

Young woman murdered for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A woman was killed for dowry allegedly by her husband at Ramnagar village in Sadar upazila of the district on Tuesday.

The deceased was Hashi Begum, 22, wife of Mizanur Rahman of the village, said Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Natore Police Station.

Being informed, police recovered the body of Hashi from her husband's house around 10:00pm and sent it to Natore Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Ziarul Islam, father of the victim, said Mizanur often tortured Hashi for Tk 1 lakh as dowry.

Mizanur and his family members changed the body of his daughter from ceiling of the house after killing her, he alleged.

Police arrested Mizanur's mother Momena Begum, the OC said, adding that Mizanur and other family members managed to flee soon after the incident.

Lost Vinci

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after he was acquitted of sodomy, is one of eight he is known to have drawn.

The find is extremely rare, with the last Da Vinci drawing that came to market -- a sketch of a horse and rider -- equalling the world record for an Old Master drawing when it sold for \$10 million in 2001.

It was then said to be the most significant drawing by the artist and polymath to be sold at auction since the 1930s.

MIRROR WRITING

De Bayser told AFP he came across the new sketch, done with a quill pen, during a routine trawl through material sent to the auction house for valuation.

AL probe

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team member, wishing not to be named.

The team, however, did not find any links of local AL lawmaker Abul Kalam Azad to the incident. However, it said the lawmaker should have played a role in tackling the incident but he remained silent throughout the time.

The local union parishad election was a factor in the incident, the AL leader said, quoting the report which also blamed Jamaat men wanting to "achieve political gain" for the incident.

The AL team said it did not have enough time to find out all the reasons behind the incident as the team was at the spot for just a day.

It suggested that the government forms a stronger probe committee to investigate further and rehabilitate the evicted Santals and give them compensation, added the AL leader.

Don't allocate

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Confusion might be created among people if "daripalla" is used as the symbol of any person, organisation or political party, it added.

The SC had a full court meeting on December 12 and decided to request the EC not to allocate weighing scale to any political party as the polls symbol.

The weighing scale was earlier allocated to the Jamaat-e-Islami. The party lost the right to contest parliamentary elections after the HC declared its registration with the EC illegal.

EC's Secretary Muhammad Abdullah yesterday told The Daily Star that they received the letter from the SC.

"The letter will be placed before the [EC] commissioners tomorrow [Thursday] for our further course of action. I think the commissioners will make decision as per the court directive," he said.

2 abducted

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Agalachhara village in Bangoltoli union.

Armed members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) first abducted the two victims from their homes around 3:00am and later killed them inside the forest nearby, said local sources.

Saroj Kanti Chakma, president of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS - MN Larma) Baghaichhari unit, confirmed the killings of the two Juba Samiti men, saying that armed UPDF men have committed the crime.

Rebutting the allegation, UPDF Baghaichhari unit chief Jewel Chakma claimed that the two people were killed due to an internal feud of the PCJSS. "We are not involved in the incident."

Abul Kalam, officer-in-charge of Baghaichhari Police Station, said, the bodies of both victims bore wounds inflicted by sharp weapons and firearms. Additional force has been deployed in the area, he added.

Muslim insurgency

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This has helped the group gain significant support among Rohingya in northern Rakhine. It has spent at least two years training hundreds of local recruits in guerrilla warfare and explosives.

Several hundred Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh have also travelled to Rakhine in recent weeks to join up. The current heavy-handed security response is very unlikely to dislodge al-Yaqin; rather, it is creating further despair and animosity among the population, which may further entrench violence.

The emergence of this well-organised and apparently well-funded group is a game-changer in the government's efforts to address the complex challenges of Rakhine State, the report mentions.

Though there have been some small insurgent groups in recent decades, mostly based out of Bangladesh, in Myanmar, the Rohingya have never been a radicalised population, and the majority have eschewed violence, seeing it as counterproductive to improving their lot.

But impoverished and oppressed, they struggle to survive and have little hope for their future; over the past year, the sense of desperation has been increasing.

Though there are some indications of training and solidarity links with international jihadist organisations, the aims and actions of al-Yaqin involve insurgency against security forces, rather than being terrorist or transnational jihadist. It has not attacked civilians or religious targets. Its stated aim is to secure the rights of the Rohingya as citizens within Myanmar -- although its violent approach has set back that cause

immensely.

Its tactics are sophisticated. On October 9, it launched pre-dawn attacks on three border police bases, including an audacious assault on the headquarters, a key security installation.

