

A timely intervention saves them from torture, stigma

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A family at Badlagari village in Sadullapur upazila who was confined to their house due to a so-called religious edict by a few locals, has at last heaved a sigh of relief, thanks to the intervention of the upazila administration.

On May 28, Lucky Begum, 28, wife of Abdur Rashid Mandal, left home for capital Dhaka with family friend Abdus Sattar, following a bitter quarrel with her mother-in-law and stayed in a relative's house in Dhaka, police said. The next day Abdur Rashid brought back his wife from Dhaka.

Saying that the woman had committed adultery, some locals handed them over to Sadullapur police station.

The couple were released from there, as local union parishad member Ashish Kumar Titas submitted an undertaking on behalf of the couple, said Abdur Rahman, SI of Sadullapur police station.

But soon after their release, a few religious leaders decided to bring the couple under *fatwa* (religious edict) judgment, making locals adverse to the family.

"We virtually remained confined to the house, as local people snapped all kinds of contact with us. On last



PHOTO: STAR

Declared ostracised through a so-called edict by local religious leaders, Abdur Rashid Mandal (sitting on the ground) describes his ordeal in presence of the upazila nirbahi officer on Tuesday. Inset, the fatwa victim family.



Friday, a villager beat up my only son Ashiqur Rahman, a student of class one, as he went out of home," said Abdur Rashid.

On Tuesday, Abul Hossain, secretary of Bodlagari mosque committee, called a meeting where a few local religious leaders gave a *fatwa*, declaring that the couple would have to perform *hilla* (remedy) marriage and accept the stipulated lashes according

to Islamic *sharia* if they want to stay together.

Informed, Sadullapur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Golam Mowla with a police team rushed to the spot just before the end of meeting. Sensing their presence, many of the attendants fled the scene.

Police arrested Abul Hossain, a retired school-teacher, Moksuder Rahman Mandal, Mizanur Rahman Mandal and Ranju Mandal from the spot.

They were released

under the custody of upazila Awami League President Mozharul Islam after the four people gave undertakings not to commit such an unlawful act in future and, said Abdul Jalil Sarker of Sadullapur police station.

Meanwhile, Abdur Rashid and Lucky Begum said they are still apprehensive of hostile behaviour by locals due to the chaotic situation.

BCL enforces indefinite strike at MMC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Mymensingh Medical College (MMC) unit enforced an indefinite strike at the college yesterday, protesting postponement of MMC students union election.

The college authorities on Monday postponed the election scheduled for June 18, saying that final examinations of first, second and third year students will begin from July 1.

"It is very difficult for us to hold the election, hampering the academic activities on the campus," said MMC Principal Prof Motiur Rahman.

He said a seven-member committee was formed at a meeting of the academic council yesterday to talk with the BCL central and MMC unit leaders to resolve the ongoing crisis. But the BCL college unit leaders refused to sit with the committee members.

On the other hand, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) MMC unit has boycotted the election, alleging that the campus atmosphere is not conducive to holding election.

In a memorandum

submitted to the principal recently, the JCD demanded that the college authorities ensure a congenial atmosphere on the campus and safe stay of their supporters at their dormitories for a peaceful election.

BCL is demanding election on the date scheduled for June 18. Yesterday, they locked the gate of the administrative building and ransacked its several rooms. No classes and examinations were held at the college.

Earlier on May 30, the BCL MMC unit went on an indefinite strike demanding college students union. They withdrew the strike on the following day after the college authorities assured them of holding the election in the shortest possible time.

Following a discussion with the BCL leaders, the authorities fixed July 18 to hold the election, college sources said.

BCL candidates have already submitted their nomination papers to the college authorities. As no other panel other than the BCL is in the race, its leaders are putting pressure on the authorities to declare their panel elected, sources added.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS



PHOTO: STAR

Celebrating 31st year of Pabna Drama Circle, a colourful procession was brought out in the district town yesterday.

HSC examinee electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

An HSC examinee was electrocuted in Bipatengali of Mucharbandal area in Sadar upazila of Jessore district yesterday. The victim was identified as Parvez, 21, son of Md Monwar Hossain of Bipatengali village. Police said, Parvez climbed an electrical pole on Khulna-Bheramara road where he came in contact of a live wire. Parvez died on the spot. Later, his friends brought the body to his house. A pall of gloom descended over the area.

Timber-laden trawler seized

UNB, Bagerhat

A team of Sundarbans forest department seized a trawler loaded with Sundari timbers worth Tk 5 lakh in Trimohona area of Pashur River in Mongla upazila on Tuesday evening. Sundarbans East Zone DFO Mihir Kumar Do said, on secret information, the team raided the area and chased the trawler. Sensing danger the smugglers managed to flee the scene leaving behind the trawler. Forest department sources said the smugglers stole the timbers from Sundarbans and were heading for Tekerhat in Madaripur district.

Man gets life for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Mymensingh court yesterday sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for killing his wife in 2009. The court also fined him Tk. 5000, in default, to suffer more three months in prison. The convict was identified as Hasan Ali, son of Abul Kalam of village Naugao in Phulbaria upazila of the district. According to the case, Hasan Ali hacked his wife Nazma Begum with an axe over a family feud on June 22, 2009, causing her death on the spot. A case was lodged with Phulbaria police station. Police pressed a charge sheet against Hasan Ali. After examining witnesses and evidences, Md. Nurul Huda, the judge of Mymensingh District and Session Judge Court handed down the verdict.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Chapainawabganj Government College form a human chain in front of the institution yesterday protesting procrastination in admission process, session jam and delay in publishing results of the examinations under National University.

