

Only one escaped

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Dhaka. She said she was not aware that her husband has killed so many women.

Rasu, initially arrested for theft, confessed to killing 11 women, aged between 15 and 35, in two years in Faridganj, Chandpur, in his attempt to reach the number 101, police said Sunday. He began confessing the murders Saturday in police custody.

He was produced before a court Sunday where he recorded a three-hour-long confessional statement under section 164 of the CrPC.

Faridganj police said Rasu was first arrested at Niraspura in Tongi on September 3 in connection with stealing a fan from a mosque in Faridganj. He was placed on remand on October 8 in a case filed in connection with the killing of a teen-age girl.

Officer-in-Charge of Faridganj Police Station Ranjit Chandra Palit said, "Police had been investigating the recent murder of a woman in Chandpur after being tipped off by a caller on cellphone. When police tried to trace the caller the phone number was found inactive. It was later reactivated and police arrested the user and found out that the user had bought the SIM [subscriber identification module of mobile phones] from Rasu."

Rasu eventually confessed to using the phone for contacting women, take them on outings in Chandpur, torturing and killing them, and dumping the bodies in water, said Palit.

Fifteen-years-ago Rasu was living in Tongi, Dhaka, where he met Sharmin of a rich family. He claimed before police that he proposed to her several times but was rejected. He also said he was severely beaten by the goons of her family members, which made him "angry towards women". He claimed that he thought about living his life at Shahjalal's shrine in Sylhet "like Nizam Uddin Awlia" but first he had to kill 101 women.

Rasu's first wife was Monu of Luria in Faridganj. He was married to her for 11 years. The marriage eventually came to an end and he later married Monu's younger sister Rina. Rasu said his first victim was his brother-in-law Mannan's wife Shahida, whom he killed in early 2007.

He reportedly lured her to Bhatialganj in Faridganj, raped her, and strangled her.

Rasu told police he left the body on the Dakatia river.

He told police that he raped the women he "liked" before killing them. Others were strangled straightaway.

His last victim, a woman from Paltaluk in Faridganj, was killed with the help of his nephew Zahurul, he told police. Zahurul has been arrested.

Rasu in his confession also claimed that a number of influential people had helped him escape law enforcers. He did not mention their names saying that his family might face problems if he did.

Faridganj OC Palit said Rasu was remarkably calm and poised during his confession and questioning. "He did not seem to be mentally ill at all," said the police officer.

Rasu was oddly at ease describing the murders before media.

"I hope not to be killed in any 'crossfire', I would rather be punished according to the law," he said during a police press briefing.

Nine of the cases filed in connection with the murders had stalled and the authorities said they are opening up investigation into those cases.

Rajuk drive

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going drive to contain traffic jam.

Asked, he said, "We are yet to receive the copies of the stay orders to determine exactly how many orders have been issued from the HC. When our officials reach a certain spot the building owner shows us his copy of the order while we have none to verify."

According to the DMP list, the government owns many of the listed buildings while others belong to banks, hospitals, business centres and educational institutions.

Sources said the DMP made a list of 344 buildings located on busy thoroughfares and of them, 198 abuse car parks while the rest have no spaces for parking.

Rokon-Ud-Dowla said apart from those 198 buildings, they have been conducting separate drives against the buildings, which did not leave any space for parking.

Rajuk officer Aminur Rahman authorised for Dhammondi zone said whenever they find such buildings in the area they would go for action. They have forced 150 building owners to make space for car park.

Nobel Prizes plagued by rumours of leaks

AFP, Oslo

The names of the Nobel laureates often elicit surprise when they are revealed, but last-minute predictions that hit the bull's-eye have sparked suspicions of leaks by the institutes that hand out the awards.

Last week, US President Barack Obama clinched the prestigious Peace Prize and German writer Herta Mueller won the Literature Prize, surprising most observers -- except for a handful of journalists and punters who correctly predicted them as the laureates.

When Obama's name was read out at the Nobel Institute in Oslo on Friday, a collective gasp went through the room.