The headquarters was overrun in a complex attack involving several hundred assailants that included planting improvised explosive devices and setting an ambush on the approach road, delaying the arrival of army reinforcements, while the attackers looted the armoury.

A further clash on November 12 killed a senior army officer. These actions represent the actions of a determined, well-trained insurgency that will likely launch further attacks.

Feeling its dignity affronted and taking casualties, the military employed disproportionate force and failed to adequately distinguish attackers from civilians.

At least 1,500 homes have been burned down -- almost certainly by the military, according to satellite analysis released by Human Rights Watch on December 13.

Some 30,000 have been internally displaced and 27,000 have so far sought refuge in Bangladesh. The area where the military is focusing its crackdown has been almost entirely sealed off, which has made it difficult to verify multiple allegations of serious human rights abuses; but as more people arrive in Bangladesh, a clearer picture is starting to emerge.

Aung San Suu Kyi has said little publicly on the situation, has not travelled to the area or criticised the crackdown. The state media she controls have issued blanket denials of abuses, risking reinforcing the impunity of troops on the ground. And tensions with the Muslim world are rising.

Tension over Facebook post on Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A written complaint was filed with police against a shop owner in Chittagong's Hathazari upazila yesterday after he allegedly made a post on Facebook "hurting religious sentiments of the Muslims".

Several hundred locals went to Habibullah Khan's computer training centre at Chowdhury Hat Market in the morning and locked the shop from outside, traders in the market said.

The accused was not there at that time.

The Facebook post was uploaded from the account "EliteHabibCtg" on Tuesday.

Ali Faruk Chowdhury, general secretary of Chowdhury Hat Market Traders' Association, lodged the complaint with Hathazari Police Station.

Shariful Islam, inspector (investigation) of the station, said, "We have got a written complaint against a youth. We are investigating the matter."

Several hundred locals, including Hindus and Muslims, gathered at the market after the news about the post had spread in the locality yesterday morning.

Habib was on the run and his mobile phone was found switched off.

However, he offered apology through another Facebook post from the account around 1:00pm. The account was deactivated around 4:30pm.

Locals in a rally held in the afternoon demanded Habib's arrest and punishment.

Rejoinder, our reply

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Unscrupulous Traders" disrespectful.

(B) In the report, quoting BJMC officials, the reporter wrote that GFTCL managed to buy 100 bags for \$84 when 100 bags were being sold for \$100. Also the BJMC director was quoted as saying that the BJMC never got the right price, whereas some traders earned 10-20 percent profit. It is an utter lie and misrepresentation of fact.

(C) The GFTCL has got no role to play to fix the BJMC's published price and traders like GFTCL are in no way related to gigantic loss that the BJMC incurred over the years. It is entirely the BJMC's internal affair. The GFTCL cannot dictate the BJMC's operational efficiency, productivity, cost minimisation, pilferage, wastage, mishandling and misappropriation.

(D) Because of the GFTCL's marketing efficiency, prudence, intelligence and professionalism, it became the largest BJMC's buyer. Complying with the BJMC's regulations, it has been exporting jute goods from the BJMC. In the last five years, the company exported around Tk 650 crore worth of BJMC-manufactured jute goods to Sudan.

(E) Although the GFTCL has been performing spectacularly in the export market, disregarding all our credentials and business reputation, Mr Amin Abdel Latif (Bangladesh's consul general in Sudan) in connivance with the beneficiary of the then BNP regime started conspiring against us to monopolise the market. Meantime, Mr Amin Abdel Latif, a Sudanese, minted money and earned windfall profit. It is after long six years, ice has started melting and found a room to approach the authority in 2009.

OUR REPLY

Nowhere did The Daily Star report say that Mushtaq's GFTCL is not an enlisted exporter with the BJMC. Also, the report did not term him as an "unscrupulous trader". It is BJMC officials who said they are a fully-fledged business organisation and are able to market and sell their goods directly.

But influential quarters always prevented them from doing so.

Moreover, Mushtaq himself admitted how a group of people controlled BJMC-manufactured products and made money for years. He said the then jute minister of the BNP government in 1991 had given a Gazipur-based businessman the sole agency of the BJMC's jute products and if other exporters, including enlisted ones, wanted to buy BJMC goods, they had to go to that businessman, who was dubbed "mini BJMC" at that time.

Identify sources

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said their empathy and appreciation for Bangladesh will create them as Bangladesh's valuable ambassadors in their respective countries.

