents, husbands were responsible for violence leading to suicide, said an official of Mollah Foundation, a local research organisation.

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, he said.

Moin Uddin, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kushtia Sadar police station, said the actual number of death of women from violence would be far more as many inci-

dents were not reported to police by the victim's relatives and cases were not filed to avoid alleged hassle.

In such cases, police have no alternative to recording unnatural deaths, he said.

Some NGO officials said in many cases, victims' families did not lodge case fearing retaliation by the killers and apprehending harassment by police.

"Poor families of victims want to avoid trouble and spending money in legal fight," said an NGO official.

There were instances where victims' families even declined to accept legal aid offered by NGOs, he said.

Release of Hasina demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Satkhira District Awami League (AL) and Satkhira District Bar Association, in two separate statements issued yesterday, have demanded immediate and unconditional release of former prime minister and Awami League (AL) president Sheikh Hasina.

Expressing grave concern over the arrest, the AL leaders said the government decision has triggered people's protests in many places.

Signatories to the AL statement are Satkhira district AL president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, vice presidents Dr AFM Ruhul Haque, Monsur Ahmed, Sheikh Abu Nasim and Mahidul Haque, general secretary Nazrul Islam, joint general secretaries A Ahmed and Syed Firoz Kamal, organising secretary Firoz Ahmed and office secretary Azibar Rahman.

Community policing begins in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

Community policing has been launched here aiming at curbing criminal activities and improving law and order situation in the district.

Pabna police launched the programme at a function held at the Bonomali Auditorium here yesterday. A seminar was held to mark the occasion.

Pabna Superintendent of Police (SP) AFM Masum Rabbani chaired the launching ceremony while Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police of Rajshahi region AKM Shahidul Haque was present as chief guest. Pabna Deputy Commissioner (DC) Md Golam Moula was present as special guest.

While addressing, the DIG hoped that community policing would bring back people's trust on police force.

Among others, Advocate Md Mohiuddin, Dr Sarwer Jahan Fayez and Nadira Akter addressed.

A reformer policeman

13 Kushtia drug traders surrender, begin new life: Mirpur pourasabha declared drug-free zone

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

It was a simple incident but could be an eye opener for many in eliminating drug trade and use.

Thirteen drug traders surrendered to police yesterday, saying 'no' to the illegal and heinous work.

The incident took place at Mirpur police station in Kushtia. All it happened at the initiative of the officer-in-charge who launched a motivation drive after arrested drug peddlers obtained bail from court and returned to their old profession.

Mirpur, a bordering upazila, is known for long as a vital area for drug smuggling and trading in southwestern region, Poradah being the main conduit.

Drugs are being smuggled from across the border and those are supplied from Poradah to different areas of Kushtia, Meherpur and Chuadanga.

A number of syndicates are involved in drug smuggling and trading.

After joining Mirpur police station as Officer-in-Charge (OC) in March, SM Kamruzzaman, launched a drive against the crime and arrested a number of drug traders and smugglers within short time.

But all obtained bail from and started resumed the illegal trade.

"Then I thought about alternatives and launched a campaign to motivate drug smugglers and traders", Kamruzzaman said talking to this correspondent.

He formed 'village committee' in all the 196 villages in Murpur upazila involving youths to launch a campaign and with their help made a list of alleged drug traffickers in last two months.

He also urged people of all

walks of life including public representatives to extend a helping help in this regard, the OC said.

"Since then I am going to them (drug traders) and motivating them to leave the profession and take to something else to lead a hassle-free happy life," the OC said.

Many of them responded and sought help to begin a new life.

Thirteen drug traders came to the police station and expressed their will to give up drug peddling. Poradah Union Parishad member Sarmin Akther Nasrin was the mediator.

The 13 are Anis Mridha, Babul, Delwar Rahman, Sahar Ali, Ohidul Islam, Sahidul Islam and Hasem Ali of North Katdah village; Abdul Hannan and Amirul Islam of

Chitholia; Maga and Nadder Seikh of Sawrupdah; Baser Ali of Gobindpur; and Zohurul of Katchuadah village. All are from Mirpur upazila.

In presence of local journalists and local elite, they promised not trade on drug any more. They told journalists that they will look for good work to lead an honest life.