And yet, on the eve of the announcement, Norwegian commercial television TV2 had suggested he was the most likely winner.

"I wasn't 100 per cent sure, but for me, Obama was the most logical choice. I'm surprised that others were surprised," Gerhard Helskog, the TV2 journalist behind the news clip, told AFP.

Huji operative

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The Awami League president at an election rally in Sylhet on September 26, 2001.

But the night before, a bomb went off at the house they were staying to prepare for the attack. The blast left two militants killed and Obaida injured.

An ex-student of Patia Al Jama'atul Madrasa in Chittagong, Obaida is charged with being involved in two cases filed in connection with the Sylhet incidents.

Of the cases, one is under Explosive Substances Act and another on murder charges. He was arrested at the scene and treated under police custody. He however came out on bail after nine months, and did not appear before the court concerned.

He went to Kuwait and returned home after a year's stay there.

The court issued a fresh warrant for his arrest on June 10 this year.

Talking to newsmen at the police station, Obaida denied links to the Sylhet blasts. He said he went to Sylhet with his friends to visit Hazrat Shahjalal's shrine. He however could not name any of those who accompanied him in the visit.

Locals said Obaida has lately been identifying himself as a Jubo League activist.

Rid boss

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harass Mizanur, the HC said.

On August 18, Mizanur and his wife Sheuli Rahman, also a director of the company, appeared before the HC and sought anticipatory bail in the case.

The HC on the same day granted bail to Sheuli and asked Mizanur to surrender before the Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka.

One of the directors and two pharmacists accused in the case were yet to appear before any court seeking bail.

Earlier on September 16, the Drug Court ordered attachment of movable and immovable properties of Mizanur, his wife and three officials of the company in the case.

The same court on August 11 issued arrest warrants against the Rid Pharma managing director, its two directors and two pharmacists after Drug Superintendent Shafiqul Islam filed the case with the court.

On July 22, the Drug Administration sealed off Rid's factory in BSCIC area of Brahmanbaria following the children's deaths.

The government also formed a seven-member probe committee to investigate the incident. On July 29, the probe committee placed its report that found the presence of poisonous diethylene glycol in the paracetamol syrup of the company.

Rid Pharma used diethylene glycol, meant for tannery and rubber industries, instead of propylene glycol as diethylene glycol costs Tk 200 per litre while propylene glycol costs Tk 1,100.

Later, the government banned two drugs of Rid Pharma -- Ridaplex (vitamin B-complex syrup), Temset (paracetamol suspension) for their low standard and harmful effects on public health.

Manufacturing, marketing, preservation, use and sale of the two drugs have also been banned in the country.

Sources at Drug Administration said Rid Pharma received drug manufacturing licence in 2006 and started marketing 12 drugs. Though the company only had permission for producing paracetamol suspensions, it started producing paracetamol syrups.

Kahn's concept

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As per the Kahn master plan, the secretariat was earmarked at the place on which Ziaur Rahman's grave is situated.

Attitude of the successive governments was to occupy any open space available anywhere, not caring at all about architecture and aesthetics in development and urban planning, Prof Wares adds.

"Such acts by the government itself are tantamount to the first-rate offence," he observes, adding, any development within the master plan of the complex should have been debated and settled in parliament.

Various administrative, cultural and spiritual setups were planned in layers in the architectural master plan of the complex.

The master plan was finalised in 1972 by Kahn himself and the vision of the architect was to plan the capital complex in the pattern of a garden city, says Wares.

It should not have been distorted unless the authorities were faced with an unavoidable situation, he adds.

But a number of hospitals, PWD quarters and other establishments have been set up over the time distorting serenity and sublimity envisioned in the master plan.

According to Prof Wares, any development within the complex area should have been consistent with the master plan.

"The cardinal problem is that our governments seriously lack in cultural sense," he adds.

President of the Institute of Architects, Bangladesh Mubashar Hussein says the conference centre was built by the then Awami League government demolishing the Met office in utter disregard to the master plan.

The governments could have revised the layout, if required, to accommodate development instead of doing it on piecemeal basis in such an architecturally planned complex, he adds.

