

HELD FOR COP, WIFE MURDER House help Sumi gets no attention

TAMANNA KHAN

While Oishee Rahman remains the focus of media attention after her parents' murder, questions are arising as to whether the parents of Khadiza Khatun Sumi, the slain couple's house help now in detention, even know of the incident.

"No one came asking for her, neither her relatives nor any human rights organisations," said Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of the Detective Branch of police.

DB police on August 18 detained Sumi, who had allegedly helped Oishee move the dead bodies to her bathroom in the couple's Chamelibagh residence in the capital. The prime murder accused, Oishee, in her teens, surrendered at Paltan Police Station on August 16, 22 hours after the decomposed bodies of Special Branch of police inspector Mahfuzur Rahman and his wife Swapna Rahman were recovered.

Sumi, a minor, on August 25 confessed before a court that she, threatened by Oishee, had helped her move the bodies. She is now under the supervision of the Children Development Centre.

Police did not find her parents in the Rangamati address

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Country's future rests on next poll results: Joy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Saying the future of Bangladesh depends on the outcome of the upcoming general election, Sajeeb Wazed Joy yesterday urged the people to help keep up the process of development for building a new and modern Bangladesh.

"If the Awami League doesn't come to power, the developments which have taken place during this tenure will die out again. Today's flow of electricity will come to a halt within two years. Terrorists are lining up and they will reappear if the BNP comes to power," he said.

Joy, only son of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was speaking at a seminar titled "Vision 2021: Achievements of the past five years and pledges for the next five years" at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) organised by Suchinta Foundation.

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TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR

Old Jackfruit Tree

Its branches are dying as its thick bark peels and falls off from its trunk. The jackfruit tree is growing old.

Forty years ago my father sowed hundreds of jackfruit seeds in these hills. This tree grew from one of them.

It has been through quite a bit in its lifetime, this quiet tree.

On top of the *tilla*, where rainwater drains quickly, the first few years were tough. It was slow and hard work sending its roots into the rock-laden soil. Seasons came and went. After summer's heat, the rains brought new life every year, decomposing and dissolving organic matter and pushing them into the soil as nutrients.

At infancy, it was protected by bamboo fencing – a cylindrical cage that kept away cattle, the worst enemy of the fledgling seedling, for there is nothing tastier to a cow than green jackfruit leaves.

Fighting the odds it kept growing, synthesizing food from the sun, its roots extracting whatever they could from the tight-fisted soil. Growth came easier after the first three years with deeper roots and more leaves to catch the sun's rays.

Eight or nine years into its life came the momentous spring when it bore its first fruit. A few tiny buds appeared in late winter that grew a hundredfold into giant fruits, each weighing several kilograms, in just three months. Were they crunchy or chewy? I don't know, but I guarantee you they were very sweet.

For the next thirty-five years, the tree gave and gave as the fruits continued. It did not matter whether the year was dry or wet, hot or cold, calm or stormy – the giving did not stop. During good years,



Old jackfruit tree.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

environment too harsh? Or perhaps it was damaged by a cow in its infancy and never fully recovered? We will never know, but there are taller trees nearby, and ones down the hill are gigantic in comparison.

Now its usefulness is coming to an end. Its fruits dwindle every year. Four monsoons ago, sensing its decline, I planted new jackfruit seedlings in open spots around it as replacement. They grow vigorously.

Soon it will complete its lifecycle. But even in death, the old jackfruit tree will give us one last gift: the strong, solid wood of its body, which will one day become a newlywed couple's bed, the door of a new house, or a child's desk at a primary school.

Jackfruit (*Artocarpus Heterophyllus*), is the national fruit of Bangladesh.

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NEWSINbrief

Acid hurled at woman in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A rival group hurled acid at a woman over a land dispute at Kristopur village in Nawabganj upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

The victim is Asia Khatun 30, wife of Golam Mostofa of the village.

Police said Mostafa had the dispute with one Robin Pawria of the same village.

In the afternoon, some accomplices of Robin hurled acid on the woman's chest while the duo locked in a wrangle over the issue near Mostafa's residence, police added.

10 bombs recovered in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Ten live bombs were recovered from Boro Meghla village in sadar upazila of Jessore yesterday noon.