The OC told them he will help them in their pursuit of a decent life. They are allowed to go as none faced any case.

Meanwhile, Mirpur municipality area has been declared a drug-free zone.

OC Kamruzzaman, his attempt bore fruit due to cooperation of local people including public representatives.



PHOTO: STAR

The 13 drug peddlers at Mirpur police station after they bade goodbye to the illegal profession.

Khulna JP leader jailed for extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Khulna city Jatiya Party leader Anwar Hossain Shona was given two and a half years' rigorous imprisonment in an extortion case.

Metropolitan Magistrate Atiqul Haque of Speedy Trial Tribunal also fined him Tk 10,000, in default to serve more three months' prison term.

His close associate Golam Rasul also got the same punishment given by the same court in the same case.

Autorickshaw driven Shamim Molla of Khulna city lodged a case with Khulna Sadar police station on June 13 against them for realising tolls from baby autorickshaw drivers.

Joint forces arrested them on June 14 from their residences and recovered a revolver from the possession of the JP leader.

The chargesheet of extortion case was submitted to court on June 21 by investigation officer Bikash Chandra Shil.

The court recorded statements of 12 prosecution witnesses during the trial.

Both the accused were at the dock when the verdict was delivered.

Tk 13 lakh for repair of Kuakata dam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Water Development Board, as an emergency step, has decided to allot Tk 13 lakh for repair of damaged portions of Kuakata flood control embankment.

WDB sources here said, about half a kilometre of the flood control embankment at Khajura, four kilometres west of Kuakata sea beach, was damaged by recent tidal surges. Part of it was washed away.

Hamidu Rahman, joint chief of planning commission, visited the damaged dam on Sunday. Hamidur told WDB higher authorities about the situation over phone from the spot and they allotted the money to repair the dam, the sources said.

"Repair work has been started and sand bags are being dumped at the damaged part to avoid further damage", WDB Executive Engineer Jaheer Uddin Ahmed told this correspondent yesterday.

The WDB had constructed 981 kilometre embankments and set the sluice gates to protect the coastal areas from check tidal surge.

'FORCING' HINDU GIRL TO CHANGE RELIGION, MARRY

Four lawyers among seven chargesheeted in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Seven people including four lawyers were chargesheeted yesterday for their involvement in allegedly abducting a minor Hindu girl, forcing her to change her religion and marry a man.

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Sub-inspector (SI) Rafiqul Islam of Satkhira Sadar police station submitted the charge sheet to a magistrate court at Satkhira after four months' investigation.

The investigators said the accused in collaboration with each other abducted Usha Rani and arranged her marriage with Haidar

Ali after forcibly converting her to Islam. They were charged under Article 7/9(1)/30 of Women and Children Repression Preventive Act, 2000.

The chargesheeted accused are Haidar Ali, Zirarul Islam, and Emam Hossain of Babulia village in Sadar upazila; and lawyers Azharul Islam, Reja Uddowla Bachchu, Ashrafal Alam Siddique Mona and Sheikh Sirajul Islam.

Prime accused Haidar Ali is in jail while Zirarul Islam and Emam Hossain are absconding, police said.

The four lawyers obtained anticipatory bail from High Court.

The victim is in safe custody in

Bagerhat, court sources said.

The sources said, Haidar Ali, Ziurul and Emam abducted Usha Rani Das, 15, daughter of Hira Lal Das of Babulia village in Satkhira Sadar upazila, on March 13.

They took her to Satkhira and forcibly converted her to Islam through an affidavit by showing her 18-year-old.

Later the accused managed a marriage declaration by showing her 18 through another affidavit. The lawyers helped Haidar, it was alleged.

Her mother Laxmi Rani Das filed a case with Sadar police station accusing the seven people including four lawyers.

