

CHASED BY RIVAL GROUP

Expat jumped into river, still missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Saudi Arabia expatriate youth, who jumped into the Brahmaputra river after being chased by a group of rival people in Gafargaon upazila on Tuesday, is yet to be traced.

The victim is Sabuj Mia, 28, son of Shahid Mia of Lamkaine village, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Gafargaon Police Station AKM Mahbub Alam said.

Quoting the victim's family members, the OC said one Ali Newaz, a manpower broker of the village, took Tk 10.5 lakh from Shahid to send his other two sons Russel and Parvez to Malaysia more than six months ago.

As his two sons could not fly for Malaysia in the schedule time, Shahid asked Newaz to return his money.

As a sequel, Shahid along with his sons and relatives went to the upazila sub-registrar's office and demanded the money from Newaz when he came there to sell a piece of land on Tuesday.

While returning home around 3:00pm, as Shahid and others reached Imambari area, Newaz along with some of his hired goons allegedly attacked them with sharp weapons.

While running here and there to save his life, at one stage, Sabuj jumped into the Brahmaputra and went missing, the OC added.

Murder accused flees from the dock

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A man accused of killing his wife escaped from the dock of Satkhira District and Sessions Judge's Court yesterday.

The accused, Amjad Hossain, a resident of Nathpara village in Satkhira Sadar upazila, was produced before the court in handcuffs but he managed to flee from the jam-packed courtroom.

"Police on October 16, 2016 arrested Amjad on charge of killing his wife Achhia Khatun. Later he gave confessional statement in the court under Section 164," said advocate Osman Gani, public prosecutor (PP) at Satkhira District and Sessions Judge's Court.

"The date for hearing of the case was fixed on September 18. It could not be known why Amjad was brought to the court today [September 20]," the PP said.

The date for framing charge in the murder case has been fixed on October 22, he said.

Abu Sahed, superintendent of Satkhira district jail, said, "The date for hearing of the case was today. Court police came and took him around 8:15am."

"The court shifted the date of Amjad's case from September 20 to September 18 but the order concerning the changed date did not reach the jail authorities. Attempts are on to arrest the accused," said Ashraful Bari, court police inspector.



Built by a local influential man to monopolise fishing, a dam across Boro Kathalia canal in Kathalia upazila of Jhalakathi hampers irrigation, in addition to depriving common fishermen in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

Dam, a nuisance for locals

M JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL, Jhalakathi

A dam built across Baro Kathalia canal in Kathalia upazila under the district about eight years ago remains a nuisance for locals, especially farmers and fishermen.

Locals alleged that a few local influential people with the help of upazila Chairman Kibria Shikder and his brother Sadar union parishad Chairman Kabir Shikder built the dam to get allotment under the government's test relief programme and monopolise fishing there.

"The dam in the canal affects agriculture. Earlier engine boats plied the canal but it has lost navigability after creation of the dam. Four years ago, we filed a case and cut the dam but the powerful men rebuilt it," said Abdul Ali, a farmer of the area.

People from the both sides of the canal are grabbing the canal land after erection of the dam, said Tuhin, a college student of the area.

"I want to sell some wood trees to bear my child's education cost but buyers offered me low price,

claiming that they have to pay for carrying logs over the dam," said Shamim, a local.

"Before construction of the dam we caught fish in the canal, but now, only men of chairman Kibria Shikder catch fish there. They do not allow others," said a local fisherman seeking anonymity.

Several farmers said they suffer from flooding every rainy season as water cannot flow smoothly due to the dam.

"This dam affects agriculture in the area as floodwater that brings

fertility to the land cannot reach the land and waterlogging occurs in the rainy season," said Abdullah Al Mamun, agriculture officer of Kathalia.

"Fishes cannot move freely and breed well due to the dam in the canal," said Md Abdul Kalam Azad, upazila fisheries officer.

"Making a dam across a canal to stop the water flow is illegal. I have already discussed the issue with local leaders and officials in a meeting and the dam will be removed very soon," said Sharif Muhammad Faizul Alam, upazila

nirbahi officer of Kathalia.

"The musclemen are maintaining the dam for their personal interest and none dare to protest the matter although thousands of people are suffering for it," said an union parishad chairman of the upazila, wishing anonymity.

Kibria Shikder, upazila chairman of Kathalia, said, "I supported building the dam for public interest. My brother Kabir along with some local people may go to catch fish in the canal. I will break the dam very soon."



A scene of Bou Bazar (wives' market), a market run by women at Baniachar in Jalirpar union of Muksudpur upazila of Gopalganj.

PHOTO: STAR

Where women run the show

Gopalganj women's market an enduring success

SUZIT KUMAR DAS with ANDREW EAGLE

A good percentage of village women right across the country don't feel entirely comfortable to visit local markets. The noise, grit, fumes and dust, along with the overwhelming male majority in the crowd of market-goers and shopkeepers hardly appeals. Nor do women easily feel safe in such an environment. As a result, the women of Baniachar, in Jalirpar union of Muksudpur upazila in Gopalganj, long ago opted for change: what was needed, they decided, was a market of their own.

Established in 1988 and locally known as Bou Bazar, the 'wives market' is a longstanding, bustling success. The market currently hosts 150 permanent shops run by women, with around 300 more women arriving daily to sell milk and vegetables from temporary stalls. All manner of daily supplies can be purchased there.

