

1 held over Jamalpur FF murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police on Tuesday showed one of the four accused arrested in a case for killing Abdul Bari, a freedom fighter, in the district town on Monday.

The arrestee, Anisur Rahman, is a Ticket Checker (TC) of Bangladesh Railway.

Deceased's son Mizanur Rahman Mukul filed a case with Jamalpur Railway Police Station on Tuesday night accusing Anisur Rahman, OC Goura Chandra Majumdar and constable Tapon Barua of the police station, and ASI Sohrab Ali, in-charge of Railway Nirapatta Bahini (RNB) at Jamalpur station.

Kawsar Ahmad, acting in-charge of the police station said police produced the arrestee before a Mymensingh court yesterday that sent him to the jail.

On Monday, freedom fighter Abdul Bari, 65, died at Mymensingh Combined Military Hospital (CMH) after he was beaten up allegedly by the railway policemen.

Bari's son Mazharul Islam Babu, a MBA student at Rajshahi University, was detained for boarding a local train without ticket.

When Bari went to free his son, there was scuffle following an altercation with the on-duty policemen. At one stage, one of the cops punched Bari in his face and he fell to the ground unconscious.

Bari was later taken to Mymensingh Combined Military Hospital (CMH) where he died the same afternoon.

Jamalpur Deputy Commissioner Shahbuddin Khan said eight railway policemen including OC Majumdar were withdrawn following the incident.

A five-member committee was formed to probe the incident, the DC added.



PHOTO: STAR

Trees with barks off on trunks bear testimony to criminals' evil design to cause death of trees in different areas of Teesta Irrigation Project to clear ways for felling and looting them later. The photo was taken from Dinajpur main branch canal of the project at Horosh Chandra Pat village.

TEESTA CANAL EMBANKMENTS

A bizarre way to loot trees!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Felling of matured trees on the Teesta irrigational canal embankments continues unabated in Jaldhaka and Dimla upazilas of the district, but the authorities concerned seem helpless to stop this illegal practice.

The tree thieves have adopted a novel way to steal the trees. They cut off the bark around the stem on the lower part of big trees, which ultimately kills them.

Prof Abdul Latif, head of the botany department in Nilphamari Government College, told this correspondent that the trees take minerals, water and other nutrients from the soil through the roots.

Those substances are then transmitted to different parts of the trees up to the top through the bark to produce food in the leaves by photosynthesis. If the bark is cut, this natural process is disrupted and the affected trees die within a short time for want of nutrients, he added.

Locals said thieves adopt such a method as felling live trees is a crime punishable by jail

sentence or fine. But felling of dead trees is not treated so seriously as those may cause accidents.

Md Fazlul Huq, sub-divisional engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) in Dalia of Nilphamari district, who is responsible for maintaining the Teesta barrage and different irrigation canals, said WDB and the forest department came to a written agreement in 2003 regarding forestation on the canal embankments.

Accordingly, the forest department planted 50 thousand different trees on both embankments of the Teesta main irrigation canal, Dinajpur branch canal and Rangpur branch canal, stretching more than 100 kilometres, and formed beneficiaries' groups to look after them, he added.

After the trees matured, they would be sold, and the money would be shared proportionately among the beneficiaries' group, WDB, forest department and union parishads concerned, Fazlul Huq further added.

On a visit to the main canal and Dinajpur branch canal yesterday, this correspondent saw that thieves

had stolen a large number of trees. They had also cut the barks of about a hundred giant trees at Bahali Para, Horish Chandra, Bala Para, Dakkhin Kathali, Uttor Kathali and Nautara villages.

Sunil Chandra Roy, 50, of Horish Chandra village, said that miscreants cut the bark of the valuable big trees at dead of night, as locals remain vigilant at daytime.

After the trees die, they cannot be removed by the forest department officials due to shortage of manpower. Taking the opportunity, the thieves take away the trees at night, he added.

Monem Hossen, forester of Jaldhaka forest office, said, "My department filed dozens of cases in the court against a number of criminals on charge of felling trees. But this crime can't be stopped as the thieves are cutting tree barks to make them die before removal."

Mostafizur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB in Dalia division, said they usually hold motivational meetings with the union parishad leaders concerned and request them to look after the canal embankment trees, but to no avail.

SNIPPETS

Child marriage bid foiled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A teenage girl was saved from early marriage in Kathalia upazila of the district on Tuesday. Farzana Akhter, 17, daughter of late Ainal Haque of Ashulia in Dhaka, was going to be married with Md Al Amin, 25, son of Dulal Sharif of Kathalia, in the evening. On information, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Sharif Mohammad Faizul Morshed rushed to the spot, foiled the marriage and detained four people including the bridegroom. The four were later produced before a mobile court, led by the UNO, which fined them Tk 1,000 each.

