

ASSAULTING UNO IN FENI 8 charge-sheeted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

Police yesterday pressed charges against eight people, including Feni district Awami League Vice-President Khairul Bashar Majumder Tapan, in a case filed for assaulting Parshuram Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

Parshuram Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Abul Kashem Chowdhury Jalal Uddin, also investigating officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet before the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in the afternoon.

Magistrate Sheikh Md Badiul Alam fixed May 26 for hearing the case.

He also rejected a bail petition moved by the three accused and sent them to jail.

OC Kashem said the case was filed under the speedy trial act and the police pressed charges against Tapan, Chithalia Union Parishad Chairman Jasim Uddin and six others.

On May 6, local AL leaders and activists allegedly assaulted Parshuram UNO HM Rakib Haider for "not showing respect to Tapan".

Around 10:30am, the UNO, the upazila chairman and some local AL leaders and activists were waiting at Dhanikunda on Feni-Parshuram road to welcome Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan who was scheduled to visit Bilonia land port.

At that time, Mohammad Faruk, a local AL leader, asked Rakib to get introduced with Tapan.

The UNO did not respond to this and Tapan got into a heated argument with Rakib, accusing him of "not showing respect to him". At one stage, the AL leader's followers started beating him up, leaving him seriously injured, according to police.

Rakib was taken to Feni Sadar Hospital.

The UNO's diver, Abul Kashem, filed a case against seven named people, including Tapan, with Parshuram Police Station that night.

Parshuram police arrested six accused of the case while Tapan and Jasim surrendered before a Feni court.



Farmers harvest boro paddy on a field at Aloa in Tangail Sadar upazila. Growers in the area are unlikely to make any profit from their produce as they now sell a maund of boro for Tk 600, almost equal to the production cost. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

Govt opens probe

FROM PAGE 1

A video clip of the incident has gone viral on social media, triggering public outrage and a firestorm of protests on social networking sites.

A number of private television channels yesterday aired reports along with the video clip released by a local news portal -- narayanganj24.com.

Infuriated by the incident, some Facebook users uploaded photos in which they were holding their ears. The photos carried the caption, "sorry sir".

Condemning the incident, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said he was deeply saddened by it.

A three-member committee has been formed to investigate the incident, he told this correspondent yesterday.

"Insulting him in public was a condemnable act. It is very unfortunate, unacceptable and inhuman. We are very shocked," the minister said.

The committee headed by a secondary education officer will investigate the incident and come up with recommendations.

"Then we will take the next step," Nahid added.

Talking to this correspondent last night, Shyamal, who has been the headmaster of the school for around 17 years, said some members of the

school managing committee had a grudge against him as he refused to meet their unfair demands.

"They wanted me to be their puppet but I resisted them. They had been looking for an excuse to oust me from the school," he alleged.

Shyamal said they finally got the chance through an incident on May 8 when he slapped two class-X students at the school to discipline them.

Four days later, the chairman of the school managing committee asked him to arrange a meeting to discuss the school's development work, said the headmaster.

Shyamal then called a meeting and went to the school to attend it on May 13.

As the meeting started, a committee member said a female guardian had lodged a written complaint against Shyamal that he had beaten her son, a class-X student of the school.

Within minutes, several youths suddenly entered the meeting room and started beating Shyamal.

The headmaster told this correspondent that he later learnt from his relatives that when he was under attack, it was announced over the loudspeakers of a nearby mosque that he had hurt religious sentiment.

Later, he was made to do sit-ups in the presence of the JP lawmaker.

"I was dumbfounded by the incident. I lost sense of what was hap-

pening around me... I want justice. I pray that no teacher would ever go through such an ordeal."

Shyamal said he didn't say anything about religion, let alone make derogatory remarks.

The video clip showed that the mob encircling Shyamal was chanting "Joy Bangla" while he was doing sit-ups.

At one stage, Shyamal fell to the ground. He was then made to stand up and apologise to the crowd.

Syed Borhanul Islam, a teacher of Islamic Studies at the school, told reporters that he had never heard of any allegations that the headmaster had made disparaging comments on religion.

The chairman of the school man-

aging committee couldn't be reached for comments.

Earlier, Selim Osman told the BBC that the headmaster was made to do sit-ups in his presence.

There was no other way to save the teacher from the angry mob, the MP claimed.

Meanwhile, Narayanganj Superintendent of Police Khandaker Mohit Uddin said the police have nothing to do with the incident. "Police went there to prevent any cognisable offence from taking place."

The matter entirely falls under the jurisdiction of the school governing body, he told journalists at the office of the DIG of police, Dhaka Range, in the capital.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cuddles the newborn daughter of her niece Tulip Rizwana Siddiq after she reached London on Sunday.