She said her government has ensured that the Armed Forces have access to latest technologies and equipment as adequate training facilities have been established and made operational.

Hasina recalled the Armed Forces' integrity, commitment and diligence to help the people in times of natural calamities and disasters and strategic infrastructure projects implemented by them at very high standards both at home and abroad.

Then a group of Indian jute traders were able to influence the BJMC and had bought its goods in late 1990s and early 2000s. Later, a Sudanese businessman, Amin Abdel latif, who is also honorary consul general of Bangladesh in Sudan since 1991, got strong influence in the BJMC. Also, in the rejoinder Mushtaq said Amin minted money and earned windfall profit from BJMC.

On selling the BJMC-made bags at lower price than the market price, a top BJMC official showed a sale document that 100 B Twill bags were sold at \$84 last year to a local buyer when the international market price was around \$100. It was not the GFTCL that bought the goods at \$84 last year. We are sorry for the inadvertent mistake though the report published his comment as, "He [Mushtaq] refuted allegations that he bought jute goods from the BJMC at lower than the market prices".

The report never said that the GFTCL has a role to fix price of the BJMC's products.

However, The Daily Star corrects the GFTCL's last five years' export figures to Sudan at Tk 650 crore, instead of Tk 600 crore.

Three more

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formed by the national carrier, said Shakil Meraj, general manager of Biman' public relations department.

Stern actions against them will follow, said sources in the civil aviation ministry.

The four-member probe committee submitted its final report on Monday. The team led by Chief of Technical Capt Fazal Mahmud Chowdhury submitted the report to the managing director and CEO of Biman.

Earlier, Biman suspended six officials from its engineering department on November 30 as it found out their negligence had caused the Biman flight carrying PM to land in Turkmenistan.

The suspended engineers were SM Rokonuzaman, Samiul Haque, Lutfur Rahman, Milon Chandra Biswas and Zakir Hossain and technician Siddiqur Rahman.

On November 27, the prime minister left for Budapest at the invitation of Hungarian President Janos Ader to the Budapest Water Summit 2016. She was leading a 90-member delegation including three cabinet ministers.

The VVIP flight to Budapest with Hasina made the emergency landing at Ashgabat International Airport in Turkmenistan after a loose nut caused an oil leak and subsequent oil pressure loss in engine-1 of the Boeing 777-300ER, according to the Biman probe.

Cockpit crew members detected the technical glitch when the aircraft was flying over Lahore in Pakistan, and as per the standard operation procedure, the pilots made the emergency landing. The probe report cites "human failure factor" as the reason for it.

Having the problem fixed, the aircraft named "Ranga Pravhat" left the Ashgabat airport for Budapest.

Three enquiry committees were formed following the incident -- one by the civil aviation ministry, one by Biman and another by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

The two other probe committees are yet to finalise their reports, sources said.

Police blacklist 12 websites

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betfair.com, unbet.com, betvictor.com, netbet.com, titanbet.com, winer.com and paddypower.com.

Although betting is illegal in Bangladesh, it has grown out of proportion with the success of the Bangladesh cricket team and more importantly since the introduction of the BPL in 2012. Besides, people in this part of the world were also involved in betting during overseas events including the Indian Premier League (IPL). And according to police these websites play the biggest role in syndicated betting with their representatives on the ground.

A mid-ranked DMP official told The Daily Star that they detained at least 60 alleged gamblers including three Indian nationals and four Pakistanis from inside and outside stadiums during BPL matches, suspecting their involvement in illegal betting.

"They were taken to custody but were released later on bond, because anyone convicted of illegal betting are liable to pay only Tk 100 as per the law," the police officer told The Daily Star.

Preferring anonymity, he also told that the three Indian nationals, who also visited Bangladesh during the England series, were deported through the Indian High Commission while the Pakistani nationals were handed over to their embassy.

The police officer said it was easy to identify a gambler from a spectator because the gambler stays busy with his mobile phone rather than watching the game.

When contacted, Nazmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Cyber Security & Crime unit of DMP, confirmed that they wrote to BTRC to block those websites after a thorough investigation.

According to police, illegal betting took a serious turn recently as it involved all sections of the society including the young generation. Besides, the illegal betting syndicates that have been sprouting in every nook and corner of the country are sucking in even a farmer, a day labourer and a rickshawpuller.

The betting menace is growing because of the existing lenient law against it, said a police officer, adding that it should be revisited to bring the culprits to book.