Kids drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two kids drowned in ponds in Dinajpur and Rangpur districts on Tuesday. The deceased are Ashiqur Rahman, 10, son of Jahangir Gazi of Kagzipara village in Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur, and Moumita Zannat, 6, daughter of Momin Islam of Chhatnibilpara village in Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur. Family members said Ashiqur accidentally fell into a pond near their house while playing on its bank and drowned. Later, villagers rescued the body from the pond. Meanwhile, Zannat went out of home for playing with her friends at noon and did not return since then. In the evening, her body was found floating in a pond near their house.

Two electrocuted

STAR COUNTRY DESK

A woman and a minor girl were electrocuted in Mymensingh and Tangail districts yesterday. A housewife died from electrocution at Parapachashi village in Ishwarganj upazila of Mymensingh, reports our correspondent. The deceased is Rahima Khatun, 40, wife of Abul Hashim of the village. Family sources said Rahima was electrocuted when she came in contact with a live electric wire of a motor at her house around 10:00am. In Tangail, a seven-year-old girl was electrocuted in the town, reports our correspondent. The deceased is Shahrin Islam, daughter of Shafiqul Islam of Kazipur area in the town.

2 'commit suicide'

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two housewives allegedly committed suicide in Jessore and Sirajganj districts on Tuesday. A young woman took her life by hanging herself from the ceiling of her room at Navaran village in Sharsha upazila of Jessore, reports our Benapole correspondent. The deceased is Anjana Rani, 19, wife of Palash Kumar. Police said Anjana gave birth to a child two months ago. Eight days after birth, the baby died. The incident upset her very much. She committed suicide over the issue on Tuesday night. In Sirajganj, a housewife committed suicide by setting fire to her body over a family matter at Khadila village in Ullapra upazila of the district in the afternoon, reports our Pabna correspondent. The deceased is Sabila Khatun, 30, wife of Shahidul Islam of the village.

Magura's lone school for autistic kids in dire straits

AZIBOR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

Begum Shamsunnahar from Magura town is worried about her child's education. Due to a lack of teaching aids and toys, she says, regular schools aren't suitable. Shamsunnahar's child is autistic and attends the sole school for autistic students in Magura. But for 4 long years due to a funding shortage the school has been unable to cover teachers' salaries. The school's future is uncertain.

In 2012 when the school first opened, Shamsunnahar, like the parents of the other 48 enrolled students, was delighted. A very bleak educational outlook for her child was suddenly replaced by a ray of hope. But the school is yet in the midst of financial crisis.

"There is no other school for autistic children in Magura," says Samsunnahar. "The authorities should take measures to ensure the betterment of these students."

"My child has been at the school for 2 years," says another parent AKM Nurul Basher. "I have found such positive change in him. He gets treated with great care by his teachers. The education is very good; which is why to think of their lack of salary makes me tearful."

The school has 5 classrooms and employs 8 staff members including 4 determined teachers.

"The young students bring much

joy into the classroom," says teacher Sumana Khatun. "They make us laugh while teaching them. Classroom strategies are of course different to those for regular students and it's so pleasurable when they make progress."

"Teaching autistic students is a unique and rewarding experience," says assistant teacher Taslima Khatun. "We get so much satisfaction from teaching them. There is only one problem to dishearten us: we don't get paid."

Dolifa Yashmin is the school's headmistress. "My in-laws daily forbid me to go to the school," she says, "because for 4 years I have not taken any remuneration. But I cannot part with the school because the students are like children of my own."

Although 60 autistic schools across the country receive regular donations from the Society for the Welfare of Intellectually Disabled, Magura's school does not. Its only income source is students' fees of Tk 500 per month each, including cycle van transport. But many of the students attend without paying fees since their families are insolvent.

Most of the school's around Tk 6,000 realised monthly income is used to cover the building rent. Employees go empty handed.

The deputy director of social welfare in Magura, Sheikh Mahinul Hoque,

says he is aware of the problem. "If the school was registered with the social welfare department," he says, "I could support them financially. This institution requires urgent registration."

Yet according to Dolifa Yashmin, on several occasions letters have been sent to the ministry requesting assistance, without result.

Parents meanwhile do their best to help. "We assist the school often," says one student's guardian, Omar Ali. "This school is important for our town's autistic students. But the teachers don't get a government salary, and if they were paid regularly it must be that the quality of the school would be even better."

For the students, unaware of their school's perilous financial position, are left only to enjoy their school life while it lasts. "We like our class," says Sheikh Setara of Class 3. "We get to play with toys as we learn."

"I learnt handicrafts here," says Munira Tasnim of Class 4. "It can help me in the future. Our classes are really interesting."

Yet for the teachers, despite their dedication, non-payment of salary is making life miserable. There is only to hope that soon the government or a non-government organisation will extend the institution support.

Rapist gets life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Judge Md Abdul Mannan of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-1 of Bogra yesterday sentenced a rapist to life imprisonment and fined him Tk 50 thousand, in default, to suffer one more year in jail.

The convict is Kamal Pramanik, 32, son of Shekendar Ali Pramanik of Jhinarpara under Sonatola upazila of the district.