PHOTO: PTI

Met Aslam, but no secret plot

FROM PAGE 1

a public programme and then post their photographs on Facebook, said Safadi, a leader of Israel's Likud Party and chief of International Diplomacy and Public Relations.

In the meantime, detained BNP Joint Secretary General Aslam, who sparked controversy after meeting Safadi in India early this month, and his associate Asaduzzaman Miah were placed on a seven-day remand in connection with a case for allegedly hatching a conspiracy with an Israeli national to topple the Bangladesh government.

The two were arrested by detectives in the capital's Khilkhet area on Sunday.

Known to be a trusted lieutenant of BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman, Chittagong-based businessman Aslam came under severe criticism after several photographs showing him with Safadi went viral on social media.

Several photographs posted on the Facebook page, "Mendi N Safadi Center -- for International Diplomacy and Public Relations",

show the two attending programmes in India earlier this month.

Talking to BBC Bangla Service yesterday, Safadi said he was invited by the youth front of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to attend a programme in New Delhi where he met Aslam.

He mentioned that Aslam was invited to the programme as a political leader of a neighbouring country.

The Israeli politician also said they had not known each other before, and they had a conversation just as guests.

Safadi said he couldn't believe that Aslam was arrested because the BNP leader had a conversation with him.

"Did he [Aslam] kill anybody? He just had a conversation with an Israeli during his visit to India."

Safadi was aware that some media outlets in Bangladesh had labelled him as an agent of Mossad, the national intelligence agency of Israel.

The Israeli politician said he had nothing to say if anyone considered

him a Mossad agent despite the fact that he leaves posts on Facebook about his activities every hour, deliver speeches at seminars and gives interviews to newspapers.

Meanwhile, the organisers of the programme in India said they were surprised that Safadi was termed a Mossad agent.

Indian Citizens Security Council, which organised the programme in New

Delhi, told BBC Bangla that it was not believable that Safadi visited India to hatch a plot to stage a coup in Bangladesh.

Bijoy Kumar, convener of the organisation, said, "We give opportunities to a cross-section of people to speak in our programmes. Mr Safadi was also invited to the programme for the same purpose. But there was no reason to think that he would get involved in a conspiracy against our friendly neighbouring country. He just delivered a 10-minute speech at our programme."

BNP REFUTES ALLEGATION
Top BNP leaders yesterday refuted

the government's allegation that the party is conspiring with Mossad to topple the government.

At a protest meeting at the capital's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, the BNP leaders said they want to "restore democracy" in the country through a people's movement, not through any plot.

ASLAM ON REMAND
A Dhaka court placed Aslam and his associate Asaduzzaman Miah on a seven-day remand.

Metropolitan Magistrate Sarafuzzaman Ansari passed the order after Inspector of the Detective Branch of police Golam Robbani, also investigation officer of the case, produced them before the court with a 10-day remand prayer for each.

In the prayer, Robbani said Aslam and Asaduzzaman had visited India from May 5 to 9 to hatch a conspiracy to overthrow the Bangladesh government. During their stay there, they had meetings with a Mossad agent, which was tantamount to sedition.

Anthrax

FROM PAGE 16

Talking to The Daily Star, Md Humayun Kabir, statistics officer of the Civil Surgeon's Office in Sirajganj, said this is the second consecutive outbreak of anthrax in the district. As many as 87 people in three upazilas have so far been infected in the last couple of weeks, he added.

Earlier, 47 people in Shahjadpur and Kamarkhand upazilas were infected from animals a couple of weeks ago. Of them, 29 were infected in Jamtoil village of Kamarkhand upazila and 18 were infected in Koizuri village of Shahjadpur upazila of the district between May 5 and May 10, he added.

Civil Surgeon Shahed Mohammad Sadekul Islam said apart from providing treatment to the affected, the district health office has also started generating awareness among the locals. He suggested that people should avoid slaughtering any sick animals as well as consuming their meat.

Anthrax is an infection caused by a bacterium called Bacillus anthracis. It is a common livestock disease. Symptoms begin between one day and two months after contacting the infection.

Immunising animals against anthrax is recommended in areas where there is a history of previous infections. The disease can be transmitted to humans if people get them exposed to infectious cattle or consume meat of any butchered infected animals.

Nothing free in prison

FROM PAGE 1

The Daily Star learnt these from three prisoners who wanted to be anonymous. One of them walked out of the jail on March 27 and two others in February last year.

"The jail is apparently hell for those who are unable to manage the money," said a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver who served one month.

He said those prisoners would be forced to lie down on their left or right side in a row, which is known in jail as *hilsa fal*.

The designated cell keeper then pushes the back of the last prisoner in the row with his leg to ensure there was no room between prisoners, he said.

An ex-jail official wishing anonymity, however, said each prisoner is entitled to get six square feet of space.