Parvati Rani, a resident of the adjoining PWD sweepers' colony [Telegue colony] for 15 years, said she has seen the land as green open space.

Md Abdul Haq, executive engineer of Public Works Department's (PWD) Sher-e-Banglanagar Division-3, said the ministry has leased out the land between two organisations.

10 grenades

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It took around a month to trap the grenade traffickers, the Rab personnel said.

In preliminary interrogation, Rafiqul told the Rab that the tribal youths supplied the grenades to him, Azad said.

The tribal youths might have collected the grenades from separatists in neighbouring countries, he added.

Azad said, "Rab personnel are investigating to find out whether the criminals have military links."

He however declined to elaborate for the shake of investigation.

Locals knew the arrestees as day labourers, Azad said.

Gayeswar

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appeared for the state while advocates Nitai Roy Chowdhury, Masud Ahmed Talukder and Sanauallah Miah defended the accused.

Meanwhile, a large number of leaders and activists gathered on the court premises and chanted slogans demanding withdrawal of the case.

Earlier on August 3, the court issued an arrest warrant against the BNP leader.

Gayeswar, on March 9, obtained ad-interim bail from the HC till the submission of the probe report. His bail period expired as the investigation officer submitted the charge sheet on July 5.

On January 5 this year, the ACC filed the case against him on charges of extorting Tk 2.61 crore and concealing information of his wealth worth Tk 25.95 lakh in his wealth statement submitted to the commission on August 20 last year.

The statement said Gayeswar owned properties worth Tk 1.28 crore, but he mentioned his wealth worth Tk 1.02 crore.

ACC Deputy Director SM Mofidul Islam alleged Gayeswar extorted Tk 1.94 crore from the managing director of M/s Abdul Monem Ltd in 2004 after the company got the earth filling tender in Purbachal New Town Project of Rajuk during the rule of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

He also extorted Tk 67 lakh from the managing director of M/s Reza Construction Ltd.

tions.

The land had been open space and PWD planted some trees several years ago to protect it from illegal occupancy.

"But the trees there are of no value," he said.

Haq added the land is for official use in the "administrative zone" and that CSC is an institution like public administration academy.

The chief architect of the department of architecture under the public works and housing ministry said an initiative was taken to build a private five-star hotel at the site during proposed NAM conference.

"We opposed the idea and said that the land could be used for setting up any international offices," said Ismail.

The ministry might have decided on leasing out part of the land to CSC, he said.

AL lawmakers

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would soon implement its announcement that outlaws in south-western region of the country would be given a scope to surrender to the authorities and return to normal life.

During question-answer period, the lawmakers described the prevailing law and order in their constituencies.

"Incidents of killing and robbery are frequent in my constituency. Therefore, more police camps are necessary to stop the criminal activities," ruling party lawmaker Manjur Quader Quareshi said.

Mokbul Hossain said criminal activities have increased in his constituency in Pabna.

Matiur Rahman said normal life has been seriously affected in five unions of his constituency in Mymensingh due to robbery, rustling and other criminal activities.

Mozammel Haque said police could not properly ensure security of life and property of people due to shortage of manpower.

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku, who was responding to MPs' queries on behalf of Sahara, said the government is sincerely working to maintain law and order.

He also assured the lawmakers of setting up more thanas and police camps in their constituencies.

The home minister told the House that 2,107 people were killed in six months from January to June this year.

She also said 53 Bangladesh citizens were killed by Indian Border Security Force in the last nine months.

In the capital, 273 people were arrested under the Special Powers Act in the last 10 months, Sahara said.

SECURITY BILL

The parliamentary standing committee on home ministry yesterday recommended that the House pass the Father of the Nation Family Members' Security bill. The committee placed its scrutiny report in parliament yesterday.

Suranjit seeks

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In response, Speaker Abdul Hamid said it is a very serious matter. "I hope the government will handle it seriously and will inform the House soon about it."

Ehtesham was transferred to 66 Infantry Division in Rangpur as its GOC (general officer commanding), on Sunday following a Prothom Alo report on the issue.

