

Her body burnt for dowry

AMINUL ISLAM, from Mymensingh

Her in-laws had been torturing her in every way possible in pressuring her into getting dowry from her family. With rage over failed attempts they at last inflicted burns on her on Thursday.

The 24-year-old victim, Radharani Chowhan seemed to have stopped talking as The Daily Star correspondent visited her at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) where she has been undergoing treatment.

Adnan Kaiser, register of the burn and surgery department of the hospital, yesterday said she was out of danger and was recovering.

Daughter of late Harilal Chowhan, of Kacharipara in Nalitabari upazila of Sherpur district, Radha married Arun Chowhan, son of Sreeprasad Chowhan of Haluaghat upazila in Mymensingh, nearly six years ago.

About one and a half years into the marriage, Radha's in-laws began pressuring her to bring Tk 1 lakh dowry from her parents. They also persuaded Arun, an employee of a clothing shop, to put pressure on Radha for realising dowry, according to her family.

As she refused to oblige them, saying that her only brother didn't have the capacity to give the dowry, the in-laws increased both mental and physical torture.

In recent months, the torture



Radha with her mother in Mymensingh Medical College Hospital yesterday. Her father-in-law poured boiling hot curry on her over dowry. PHOTO: STAR

mounted to its peak. On several occasions, she was beaten up. About a week ago, Radha was driven out of the house, said her elder brother Sanjib Chowhan.

Neighbours then gave her shelter, and as things calmed down they told her to go back to her in-laws' house.

The in-laws on Thursday again engaged in an altercation with her

over the same issue. At one stage, Arun's father Sreeprasad poured boiling curry, which she was cooking at the time, on her face, Sanjib said.

Hearing Radha scream, people from the neighbourhood rushed to the spot and took her to Haluaghat Upazila Health Complex.

She was immediately shifted to the MMCH as her condition was critical, Sanjib said, adding that Arun himself took her to Mymensingh but after her admission to the hospital, he fled.

"We fulfilled all demands [of Radha's in-laws] during their marriage, but now we have no ability," said Radha's cousin Rajkumar Sarker.

Her mother Budia Chowhan said she wants exemplary punishment to everyone who tortured her daughter.

Nearly seven percent of Radha's body including face, neck and the right hand were burnt, said Adnan, of the surgery department of the MMCH.

Meanwhile, Sanjib lodged a case with Haluaghat Police Station against Arun's father Sreeprasad, mother Joysna Chowhan and younger brother Barun Chowhan.

Police arrested Sreeprasad and Joysna at their house yesterday morning, said Sub-inspector Sanwar Hossain. The arrestees were then produced before a Mymensingh court that sent them to jail.

Anti-IS offensive

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The operation, dubbed "Wrath of the Euphrates," involves some 30,000 fighters and had begun on Saturday night, Ahmed said, speaking alongside SDF officials in crisp fatigues.

SDF spokesman Talal Sello told AFP it would proceed in two phases, first seizing areas around Raqa and isolating the city, advancing from three fronts, then "taking control of the city" itself.

"The fight will not be easy, and will require accurate and careful operations because IS will defend its bastion knowing that the loss of Raqa will mean it is finished in Syria," he said.

An AFP correspondent in Ain Issa saw dozens of armed SDF fighters heading on vehicles towards the front line.

The long-awaited operation comes two years after IS seized control of large parts of Syria and Iraq and declared its cross-border "caliphate".

The jihadists have suffered a string of territorial defeats in recent months and are under pressure on multiple fronts.

After launching an offensive on Mosul on October 17, Iraqi special forces pushed into the city on Friday and have been facing stiff resistance from the jihadists.

MOSUL BATTLE RAGES

Iraq's special forces worked yesterday to clear neighbourhoods on the eastern edge of Islamic State-held Mosul.

The offensive has slowed in recent

days as Iraqi forces have pushed into more densely populated areas, where they cannot rely as much on airstrikes and shelling because of the risk posed to civilians, who have been told to stay in their homes, reports AP.