The part of section 4 of Public Gambling Act-1869 reads: "Whoever is found in any such house, tent, room, space, or walled enclosure, playing or gaming with cards, dice, counters, money or other instruments of gaming, or is found there present for the purpose of gaming, whether playing for any money, wager, stake or otherwise, shall be liable, on conviction before any Magistrate, to a

fine not exceeding one hundred taka or to imprisonment of either description, as defined in the 9[Penal Code], for any term not exceeding one month."

Unfortunately we are living in the 21st century and the definition of gambling and its impact increased manifold instead of just being confined to playing cards or rolling the dice. And like an aggrieved police officer, many strongly feel that the gambling law should be updated to counter the betting epidemic, which is seriously hurting the society.

"The BCB through its anti-corruption unit is working with the police to counter betting in cricket. Still, I think the law should be time-befitting for a more concerted effort to fight this evil," said the BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury while confirming that the board has been sharing its knowledge about betting with police for quite some time.

When contacted, Law Secretary ASSM Zahirul Haque Dulal told The Daily Star that the home ministry is the proper authority to take steps to amend the law for enhancing punishment for gambling.

He also added that the law ministry will assist the home ministry if it takes any initiative to this effect.

It's about time the home ministry takes a step forward from 1869.

Shaky Aleppo truce broken

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The landmark deal -- which would mark the end of opposition resistance in Syria's second city after years of fighting -- appeared increasingly precarious as the regime, the rebels, and their foreign allies traded accusations.

The last pocket of rebel-held territory in east Aleppo came under heavy tank fire, said an AFP correspondent in the area, who saw several wounded civilians.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said air strikes had also hit rebel areas and that there were "very intense clashes on every front line".

State television said rebel rocket fire on government-controlled areas had also resumed, with at least seven people reported dead.

Rebels and a source close to the regime told AFP that the evacuation had been suspended after objections from Syria's government.

The source said Damascus had balked when the rebels wanted to increase the number of those to be evacuated from 2,000 to 10,000.

But Yasser al-Youssef, a political official from the Nureddin al-Zinki rebel group, said the regime and its ally Iran were trying to add "new conditions" to the agreement.

"They want to link this deal to other issues, including the areas of Fuua and Kafra," he added, referring to two government-held Shia-majority villages in northwestern Syria that are under rebel siege.

Moscow, a key Assad ally that launched an air war in support of his forces last year, said the Syrian army had resumed its operations in Aleppo after "an attack by the terrorists was warded off".

Ankara accused Assad's regime and its supporters of hampering

the implementation of the evacuation deal.

"The regime and some separate groups are trying to prevent this," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters.

"There's Russia here, Iran, powers backed by Iran, and of course the regime. We expect nobody should blame each other on such a humanitarian issue," Cavusoglu said.

Before the fighting resumed, AFP's correspondent had seen crowds of civilians gathered in the streets of rebel areas from the early hours, some clutching bags of belongings, to await evacuation.

Some had slept in the open, despite the cold and a fierce storm that brought heavy rain and high winds, and most had gone without a regular meal in weeks.

The deal was announced a month into an army operation to recapture all of Aleppo that has seen the government take more than 90 percent of the eastern districts rebels had held.

Brokered by Russia and Turkey, it was to see civilians and fighters leave Aleppo for opposition territory elsewhere in northern Syria.

Turkey President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday said he would speak with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in an effort to rescue the deal.

Turkey said those leaving would be taken to Idlib province, which is controlled by a powerful rebel alliance that includes al-Qaeda's former affiliate Fateh al-Sham Front.

The agreement came amid mounting international concern about the plight of civilians and as the UN said it had reports of atrocities being committed by advancing government forces.

The UN has reported allegations that men have gone missing after crossing to government areas, and on Tuesday said it had credible reports of summary executions by pro-regime fighters.

UN rights office spokesman Rupert Colville described reports of at least 82 civilians, including 11 women and 13 children, being executed in recent days.

Nation pays

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the memorial.

The PM also laid a wreath at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations hosted various programmes, including seminars, discussions and wreath-laying at Mirpur martyred intellectuals graveyard and the memorial at Rayerbazar.

The Awami League hoisted black flags and flew the national and party flags at half mast atop its offices across the country.

It also arranged a discussion in the city's Krishibid Institution in the afternoon, where Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina spoke.

Led by party Chairperson Khaleda Zia, the BNP paid homage to the martyred intellectuals at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the morning. National flags were at half mast atop its offices.

The party arranged a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club on Tuesday on the occasion.



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