

PRAYER FOR BANGABANDHU'S KILLERS Madrasa principal on 2-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

A court here yesterday placed on two days' remand madrasa principal Faijul Amin Sarkar, who in a doa mahfil on the Victory Day sought heaven for the killers of Bangabandhu.

Judge Golam Kibria of Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court passed the order after hearing, said Abdul Jalil, court inspector (prosecution).

Earlier on Sunday, Gopalpur police produced Faijul, 50, to the court, following a case filed against him by Abdul Kadir Talukder, former commander of Gopalpur Muktiyoddha Sangsad, on Saturday night.

The case was filed under Section 16 of Special Powers Act, 1974. Investigation officer of the case, Sub-Inspector Abdul Hye on the same day prayed for five days' remand for quizzing Faijul.

After hearing on the remand prayer, the court yesterday granted the two-day remand, the court inspector said.

Gopalpur upazila administration organised the doa mahfil at Muktiyoddha Sangsad office on December 16, the Victory Day. People were supposed to place wreaths at the mural of Bangabandhu at the office after prayers.

There was a commotion after Faijul while conducting the doa said, "May Allah grant heaven for those who were hanged for killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975."

Police detained Faijul on the spot.

Faijul, hailing from Bhangura Bazar (Puratan Muradnagar) area in Comilla, served as principal of Aramnagar Kamil Madrasa in Sarishabari upazila under Jamalpur, police said.

Later, he joined Gopalpur Kamil Madrasa and started living at a room of its students' hostel. His family lives in Dhaka.

Faijul is Tangail unit president of Jamiatul Mudarresin Bangladesh, an association of madrasa teachers.

He went abroad as a member of an Education Ministry delegation last month, local sources said.

Hasan Al Mamun, officer in charge of Gopalpur Police Station, said, "We are collecting information about Faijul."

MIRZA SHAKIL with ANDREW EAGLE

Many people have a mind to contribute to the community. For some it's a calling that awards the welfare of others higher priority than their own. At 67 years old, Tangail's former teacher and politician M A Razzaque from Boali village in Sakhipur upazila struggles to cover living costs. Suffering from debilitating Parkinson's disease, the man who donated a good portion of his assets for community use finds it difficult to afford medicine.

"My uncle played a major role in local road construction," says Razzaque's niece Sakhina Begum. "But there's no road leading to his worn-out dwelling. My uncle is such a man. He donated all his landholdings to the school and college."

Razzaque founded Boali High School on a part of his ancestral land. Subsequently he served as the school's headmaster. Later he donated the rest of his land which, along with some adjacent parcels became the Boali Degree College.

From a young age the farmer's son was interested in politics. Razzaque participated in the 1966 Anti-Ayub Movement, the Mass Movement of 1969 and the 1971 Liberation War.

"Even as a student he was involved," says wife Hasina

For the good of others

Ex-teacher, politician now struggles to survive



M A Razzaque on Boali Degree College premises.

PHOTO: STAR

Begum. Razzaque was a member of the left-leaning Chhatra Union at the time. "It was the reason his father encouraged our marriage while he was still studying, to restrain his political fervour. But he never lost interest."

Razzaque studied mathematics at Saadat College in Tangail's Karatia but ultimately graduated with a Bachelor of Education from

a teacher's training college in Dhaka. He first joined Sakhipur's Nalua High School as an assistant teacher.

He was organising secretary of the Bangladesh Teachers' Association. He served as head of the local cooperative society.

Always driven by the thought of doing more for his community, Razzaque joined the then-ruling

party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

As general secretary of the BNP's upazila unit he promoted development, organised the construction of roads, culverts, bridges, mosques and madrasas. He had a playground built, founded markets and set up a post office. In public life, he earned a reputation for sincerity.

But the tide of time and politics waits for none. These days the once-spirited Razzaque is paralysed and has lost the ability to speak. Nor, in the current political climate, is his political contribution to his community well-celebrated.