"There are a lot of civilians and we are trying to protect them," said Lt Col Muhanad al-Timimi. "This is one of the hardest battles that we've faced till now."

Some civilians are fleeing the combat zone, while IS militants are holding others back for use as human shields, making it harder for Iraqi commanders on the ground to get approval for requested US-led coalition airstrikes.

On the southern front, Iraqi forces are still some 12 miles from the city centre. The fighting is centred on the town of Hamam al-Alli, where Associated Press journalists could hear gunfire and saw attack helicopters firing on IS positions.

Kurdish peshmerga fighters launched mortar rounds and fired heavy artillery at the IS-held town of Bashiqa, about 8 miles northeast of Mosul. The town, which is believed to be largely empty except for IS militants, has been encircled by Kurdish forces.

COMPLICATED BATTLEFIELD

The loss of Mosul and Raqa would deprive IS of its largest population centres, effectively ending the group's claim to a self-declared "state".

Clinton's win matters to media

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Clinton was fortunate to receive endorsements, even by the newspapers traditionally Republican, apparently because the Republican Party picked "the wrong presidential candidate".

For example, some major newspapers -- The Dallas Morning News, Arizona Republic, San Diego Union-Tribune, Columbus Dispatch, Omaha World-Herald, and Cincinnati Enquirer -- have broken a streak of Republican endorsements to choose Clinton.

The Arizona Republic editorial board endorsed Clinton. It was the Democratic presidential nominee endorsement in the paper's 126 year history.

In Ohio, the Enquirer had supported Republicans for president for nearly a century. The Dallas Morning News hadn't backed a Democrat for the White House since before World War II.

The Detroit News abandoned Republicans for the first time in 143 years by endorsing Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson.

Breaking its 34-year tradition of not endorsing a candidate in the presidential race, US Today, a widely circulated national daily, took sides in this election. Though it did not endorse any specific candidate, but urged its readers not to vote for Donald Trump.

Trump, the US Today editorial board said, is "erratic", "ill-equipped to be commander in chief", a "serial liar" and has "coarsened the national dialogue".

Widely reputed monthly magazine The Atlantic perceived Trump to be a danger to the USA and broke its silence endorsing Hillary Clinton. For the third time in its 160 year history it made a presidential nominee endorsement.

The last time The Atlantic took sides in a presidential election was in 1964, when it sided with Democrat nominee Lyndon B Johnson due to similar fears about his opponent Barry Goldwater.

Its only other presidential endorsement came 104 years earlier when it backed Republican nominee Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

The Chicago Sun-Times had stopped making presidential endorsements in 2012, but reversed course this year endorsing Clinton. It explained "the best way to avert a train wreck is to wave a warning flag as soon as possible".

Following their tradition, internationally reputed newspapers New York Times and Washington Post endorsed Clinton.

Of the two, the NYT has been endorsing presidential candidate since 1860. It first endorsed Abraham Lincoln, the Republican presidential nominee. It kept continuing to endorse Republican nominees for years. Then it started endorsing Democratic nominees and then again Republican. But since 1960s, it has kept endorsing Democrats. In the last 156 years, this news organisation endorsed 39 presidential nominees. Of them 24 won.

Another record is that the top 100 dailies by 2016 circulation, 55 have endorsed Clinton. And only one, the Las Vegas Review-Journal, has endorsed Donald Trump.

The Economist on November 3 in an article styled "American newspapers resoundingly reject Donald Trump" explained the reason behind the unprecedented endorsements.

"Newspaper endorsements tend to favour the party out of power, perhaps because editors are enthralled by challengers' charisma," it writes.

When Barack Obama burst onto the scene in his 2008 run, he charmed 71 percent of the newspapers. Things didn't work out quite so well the sec-

ond time around, with Obama having to make do with just 56 percent of endorsements in 2012, according to The Economist.