The victim is a Class VII student of Baluhat High School in the upazila.

The case statement said the victim went to sleep after taking her dinner at around 8:00pm on September 5, 2008. Later, Kamal entered her room by breaking the door, raped her and fled.

The victim's father lodged a rape case with Sonatola Police Station the following day.

Suspected militant arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Police arrested a suspected militant from Sarkarpara village in Sadar upazila of the district on early Tuesday.

The detainee, Abu Hasnat, 24, son of Entajur Rahman of the village, is a third-year student of Dhaka Medical College.

After filing a case with Sadar Police Station, police produced Hasnat before a Thakurgaon court that sent him to jail.

OC Moshir Rahman of the police station said a police team, acting on a tip-off, raided the village around 1:30am and detained Hasnat and his younger brother Abu Hammam, 16.

After interrogation, police freed Hammam under his parents' custody on condition of visiting the police station twice a day.

Police also arrested Hasnat's another sibling Abu Hannan, a first-year student of Dinajpur Medical College, from Chittagong city on Tuesday, the OC added.



PHOTO: STAR

YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE: Children and young adults engage in playful pastime at Chapra Beel in Basail upazila under Tangail district a couple of days ago.

Husband's brutality lands her in hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Tortured allegedly by her husband, a woman is undergoing treatment at Gaibandha Sadar Hospital.

Victim Zakia Sultana Hashi of Meghdomur village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila is wife of Asad Alam Pabon, a police constable serving in Thakurgaon.

She told journalists yesterday that her husband tortured her as she failed to pay dowry of Tk 3 lakh and refused to accept his second marriage.

Asad married Nahid of Birganj upazila of Dinajpur a few days ago without the consent of his first wife. Since then, he had been putting pressure on Zakia to accept the matter, but she refused.

On July 3, Asad came home during Eid and brought his first wife from her father's home. He demanded Tk 3 lakh dowry from Zakia and told her to accept Nahid as his second wife. As Zakia refused, he confined her to a room for 12

days without food, tortured her and cut off her hair. On being informed, relatives of Zakia went to Asad's house in Domorgacha village under Gobindaganj upazila and rescued her with the help of locals. They admitted her to Gaibandha Sadar hospital on Tuesday.

"Tk 3 lakh was given to Asad Alam as dowry when he married Zakia seven years ago, and now he wants Tk 3 lakh more. He also married another woman and tor-

tured my daughter to accept it," said Julekha Begum, mother of Jakia.

"My son Jahangir Alam went to the police station for filing a case against Asad, but police did not allow him to," she added.

Mozammel Huq, officer-in-charge of Gobindaganj Police Station, said a case can be filed with specific charges of torture.

Asad Alam could not be contacted as his cellphone was switched off.

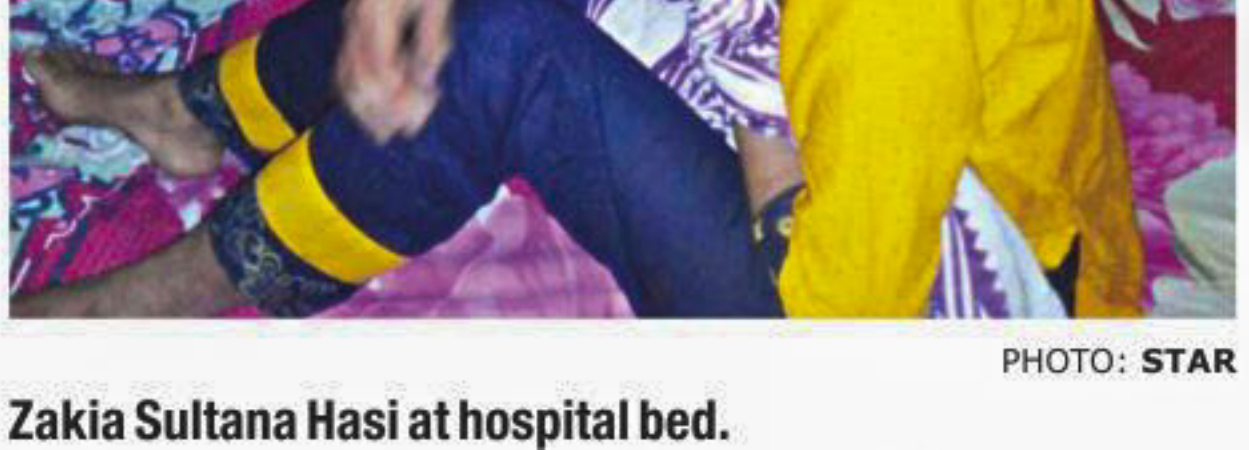


PHOTO: STAR

Zakia Sultana Hasi at hospital bed.



PHOTO: STAR

With a modest allocation for teachers' salary and learning aids, this school for autistic children in Magura town could have been a much better place for the stakeholders.