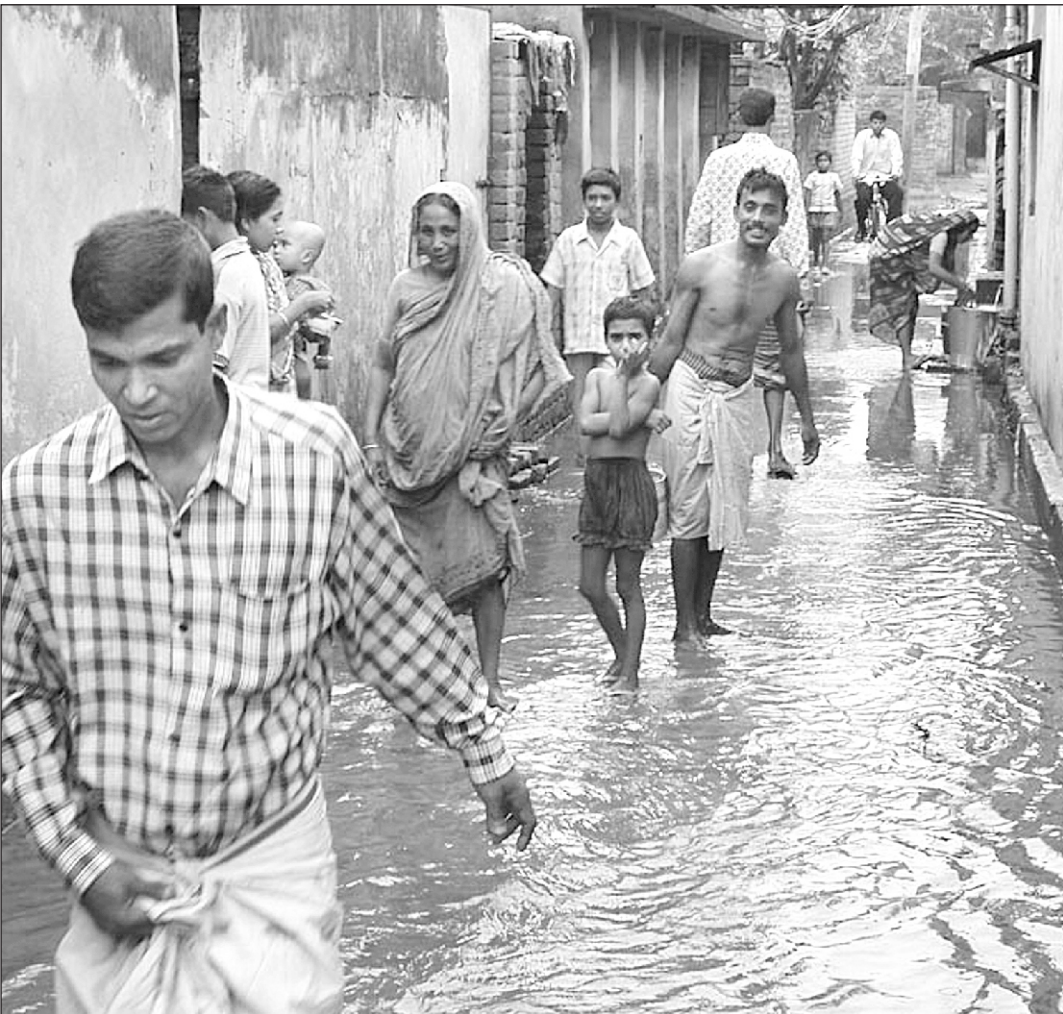


PHOTO: STAR

Two days' rain swamped many streets and low-lying areas of Rajshahi city. The photo was taken from Dingadoba where drains are clogged like many other areas due to encroachment and unplanned construction.

'Enact law to ensure rights of Harijans'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Speakers at a rally held at Bishnupur Christian Mission School in Kaliganj upazila yesterday urged the government to enact law to ensure basic rights of the Harijan community.

Caritas, a major NGO, organised the rally with Sukumar Das in the chair. Bishnupur Union Parishad (UP) chairman Mizanur Rahman was present as chief guest.

Speakers said the Harijans are being deprived of Constitutional recognition. As a result, they are being subjected to humiliation. They demanded an end to social injustice.

They demanded a separate ministry for them and allocation of fund in the national budget for their overall development for ensuring equal rights.

Their other demands included right to vulnerable group feeding (VGF) card, allotment of government khas land and right to birth registration.

Earlier, over 200 members of the low caste Hindu community brought out a procession in Bishnupur.

5X3

3X2

3X2

1.5X2

9X2

3.5X2