"I saw two youths crying relentlessly for the whole night on my first day in jail, but the jail people were unmoved," said the auto-rickshaw driver.

He said he managed Tk 30,000 by pawning two gold bangles and earrings of his wife and survived prison.

The driver was among 30 other drivers who were sentenced to a month's jail each by a mobile court on February 28 in Sadarghat area.

THE PROCESS

Within hours after landing in Dhaka jail, the process of trading starts at *Amdanikhana*, a certain cell inside the jail where the newcomers are usually kept for a night and then moved to

other cells.

After completing initial processes like frisking newcomers and enrolment of the prisoners, the man in-charge of the *Amdanikhana* asks inmates to meet him one by one. He threatens them with sufferings if they do not get enrolled for "service package" costing Tk 3,600. However, one needs to send Tk 4,000 inside that jail so that the recipient gets Tk 3,600. The Tk 400 is the commission for the jail gate staff.

A portion of the first week's toll goes to the *Amdanikhana* in-charge.

"When my turn to meet the *Amdanikhana* in-charge came on the first night, he narrated the horrific sufferings of prisoners as far more inmates stay in jail than its capacity," said a Mirpur trader who was arrested in February last year on suspicion of planning subversive activities to destabilise the country.

The jail has around 7,600 inmates against the capacity of 2,650, he was told.

"How will you get water for toilet use and for bathing? the *Amdanikhana* in-charge went on.

"I got scared. I was about to collapse as it had already been 22 hours since I was arrested. So, I agreed to the package offer," said the man in his 40's.

"When my family members visited me in the morning, the convict who brought me did not allow me to talk to my relatives until one of my relatives gave him Tk 4,000 I had agreed to pay

the previous night," he added.

He was among 32 people picked up from their homes at Senpara Parbata on February 25 last year. His neighbour was among the 32 people arrested and he too gave this paper almost an identical picture.

"My decision to agree to pay paid off," the trader said, adding that he was allowed enough room to stretch and sleep well. He was also given two blankets, one of which served as a pillow.

He said the cell in charge and his aides who were all convicts ensured him and others, who bought the "package", space to sleep. He did not have to queue up for food served by the jail authorities and for bathing.

Although it was extremely expensive, when he wanted to buy some extra food, they supplied him.

About Tk 3,000 a week is needed for additional food items.

"Whenever we wanted, we the inmates who bought the package were allowed to sit inside the cell during the daytime. But, those, who did not buy the package, were not allowed. They were only allowed to use the toilets outside which were too filthy to be used and most of the time had no water," he said recollecting his days in jail.

The jail code, however, says the toilets must be cleaned daily and there should always be adequate supply of water there.

According to the former inmate,

around 30 percent prisoners, who are ultra-poor and have no nearby relatives, do not get the "package".

He said when family members try to visit inmates, they have to bribe the jail gate staff between Tk 300 and Tk 1,500.

The wife of the auto-rickshaw driver visited him seven times during his one-month stay in the jail and she had to pay Tk 3,900 in total as bribe at the jail gate.

The former top official of Dhaka Central Jail said a group of jail officials were supposed to provide inmates sufficient space to sleep, enough food and medicine. Adequate accommodation for all inmates in Dhaka Central Jail could be arranged.

But some unscrupulous officials were inflicting sufferings on prisoners to extort them, the ex-official said.

Wishing anonymity, the former official also said there was no rule to charge any relative for meeting an inmate. There is a form that needs to be filled in and the jail authority charges Tk 2 for it and even that is illegal, the ex-jail official said.

Jailor of Dhaka Central Jail Neaser Alam said the allegations were totally baseless.

He claimed that all those sent to jail were criminals and their allegation could not be true.

The Daily Star failed to reach the IC prisons over the phone for his comments.

MORTAR ATTACK Dhaka lodges strong protest with Myanmar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka yesterday lodged a strong protest with Naypyidaw over the recent mortar shell attacks and repeated intrusion by Myanmar security forces inside Bangladesh territory.

In a note verbale sent to the Myanmar government through the Myanmar embassy in Dhaka, the foreign ministry said the incident of mortar shell attack targeting a Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) camp on May 12 was most unfortunate and totally unwarranted.

Such unprovoked firing by the Myanmar security forces is not acceptable at all, said the strongly-worded protest note.

The ministry further said the Myanmar security forces illegally entered Bangladesh territory frequently despite repeated requests from the Bangladesh side not to violate the international rules on the border.

It also urged the Myanmar authorities to take appropriate steps to reduce tension on the border and refrain from such attacks in future.

According to official sources in Dhaka, the helipad of the BGB camp inside the remote Sangu Reserve Forest of Thanchi upazila in Bandarban was damaged by the mortar shelling.