"This market has an interesting story," says Shantanu Boiragi, who sells electric wires and cables from her shop in the bazaar. "Local women used to go to nearby Jalirpur market to shop, but one day it caused a dispute. After that women were forbidden to go there; so we started this one, our own market."

"Why is it called Bou Bazar?" poses betel leaf seller Doimonti Boiragi, 48. "It's because a long time ago, after breakfast when their husbands would leave for work, women in this area had little to do. They passed hours idly. So the women decided to have their own

market. Now they come here to sell goods and to shop instead of sitting at home. It's helpful because women know better than men which vegetables to buy to cook with which fish."

"I have been running a tea stall in this market for fifteen years," says Shela Mondol, 38. "Women have no need to feel shy here. Nobody disturbs us."

"Most customers and shopkeepers are women," agrees Mina Bilal, herself a shopkeeper in the bazaar. "We have no problems here."

Despite it being primarily a women's initiative, local men have a role to play, and most often they are supportive. "We are proud of this market because it allows women to contribute to their family income," says one male customer Nikhil Biswas, 43. "I usually shop here."

"Many husbands come here after work to help their wives," explains Doimonti Boiragi. "And the fish and meat sellers in the market are men."

The president of the market committee is also a man. "Women face no particular difficulties here," says Diponkar Mohanto, "but we have other problems including no bathroom facilities in the bazaar and only one tube well."

The chairman of the local union council, Akhil Boiragi, is also supportive. "Our women have done a very good job here," he says, "They contribute to household income along with their husbands." He says he hopes to take steps to resolve the lack of some facilities and any other problem at the market.

Cop found dead in Naogaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A police officer was found dead in Atrai upazila of Naogaon early yesterday.

The deceased was Md Rahmat Ali, 38, son of Gayer Ali of Taranagar village and an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) in Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP).

According to his family members, Rahmat came home recently. He went out of his house around 11:00pm on Tuesday night. As he did not return home till late night, family members started looking for him.

Later, they found him hanging from a mango tree near his house at around 1:30am yesterday.

The cause of the death will be known once police get the forensic report, said Badruddoza, officer-in-charge (OC) of Atrai Police Station.

Police said Rahmat might have committed suicide.

BNP leader stabbed dead in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A local Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader was hacked to death in Atghoria upazila of the district on Tuesday night.

The deceased, Abu Daud, 45, son of Latif Munshi of Shibpur village, was president of ward No 8 unit of BNP and former member of Ekdanta Union Parishad.

Atghoria Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Anwarul Islam said a gang of criminals stabbed Daud on a road near his house while he was returning from Shibpur Bazar about 9:00pm.

Locals rescued Daud and took him to Pabna General Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

"Previous enmity with a local group might be the reason behind the killing," said the OC.

MA KHALEQUE HOSPITAL IN MAGURA

Last resort for poor

AZIBOR RAHMAN back from Magura

Alhaj MA Khaleque Hospital at Kazoli village in Magura's Sreepur upazila has come as a blessing for the poor in the area.

Since 1994, the hospital built on 40 decimals of land by AKM Shamsul Azam Bachchu has been providing healthcare and medicine free of cost, said Dr Pankaj Biswas of the hospital.

Bachchu, who died in 2015, named the hospital after the name of his late father Alhaj MA Khaleque. After Bachchu's demise, his son Shahjad Azam Kiron, a successful businessman in Dhaka, has been bearing all the expenditure of the hospital, said the doctor.

The hospital has an on-duty doctor, an office assistant, a nightguard and a nurse. It costs around Tk one lakh per month, he said.

Although the hospital is not well equipped, the poor patients are blessed with free service and medicines. It has now turned into a last resort for the poor patients, said Pankaj.

Besides, the hospital has saved the ultra poor patients from the hassle and difficulties of a government hospital. The government hospital is at Dariapur, which is four kilometres from this hospital. So residents of five villages throng the hospital to get treatment and medicines. The patients get service six days in a week except Friday. Most of the patients who suffer from complicated diseases get free medicines.

During a recent visit, Dr Pankaj told this correspondent, "I get immense pleasure in serving the poor ones. When they recover after taking treatment and medicine from me, my joys know no bound." Here they are not harassed and cheated, he said.

Aleya Khatun, 55, of Mangondanga village said this is the best place for the

poor patients. They are blessed with the hospital.

"I have been taking treatment from here for two months. I am now in sound health. I feel happy to come here as there is no chaos and confusion," she said.

Another patient Abdul Khaleq Biswas, 70, of Amtoil village, said, "I often come to the hospital. The doctor behaves with us very well, he is always smiling and gives us treatment with medicine."

Nurjahan, Selim Reza and Braza Bashi Das echoed the same sentiment.

Office assistant Md Masuduzzaman said, "I have been serving here since its



Patients receive free medicines.

inception. I provide tablet Napa, Paracetamol, Cotrim etc. Liquid medicines like Brodil, Napa and Cotrim are also provided.

Headmaster Molla Foyzur Rahman Lalu of Amtoil High School said, "This hospital has brought about a revolutionary change in the area in case of free treatment. We are all indebted to it. It is a last resort for the poor patients."

Sabdapur Union Parishad Chairman Molla Nurul Hossain said, undoubtedly this hospital plays a vital role for the poor patients. Here they get free treatment and medicine. The owner of this hospital is a benevolent person.



Dr Pankaj Biswas provides treatment to rural people at Alhaj MA Khaleque Hospital in Kazoli village in Magura's Sreepur upazila. Poor patients are given free treatment and medicines at the charitable hospital daily.

PHOTO: STAR