"This time, despite eight years of Democratic rule, editorial boards fearful of a Trump presidency have overwhelmingly backed Clinton," says The Economist.

It says as an inanimate newspaper -- and a British one to boot -- The Economist cannot vote in the American elections. But if it could, it would cast its hypothetical vote for Clinton and it would not be the only one.

It is true that The Economist would not be the only one as The Globe and Mail, a Canadian newspaper, on November 2 in an editorial urged Americans not to vote for Donald Trump.

"This US election, unlike any since the Second World War, is white knuckle time for the rest of the world. Foreign governments don't want to interfere in your democracy, so they can't say what they really think about Trump. But we can. We're terrified," wrote the Globe and Mail.

CRUSADER & NAZI PARTY SUPPORT TRUMP!
In the final week of the most divisive presidential contest in living memory, Trump has received the backing of the Ku Klux Klan's official newspaper. It advocates extremist reactionary. The Crusader devoted its entire front page to an editorial calling for its readers to "Make America Great Again!"

But this support generated huge controversy as it claimed: "America was founded as a White Christian Republic. And as a White Christian Republic it became great." The Trump campaign criticised the article. "Mr Trump and the campaign denounce hate in any form," the campaign said in a statement. "This publication is repulsive and their views do not represent the tens of millions of Americans who are uniting behind our campaign."

Interestingly, Trump has also received the tacit support of the American Nazi Party. Its chief Rocky Suhayda in August agreed, declaring on his radio show that Trump offers "real opportunity" to build the white nationalist movement.

More recently, Trump's rallies have been marred by a series of racially charged incidents. MEDIA RIGGING ELECTION? The whopping endorsements for Clinton by newspapers, has prompted Trump to come up with his pet theory: "Media rigging election!" The Trump campaign and pro-Trump media outlets have been arguing that there is a clear media bias and media is explicitly working with the Clinton campaign to defeat Trump.

Trump has also launched a blistering attack on the media since the beginning of his campaign. He has insulted and vilified the press and has made his opposition to the media a centre piece of his campaign. He has routinely labelled the press as "dishonest" and "scum" and singled out individual news organisations and journalists. He even threatened to sue some newspapers and to tighten defamation laws against the media.

The continuous threat has prompted the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) to take an unprecedented step, accusing Trump of "betraying first amendment values". If Trump should win the presidency it would represent a threat to press freedom, said CPJ, the US-based press freedom watchdog, in a statement last month.

Freedom of the press has been a key

principle in American public life since the American Revolution with truth long established as an absolute defence to any accusation of libel.

The first amendment states that "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press". It is a foundation stone of democracy in the United States.

This was most recently asserted by the Supreme Court in 1964, in an unanimous decision in New York Times vs Sullivan.

In its ruling, the court held that any public figure suing for libel must prove that a defamatory statement was made with actual malice, "with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not".

In numerous cases, the US apex court has also upheld the freedom of the press.

CLINTON OR TRUMP? Despite unprecedented rejection by the media, Trump still remains as a prospective contender for the White House.

In the ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll for example, Clinton was ahead of Trump by 12 points on 23 October, but that lead had been narrowing significantly in recent days. The gap between them is now four points, according to NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll released yesterday.

Amid such a situation, Americans vote tomorrow to pick their next president. Who will have the last laugh Clinton or Trump? Whoever wins, it will matter a lot to the media. If Clinton wins, news media can claim their role justified. If Trump wins, history of the freedom of the press may be re-written as feared by many and credibility of news media may be questioned further.

Depression

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(DAE) in Chittagong, said of the affected fields, 6,200 hectares are of aman paddy, 1,400 hectares of vegetable and 1,620 hectares of khesari (one kind of pulse).

The actual extent of the damage could be known after a complete survey which might take two days, said the DAE official.

Biswajit Roy, duty forecasting officer of Patenga meteorological office, said around 76 millimetres of rainfall were recorded in the previous 24 hours till 12:00 noon yesterday.