Suranjit, also chief of the parliamentary standing committee on law justice and parliamentary affairs ministry, questioned his new assignment and said he should not have been given this responsibility before unearthing the fact.

"So far I know about defence rules and regulations, a court of enquiry is supposed to be formed to investigate any allegation if raised against a serving official of the defence forces," Suranjit said.

Top 'outlaw'

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Kushtia and Kumarkhali police raided Kaya College as some GMF cadres were holding a secret meeting there around 3:30am. As the operations were asked to surrender, they opened fire on the police. The police fired back triggering a gunfight, which lasted for about half an hour.

After the incident the police found Azbahar's body lying on the spot while his accomplices fled the scene.

One LG and four bullets were recovered from the spot. Azbahar was accused in several cases including three for murders filed with Kumarkhali and Kushtia sadar police stations.

Student demo

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hour resulting in severe traffic congestion in the area following the students' demonstration.

The education ministry on June 2 published the gazette that reads the students who passed SSC and HSC after 2004 securing below GPA 3 would be considered to have got third division and those below GPA 4, second division.

Agitating students told reporters that the gazette notification discriminates against those who passed SSC and HSC in the years of 2001 and 2003. They demanded a new policy, which would do justice to all sections of students.

Officer-in-Charge of Mirpur Police Station Zakir Hossain Mollah told The Daily Star that the demonstration took to the streets at around 12:00pm and police managed to persuade the students to leave the road at around 1:30pm.

On this demand, hundreds of students clashed with policemen on the city's Mirpur Road leaving as many as 20 people including policemen injured on Sunday.

Moshtaq hailed

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murder case, who was dismissed for attempting to stir up a mutiny in Savar and Bogra cantonments and an uprising against Ziaur Rahman, was even a presidential candidate in Bangladesh in 1986.

Shafayat said that after taking power on November 7, 1975, Major General Ziaur Rahman rehabilitated the army officers involved in the killings of August 15 and November 3 earlier that year.

He rewarded them with postings to Bangladesh missions in different countries.

Convicts Major Faruque Rahman and Major Khondker Abdur Rashid however did not accept any job abroad. They returned home in 1976.

While Faruque tried a mutiny in Savar and Bogra cantonments, Major Rashid attempted to usurp the commanding officer's position in 2 Field Artillery.

Still, Zia did not take any action against them. Instead, he sent them abroad.

The officers, involved in the August 15 bloodbath, tried in vain to stage a revolt against Ziaur Rahman towards the end of 1980. This time they all got the axe.

The killers of Bangabandhu got rehabilitated for the second time after HM Ershad came to power on Ziaur Rahman's death.

Ershad paid them all their arrears.

The SC fixed 9:30am today for further hearing on the appeals.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday told reporters the August 15 incidents had left Major General (ret'd) Shafiqullah, the then army chief, exhausted, while Ziaur Rahman appeared quite normal.

Service age

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War Affairs ABM Tajul Islam said the decision of increasing the service age came considering the overall welfare of the freedom fighters, who made the highest contribution to the country's liberation.

"The government will do everything possible for them, keeping the country's interests upheld. The present government is committed to doing that," he added.

The AL after taking office early this year initiated a move to raise service age of the freedom fighters and asked all the ministries and other government bodies for recommendations.

PM CONCERNED OVER TRAFFIC JAM

Concerned by the ever-worsening traffic situation in the capital, the premier also discussed at length with her cabinet colleagues how to improve the situation.

She asked for recruiting necessary manpower to ease the situation and improve the traffic control system.

"Recruit necessary manpower so that they can play effective role in reducing traffic gridlock," said Hasina urging all to obey the traffic rules.

She also asked all concerned to think out whether the Secretariat and other important government offices should be shifted to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

41 killed in Pak

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Fazlullah Khan, a Shangla member of parliament, told the private Geo television channel that the attacker struck in a crowded bazaar in Alpuri town, but he said the bomber drove an explosives-laden car into the convoy.