'Criminal' arrested

UNB, Chapainawabganj

Police arrested 'the ringleader' of an inter-district robber gang in Gomastapur upazila on Tuesday. The arrestee was identified as Abdul Aziz, 35, son of Manzur Ahmed of Fatehpur in Bholahat upazila of the district. Officer in-charge of Bholahat police station Shahid Sharwardy said on secret information, a police team arrested Aziz from a mango garden in Belal Bazar area of Gomastapur at about 2:30pm. Aziz was wanted in over 50 cases, including for murder, robbery and mugging.

Huge Indian clothes seized

UNB, Comilla

A special anti-smuggling task force seized huge Indian clothes worth Tk 4 crore from a shop in the district town early yesterday. The task force comprised of the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), led by executive magistrate Kazi Arifin Rezwana, conducted a raid on Asgar Cloth Store at Manoharpur. Later, the task force members seized Indian contraband saris and three-piece sets worth Tk 4 crore from the shop, said Arifin. However, no one was arrested in this connection. The seized goods were later handed over to local customs office after making a seizure list.

Acid thrown on college girl in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Criminals threw acid on a college girl on Tuesday night at Kismot Rampur village under Mirzaganj upazila.

Seriously burnt, she was admitted first to Mirzaganj upazila hospital and then shifted to Patuakhali General Hospital at about 9 am yesterday.

Later, the doctors referred her to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

Victim Ripa, 17, is daughter of Shah Alam of Rampur village and reads in a college in capital city Dhaka.

Rafiqul Islam, brother of Ripa and police said, Ripa came to her village home a week ago. Tarun, a youth of a nearby village, proposed her, which she politely refused.

At about 2 am on Tuesday, a gang of 3-4 youths led by Tarun, entered the house of Ripa and threw acid on her. After the incident, the gang managed to flee the scene but Ripa could recognise Tarun.

A case was underway with Mirzaganj police station in this regard, police said.



PHOTO: STAR

Residents of four villages under Khagrachhari Sadar upazila block Khagrachhari-Bhuiyachhari Road at Golabari point in the district town yesterday.

Power eludes 4 Khagrachhari villages for about a week

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Agitated people of four villages in Sadar upazila yesterday blocked Khagrachhari-Bhuiyachhari road demanding power supply. Villagers said power supply remained suspended for the last consecutive six days to Golabari, Kaladaba, Kotbil and Bottali.

The protesters blocked the road at Golabari of the district town from 09:30am to 12:00pm, causing suspension of all kinds of vehicular movement on the road.

They withdrew the roadblock after the local Power Development Board (PDB) officials and municipality councilor pledged to solve the problem within the next seven days.

The villagers told this correspondent that they were without power supply since June 7. "We went to the local PDB officials several times but to no effect. Moreover, they demanded Tk 20,000 to repair the transformer of the area", a villager alleged.

Several others said that the consecutive power failure had made the life of local people measurable as their daily work were badly hampered.

Inhabitants of Bottali village Memaching Marma and Cimnapru Marma alleged that all their foodstuffs preserved in the fridges got rotten due to long time power failure.

The on-going hot spell added to the situation, affecting farmers and students of the area severely, said Aungshi Marma of Golabari village.

Aungpru Marma and Chimpra Marma of Kaladaba village alleged that the PDB officials do not care about the consumers of the villages. They also protested the disparity between village and town.

The villagers urged the authorities concerned to meet their demands immediately. They also threatened that they would launch agitation if their demand was not fulfilled within next seven days.

Contacted, Executive Engineer of Khagrachhari PDB Atikkram Chakma said, power supply was hampered in the area after the transformer was hit by lightning on June 7.

"We have sent the transformer for repair and trying our best to reinstall it as soon as possible", he said, refuting the allegation of demanding money from the villagers.

Roadblock protesting deaths in accident

UNB, Noakhali

Agitated locals yesterday morning blocked Begumganj-Laxmipur highway at Banglabazar in Begumganj upazila, protesting Tuesday's road accident that left five people killed.

The upazila administration and locals said several hundred people gathered on the highway at about 7am and barricaded it by putting logs.

The agitated people also demanded an end to reckless driving of buses and other vehicles on the road and initiatives

to check the frequent road accidents. The blockade created huge traffic jam causing untold sufferings to the commuters, including students and office-goers.

Additional police, some on riot gears, were deployed in the area to avoid any untoward incident.

Begumganj UNO Khondaker Nurul Haque told the news agency that the upazila administration at a meeting with the agitating people, bus and CNG auto-rickshaw owners at his office on Tuesday night assured them of step for checking the road accidents and stop-

ping reckless driving of vehicles on the road. But the angry people ignoring his assurance continued their demonstration.

Earlier, on Tuesday, five people were killed and 10 others injured as a bus, a truck and a CNG-run auto-rickshaw collided on Begumganj-Laxmipur highway at Kalikapur in Begumganj upazila.

The deceased were Nargis, 28, Anwar Hossain, 26, Saleh, 21, Yasin Ararat Kathal, 25, and an unidentified youth, aged about 23. They all were the passengers of the auto-rickshaw.

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