He said the coastal upazilas -- Sandwip, Sitakunda, Banskhali, Anwara, Patiya and Mirsharai -- were the most affected areas in Chittagong.

Zia Ahmed Sumon, Mirsharai upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), said around 121.5 hectares of aman fields and around 8.1 hectares of vegetable fields were affected in the upazila.

Sitakunda UNO Najmul Islam Bhuiyan said around 300 hectares of paddy were damaged in the area.

Our Patuakhali correspondent adds, heavy rain badly damaged aman paddy of over 67,000 hectares in three coastal districts -- Patuakhali, Barguna and Bhola. Paddy of around 90,000 hectares was affected in all six districts, including the three, in Barisal division.

Of the affected paddy fields, around 32,000 out of 2,10,340 hectares are in Patuakhali, over 20,000 out of 1,83,065 hectares in Bhola and 15,000 out of 99,850 hectares in Barguna, said DAE sources.

Nazrul Islam Matubbor, deputy director of Patuakhali DAE, said around 2,10,340 hectares had been brought under aman cultivation in the district this year and about 16 percent of the paddy was damaged.

Ansar member killed in airport

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was put in a cabin under police custody.

Resident Surgeon Jesmin Nahar told The Daily Star that the alleged attacker had cut injuries in his thigh and head.

Ansar member Ziaur Rahman, one of the injured, was taken to Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka. Two other injured security personnel of the airport's Armed Police Battalion had first aid in Kurmitola General Hospital.

Even though the attacker was wearing the uniform of a maintenance firm working at the airport, police could not say for sure if he was an employee of the company.

"The attacker said his name is Shihab but we are not sure whether it is his real name," Ruhul Amin Sagar, assistant commissioner (Airport zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

"He was giving confusing information ... he seemed to be mentally unstable. We are investigating," he said.

Ruhul also said they were collecting CCTV footage from the airport to know how the attack was made.

Director General of Ansar Maj Gen Mizanur Rahman Khan told reporters that the attacker was trying to enter the departure lounge of the airport through Gate-4 around 6:30pm. The four security personnel were deployed there.

When Md Sohagh Ali tried to stop the attacker from entering the terminal, he started indiscriminately stabbing the security personnel and managed to



The attacker being taken to hospital. PHOTO: STAR

enter the terminal.

Security personnel inside the departure lounge took him down immediately, the DG added.

An Ansar member who witnessed the incident said after the attacker started stabbing people, policemen fired several times, including shots in the air.

Panic spread in and outside the airport as passengers and visitors ran for cover amid gunfire.

Ansar platoon Commander Ashraful, who was on duty on the ground floor, said, "I ran to the scene hearing the news and found Sohagh lying in a pool of blood."

He said he then rushed Sohagh to Kurmitola General Hospital where he died at 7:45pm.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh in a statement issued last

night said,

"A young man suddenly appeared on the first floor drive way from the north side. Seeing a knife in his hand, police and Ansar tried to arrest him."

At one point, the young man critically injured Sohagh, an Ansar man, when the latter attempted to grab him, it added.

APBN members Ishiaq and Ashik were also knifed in a similar way.

"The incident could not disrupt flight operations and other activities at the airport. Investigation and legal procedure into the incident are underway," it said.

Sources told The Daily Star that the airport was in virtual lock down for a few minutes after the attack.

Meanwhile, DMP Additional Commissioner Sheikh Maruf Hassan said, "We see it as a stray incident and not a security threat."

Clinton, Trump scramble

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Pence, will hold campaign events in Minnesota, a state that has not voted for a Republican since 1972. A Trump campaign official insisted that the move was not a feint and that internal polling showed the Republican only three points behind Clinton there.

In a sign that Democrats are suddenly anxious about Michigan, Clinton today will be in Grand Rapids and President Obama will campaign in Ann Arbor. Trump and Pence will also be in Michigan in the next two days, reported Washington Post yesterday.