The military launched their offensive in and around Swat valley after Taliban militants bent on imposing a harsh brand of Islamic law advanced to within 100 kilometres (60 miles) of Islamabad.

The airstrikes late Sunday and early Monday on Taliban strongholds in South Waziristan and Bajaur districts left at least 31 suspected militants dead, officials said, although there was no independent verification of the toll.

Military and government officials have vowed to follow up the Swat offensive with a full ground assault on the northwest tribal belt, with air strikes late Sunday and early Monday hitting Taliban strongholds there.

The latest in a months-long series of air raids designed to soften up the rebels came after Taliban gunmen staged an audacious daytime attack on the military command centre on Saturday.

In total, eight militants, 11 soldiers and three hostages were killed in the crisis that unfolded at the heart of the military establishment in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, which ended with a commando raid Sunday.

Taliban spokesman Azam Tariq on Monday claimed that attack, telling an AFP reporter by telephone: "It was carried out by our Punjab branch... We have the capability to strike at any place in Pakistan."

The TTP have also claimed a suicide bomb that killed five UN workers at their offices in Islamabad last Monday, but did not comment on a suicide car bomb Friday that killed 52 people in the northwestern capital Peshawar.

The army said it was now awaiting orders to stage a full-scale offensive on the Pakistani Taliban seat of power in South Waziristan, a rugged mountainous region bordering Afghanistan which lies outside direct government control.

"We are waiting for government orders... The government has decided in principle to launch an operation against Taliban in Waziristan," a military spokesman told AFP.

Analysts say that an operation in Waziristan will be a tougher task than flushing militants out of Swat, with the Taliban entrenched in a hos-

tile terrain and able to slip easily across the Afghan frontier.

Officials said that war planes bombed known militant bases late Sunday in South Waziristan's Makeen and Ladha towns. A security official in the area, who did not want to be named, said that 19 militants were killed in the strikes.

In Bajaur further north, meanwhile, local government official Manasib Khan told AFP that Taliban mountain-top hideouts and underground cave networks were struck by military jets early Monday, killing 12 militants.

Cabinet okays

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chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed the newsmen after the meeting.

A gazette notification will be issued soon from the establishment ministry to implement the decision, Azad said.

The cabinet gave final approval to an amendment to the Gas Bill 2009 to ensure proper management and control on gas usage.

The bill has been approved with a provision of punishment for illegal gas connection and meter tampering, he said.

The meeting also approved a proposal on signing an agreement on development of capital investment and preservation between Bangladesh and Denmark.

The cabinet took a total of 204 decisions and gave nod to 73 bills since the government took office. Of them, 104 were implemented while 76 are in the process of implementation, Azad said.

The implementation rate of the cabinet decision is 69 percent, he added.

Ministers, state ministers and secretaries concerned were present at the meeting.

Job scope

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permission to send workers to Iraq, said Iraqi government was trying to lobby the foreign companies to employ Iraqi people, but the companies are not interested.

"Foreign companies can recruit Bangladeshi workers at a salary of \$300-400 whereas Iraqis want \$1000. That's why the companies prefer foreign workers," he told The Daily Star.

Iraq needs several lakh workers to rebuild the country, said a source.

First woman

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analysis can shed light on most forms of social organisation," the jury said.

Ostrom won half the 10-million-kronor (1.42-million-dollar, 980,000-euro) prize "for her analysis of economic governance" especially relating to the management of common property or property under common control.

Her work challenging the conventional wisdom that common property is poorly managed and should be either regulated by central authorities or privatised, it added.

A professor at Indiana University whose name has circulated as a possible winner in recent years, Ostrom told Swedish television her first reaction was "great surprise and appreciation," and said she was "in shock" over being the first woman to clinch the honour.

She conducted numerous studies of user-managed fish stocks, pastures, woods, lakes and groundwater basins, and concluded that the outcomes are "more often than not, better than predicted by standard theories," the jury said.

Williamson was honoured with the other half "for his analysis of economic governance, especially the boundaries of the firm."

He has argued that