"The first signs of disease occurred about a decade ago when he was working as the high school's headmaster," says his wife. Nowadays it's up to her to manage the family.

"We receive a Tk 2,000 monthly allowance from the high school he founded," she says, "and Tk 700 in rent from a small shop in the market. He used to get Tk 3,000 per month from the college too but for the last few months that has been suspended."

"Though my husband took part in the Liberation War," she laments, "his name is not enlisted as a freedom fighter, despite having all the supporting documents."

Yet Razzaque is well-regarded in the community even by those of different political affiliation. "Our Razzaque Sir spread the light of education as a dedicated teacher, and he worked his entire life for people's development as an honest politician," says Sayeed Azad, the college principal and a local Awami League leader.

GIRL RAPED, MUTILATED Prime accused arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Police in a drive yesterday detained the prime accused in connection with a case for raping a teenage girl in Ishwarganj upazila of the district early Friday.

The law enforcers arrested Sohag Mia, 19, from Kuliarchar area in the upazila around 6:30pm. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Ishwarganj Police Station Badrul Alam Khan said.

Police were interrogating Sohag at the police station as of filing of this report around 7:30pm. OC Badrul said, adding that they were conducting drives to arrest Sohag's associate.

Earlier, the 16-year-old victim, who passed her SSC examinations this year, left her studies and was forced to move to the capital four months ago to escape from her stalker Sohag.

Later, she took a job at a garment factory in Dhaka, family sources said. On Thursday, she went to her family in Ishwarganj for a visit.

In the wee hours of Friday, when she went out of her room to respond to nature's call, Sohag and his accomplice forcibly took her to an isolated place nearby, raped her there and cut her genitals with a blade.

Hearing her screams, family members and neighbours rushed her to Ishwarganj Upazila Health Complex.



PHOTO: STAR

Tractors loading silt from the dumping spot near the Teesta river at Dalia in Dimla upazila of Nilphamari. The picture was taken recently.

Sand plundering unabated

Ruling party men lift sand from silt trap near Teesta Barrage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Nilphamari*

Some people belonging to the ruling party are indiscriminately plundering sand from the silt trap near Teesta Barrage under Water Development Board (WDB) at Dalia in Dimla upazila.

Sub-Divisional Engineer (SDE) of the mechanical division of WDB Rubayat Imtiaz said the water in the Teesta river coming from upstream during the rainy season carries a huge quantity of silt, mostly sand and deposits it in a silt trap beside Teesta Barrage.

After the rainy season, WDB removes the silt using dredgers and discharges it in the dumping ground one km away so that the silt

trap can collect silt again in the next season.

"We sell the sand collected from here to different places for Tk 800 to Tk 1,000 per tractor. Around 30 tractors make 100 to 150 trips daily in all," said another driver Faridul Islam.

"We pay Tk 200 for each trip to local ruling party man Abdul Kalam as he controls the area, otherwise his men do not allow us to touch the sand," tractor driver Abdul Kader said.

Kalam, who is an influential member of ward No-1 unit of the ruling party in Khalisha Chapani union, rejected the allegation of realising money from tractor drivers, saying that they willingly donate money for a local club for social work.

A number of locals alleged that an employee of WDB, who looks after the area, takes some of the realised money from Kalam to distribute to WDB officials.

SDE Rubayat Imtiaz said they use dredgers to remove around one lakh cubic metres of silt, mostly sand, every year from the silt trap and the civil engineering division is responsible for looking after the dumping ground.

"I wrote a letter to the executive engineer of the civil engineering division in Dalia a few days ago, requesting them to take measures to stop sand lifting as unauthorised people steal the pipes of the dredgers, but there has been no response yet," the SDE added.

Section Officer (SO) of the division Hafizul Islam rejected the allegation that his men take money from sand lifters.

"We do not have enough manpower to tackle the situation as the sand lifters even threaten us," he added.