At a rally Saturday in Tampa, which is a bellwether of crucial Florida, Trump said his campaign is moving aggressively to seize upon openings it sees across the country.

"We're going into what they used to call Democrat strongholds where we are now tied or leading," the billionaire real estate developer said.

He predicted that he will win Florida and Pennsylvania -- which both voted for Obama in the past two elections -- and said that he is "doing phenomenally well in North Carolina," where both candidates have invested significant time and resources over the past few weeks.

Clinton is banking on star power to lock in her narrow poll lead, hosting back-to-back weekend pop concerts with Beyonce and Katy Perry and booking a date with President Barack Obama, AFP wrote yesterday.

For his part Trump has embarked on a cross-country odyssey through Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida, North Carolina and New Hampshire.

The latest major survey, an ABC/Washington Post tracker released early yesterday, gave Clinton a five percentage point 48-43 lead. Polling averages however are closer.

The final 48-hour programmes of both campaigns suggest that the race is closer than either side admits.

In the latest sign of the mounting

tension and ugly mood, Trump was briefly hustled off stage in Reno, Nevada, on Saturday in a false gun scare.

Trump was unruffled, although his son retweeted a message implying it was an "assassination attempt." The Secret Service said that agents found no weapon.

The unrest broke out when a protester trying to hold up a "Republicans against Trump" sign was wrestled to the ground and attacked by Trump supporters. The man, who said he was a Republican, was briefly detained then released.

Clinton's camp mocked the 70-year-old tycoon's scattershot approach to the electoral map as a sign of panic.

But the 69-year-old former secretary of state herself added an extra planned stopover in Michigan, a state that fellow Democrat Obama won easily in 2012.

At his campaign stops the billionaire Republican remained triumphant.

"In three days we are going to win the great state of Colorado and we are going to win back the White House," Trump promised late Saturday in Denver, Colorado.

"You're going to be so happy. We're going to start winning again," he intoned, urging voters to cast ballots in person to avoid the risk of fraud in postal voting.

Trump hit his key themes: promises to tear up free trade agreements, expel undocumented migrants, rebuild an allegedly depleted US military and purge Washington of corruption.

And his fans roared back the same three-word chants: "Build the wall!" "Drain the swamp!" "Lock her up!" "JUST HAS NO PATH"

Clinton's late decision to head to Michigan with Obama on today and to add a midnight rally in North Carolina as election day begins raised eyebrows.

Campaign manager Robby Mook dismissed suggestions that Clinton is trying to shore up her crumbling

northern firewall.

"Donald Trump has to win all of these battleground races," he said. "If we win Pennsylvania and Florida, he just has no path."

Outside of the United States, Washington's allies fear that a candidate who threatens to review US treaty alliances is within striking distance of the White House.

There was scorn in Britain, where Trump effigies were burned instead of local hate figures on the traditional November 5 Bonfire Night.

And in Germany, leading news weekly Der Spiegel on its front page depicted both candidates covered in the mud of a dirty campaign.

"When I look at Washington, I am worried," German President Joachim Gauck told the magazine, citing Trump's "unpredictability."

US foes like Russia and Iran have not hidden their mirth at the turmoil rocking US democracy.

The polls are unclear. Clinton still enjoys a narrow nationwide advantage, a 2.1 percentage point lead according to a poll average by tracker RealClearPolitics.

But the election will be won or lost in the US electoral college, and perhaps a dozen states are in play. Trump's camp believes it can pick off enough of them on November 8.

His campaign has been torpedoed and holed but not yet sunk by allegations of sexual assault and the candidate's own off-colour outbursts.

Meanwhile, the long-running saga of Clinton's inappropriate use of a private email server -- fed by announcements and leaks from FBI investigators -- continues to taint her pitch as the competent professional.

As the race nears the end, Clinton is trying to crack the pessimism with an upbeat message, bringing in heavy-weight support from Obama and megastars like Beyonce and her husband Jay-Z.