Kotwali Police Station Sub-inspector Jamal said some children found the abandoned bombs in a road-side bush beside Morolpara mosque while they were playing in a nearby field.

Police are investigating the matter, he added.

Farmer strangled in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Unidentified criminals strangled a farmer at Fotemohammapur village in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna early yesterday.

The deceased was Nurul Islam, 55, of the village.

Police recovered the body from a pond near his residence in the morning.

Quoting the family, Ishwardi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Biman Kumar said Nurul went missing after he had gone to a local shop Thursday night.

Nurul was strangled and dumped in the pond, he said.

'Thief' dies as he jumps off 6-storey building in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged thief died as he jumped down from the roof of a six-storey building at Baitul Aman Housing Society in the capital's Adabar area early yesterday.

Saiful Islam, sub-inspector of Adabar Police Station, said the unidentified youth climbed up the building to steal valuables from a flat on the fifth floor.

Sensing someone's presence, a light was put on in the flat. Then he immediately got on the rooftop and jumped to escape detention, he added.

Outlaw held in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police arrested an outlaw at Mirpur village in Bera upazila of Pabna early yesterday.

The arrested Md Dulal Hossain, 30, of the village, is the regional leader of Purba Banglar Communist Party (Lal Pataka), said police.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team arrested Dulal while he along with his associates were holding a clandestine meeting at the village, said Md Jahangir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Bera Police Station.

However, his associates managed to flee.



Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati demonstrates in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding Tk 8,000 as the minimum monthly wage for a RMG worker.

PHOTO: STAR

US worried over labour rights, political gridlock

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US has expressed its concern over labour rights and political gridlock in Bangladesh, said newly appointed US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Nisha Desai Biswal yesterday.

"The Administration strongly supports Bangladesh as it continues to make remarkable economic and developmental progress, but we express our concerns as it grapples with challenges such as labour rights and political gridlock," she said in her hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

President Barack Obama has appointed Nisha to succeed Robert Blake.

Upon satisfaction over the hearing, the Senate will approve her appointment.

In the hearing, she also touched upon key challenges in the region with respect to democratic governance, human rights and corruption.

Nisha said, "If confirmed by the Senate, I will continue to use our broad engagement with countries throughout the region..."

PM for women's equal role in political decision

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed equal participation of women alongside men in political decision-making as only this could help achieve the real development and progress of a nation.

"In Bangladesh, we celebrate empowerment of women...Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman envisioned a Bangladesh where women would have equal rights as men. This legacy has inspired me to carry on the work in ensuring that all genders enjoy equal rights," she said.

Hasina, a special adviser to the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), stated this in a video mes-

sage on "Women Leadership in Politics". The message was delivered in the opening session of an ICAPP special conference in Seoul, South Korea yesterday.

She said Bangladesh was possibly the world's only nation at present to simultaneously have a female prime minister, Speaker, opposition leader and deputy leader in parliament.

She said her government's policies, especially National Women Development Policy 2011, put women at the centre of its development agenda with focus on education, health and employment.

"As a woman politician and as a special adviser to ICAPP, I assure you that I shall

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Strict enforcement of rules to check sound pollution urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for strict enforcement of sound pollution rules and creating awareness to control the menace which is a huge threat to human health.

Around 13 million Bangladeshis have developed hearing loss while the damage to 3 million people is profound, said Associate Prof Manilal Aich Litu of Ear, Nose and Throat and Head-Neck Surgery of Sir Salimullah Medical College and Mitford Hospital.

Addressing a seminar in the capital's Jatiya Press Club, he said, apart from hearing loss, sound pollution directly or indi-

rectly affects all organs, causes insomnia and high blood pressure and disrupts fetal growth.

The college unit of Shandhani and Community Care Service organised the seminar, "Sound pollution and hearing impairment: Perspectives of Bangladesh".

According to Noise Pollution (Control) Rules 2006, daytime/nighttime permissible sound levels in decibels are 50/40 (residential areas), 60/50 (mixed areas), 70/60 (commercial areas) and 75/70 (industrial areas).

It also prohibits honking within a 100-metre radius of hospitals, educational institutions and offices and use of brick and

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