"If we get specific allegation with the vehicle's registration number, we will file a case against the owner and driver," said Executive Engineer of the division Mostafizur Rahman.

"I will write to the higher authorities so that they sell the sand from the silt trap, which will bring revenue for the government as there is no such directive now in this regard," he added.

Rapist still at large 12-yr-old now 7-month pregnant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

Over seven months into the incident, an accused in a case for raping a 12-year-old schoolgirl is yet to be arrested.

The victim is now seven months into pregnancy after being raped by Shahjahan Ali, 45, of Sheikhpara village in Sadar upazila. The accused is father of three children.

The victim's father, a farm labourer, filed the rape case, accusing Shahjahan under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act with Sadar Police Station.

According to the case statement, when the girl, a Class V student, was returning her home from school in the afternoon, neighbour Shahjahan lured her into his house on May 15. He later raped the victim.

He also threatened the victim not to disclose the matter, otherwise, she would have to face dire consequences, said Sub-Inspector Mahabbat Kabir.

The incident came to light in mid November after the girl disclosed the matter to her parents due to different complications from pregnancy.

Police are raiding different areas to arrest the accused, said the SI, also the investigation officer of the case.

KHULNA-KOLKATA TRAIN Stoppage in Jessore demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

People from all walks of life yesterday held a rally in Jessore town to press home their 11-point demand, including stoppage of Khulna-Kolkata train at Jessore rail station.

Under the banner of 'Rail Unnayan Sangram Committee' they formed a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office in Jessore and submitted a memorandum to the railway minister through the deputy commissioner.

India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce port sub-committee chairman Matiar Rahman said if the train has stoppages in Jessore and Benapole rail stations more passengers would have travelled in the train.

Their other demands include an additional commuter train on Benapole-Khulna route, two trains on Benapole-Dhaka route everyday, special train for transportation of agricultural commodities and raw materials, modernisation of railway hospitals and stations, clean water and toilet facilities in all the stations, rescue of railway resources and an end to corruption and black marketing of tickets.



Many homesteads at Gondokhali Purbopara village in Kamarkhali union under Madhukhali upazila of the district have been washed away by the Madhumati river.

PHOTO: STAR

Madhumati devours road, homesteads

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Faridpur*

The lone road to go to Bir Srestho Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rouf Library and Memorial Museum in Kamarkhali union under Madhukhali upazila of the district has been devoured in two places by the Madhumati river, threatening the museum.

The road from Kamarkhali bazar to Rouf Nagar village has been devoured in Gondokhali Purbopara and Rouf Nagar villages, 400 metres from the memorial museum.

Locals said the erosion started on December 6. The homesteads of Akidul Islam, Yunus Ali Mridha, Motiar Mollah and Sarwar Mridha were devoured by Madhumati river at Gondokhali Purbopara area, and 17 families in the same area are under threat of erosion.

The homesteads of Jakir Mridha, Tonu Mridha, Khalek Mollah, Kobbat Mridha, Tota Sheikh and Rajib Munshi were washed away at Rouf Nagar village. Bir Srestho Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rouf Primary School and 23 families are under threat by the river, they said.

The memorial museum is also under threat of

erosion as it is only about 400 metres from the devoured area.

"We are using different routes to go our school as the road has been devoured by the Madhumati," said Afroja Begum and Fatema Khatun, Class X students of Bir Srestho Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rouf High School.

Headmaster of the school Nazim Uddin Mollah said the school was established on 30 decimals of land two years ago, adding that it is now under threat of erosion.

"Most of that road has already been devoured, hampering communication of the area. I have informed our lawmaker Abdur Rahman about it," Kamarkhali Union Parishad Chairman Jahidur Rahman said.

"We did our best to protect the road but failed. So now only Water Development Board (WDB) can protect the road," Madhukhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer Lutfur Nahar said.

"We are making a plan to protect the road, and we shall start work after completion of the design," Executive Engineer of WDB Sultan Mansur said.