

Husband kills wife as second marriage protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A housewife was hacked to death allegedly by her husband yesterday at Paschim Chasri of Kathalia as the woman protested his second marriage.

The deceased was identified as Parvin Begum, 50, wife of Shahidul Jomadder of Pashchim Chasri of Jhalakathi's Kathalia upazila, and mother of two daughters and one son, said Md Enamul Haque, officer in charge (OC) of Kathalia Police Station. Recently Shahidul took a second wife.

Hearing the matter, Parvin protested it and a quarrel with her husband followed in the afternoon.

At one stage, Shahidul hacked Parvin with a sharp weapon, according to the information of police quoting the family members and eyewitness of the area.

Severely wounded Parvin was taken to Bahndari Upazila Health Complex in Pirojpur where he was declared dead.

"Parvin died of excessive bleeding due to the hacking," said Md Jahurul Islam, upazila health and family planning officer of Bhandaria.

The body was sent to Pirojpur Sadar Hospital for autopsy, said the OC adding that process is underway to file a case.

Teams of police were raiding different places to arrest the killer, he said.



This brickfield at Kamalerpara in Saghata upazila of Gaibandha is one of the nine brick fields in the upazila, which are operating beside croplands and dwellings, much to the nuisance for locals. PHOTO: KM REZAUL HOQUE

Brickfields in croplands, beside dwellings pose threat

Seven brick kilns in Gaibandha's Saghata upazila running without permission

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

At least nine brickfields are functioning on croplands and residential areas in Saghata upazila of the district, posing threat to environment, agriculture and public health.

Seven of them are running illegally without proper documents and permission from the authorities concerned, says report of a recent survey conducted by the upazila administration.

The authorities, however, are yet to publish the report.

The brickfields are emitting smoke, ashes and heat waves that adversely affect crop and fruit production.

Besides, the ashes gather on the surface of croplands, affecting soil fertility, said local people.

Moreover, the brickfield traders are digging up surface soil of croplands and using it to

produce bricks. That is why, the area of croplands are shrinking, they alleged.

Thick black smoke from chimneys of brick kilns adversely affects air and environment that causes health hazard to people residing near the brickfields. People are being attacked with respiratory problems, bronchitis, cough and chest diseases, said Dr Dipankar Chakravarti, resident medical officer of Saghata Upazila Health Complex.

Children are the worst affected due to the situation, he said.

The brick fields under question are AR Bricks of Bonarpara, SO Bricks of Ullah Sonatola, BMK Bricks of Padumshaher, SOB Bricks of Kachua, BSP Bricks of Ghuridaha, Noor Bricks, Talukder Bricks, Power Bricks and Satota Bricks of Kamalerpara.

Of those, AR Bricks and SO Bricks have licenses with renewal.

Most of the brickfields are located on the

croplands and residential areas. Four brick fields situated closely in Kamalerpara union have been manufacturing bricks using firewood that badly pollutes environment, said Afzal Hossain, a trader of Kamalerpara Bazar.

"Last year I submitted applications for no objection certificate from the district's agriculture department and the environment directorate of Rangpur division, but I am yet to get any reply," said Shahidul Islam, owner of Power Bricks, Kamalerpara.

Talking to this correspondent, owners of at least two other brickfields made similar comments, saying that they have applied to the authorities concerned for license and permission for running brick kilns and the matter remains pending.

Contacted, Saghata Upazila Nirbahi Officer Uzzal Kumar Ghosh said they would soon launch mobile court drives against illegal brickfields.

PATUAKHALI UZ POLLS AL aspirants face 13 intra-party opponents in seven upazilas

The 'rebels' are vying for the polls against party decision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Awami League (AL) backed chairman aspirants will face 13 rebel candidates in the upcoming upazila parishad polls in seven upazilas scheduled for March 31.

A total of 29 candidates are vying for the chairman posts in seven upazilas of the district and March 3 was the last date for nomination submission.

Of the 13 candidates, four are contesting in Baufal upazila, three in Dashmina, two in Dumki, and one each in Sadar, Mirzaganj, Galachipa and Kalapara upazilas.

In Baufal, AL-backed upazila unit AL General Secretary Motaleb Hawlader will have a tough contest from incumbent Chairman Engineer Mojibur Rahman, upazila AL Joint Secretary Jahangir Ullah, Nawmala union unit General Secretary Kamal Hossain and AL leader Jasim Farazee.

In Dashmina, AL candidate and Dashmina upazila unit President Abdul Aziz will face three rebel candidates--incumbent Chairman Shakhawat Hossain, AL upazila unit Vice-President MA Bashar and its Secretary for Relief Affairs Abu Bakar Siddik.

In Dumki, AL-backed Harun-or-Rashid Hawlader will fight against two party rivals--incumbent Chairman Shahjahan Sikder and former vice-president of Bangladesh Chhatra League, central committee, Mehedi Hasan Mizan.

On the other hand, Sadar upazila unit AL President Abul Kalam Azad submitted his nomination against AL candidate Golam Sarwar in Sadar upazila while AL-backed Atahar Uddin Gazi with contest the race against incumbent Chairman and AL leader Abu Bakar Siddique in Mirzaganj upazila.

Away in Galachipa, AL candidate Shahin Shah with contest the polls against party rebel and incumbent Chairman Samsuzzaman.

Besides, 31 people will vie for the vice chairman posts while 20 women are contesting for the woman vice chairman (reserved seats) posts in all the seven upazilas.

District Election Officer Md Ziaur Rahman said they are taking necessary measures to ensure a free and fair election in the upazila.



This earthen road has been built across the Water Development Board's canal at Pathan Para village in Nilphamari's Saidpur upazila, obstructing the flow. PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

Mud roads made across WDB canal to carry earth for brick kilns!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Two earthen roads built across a vital canal of Water Development Board (WDB) at Pathan para village in Saidpur upazila of the district are obstructing normal flow of water, thanks to the authorities' ignorance of the matter.

Two months ago, agents of local brick kiln owners illegally built the roads within 300 meters across WDB's Pochanala canal, flowing beside Saidpur municipality, for operating earth-laden tractors, said villagers.

Every year the authorities concerned dredges the canal for smooth water flow all the year round to keep municipality's environment balanced while farmers use its water for irrigation.

Mojibar Rahman Pramanik, 65, a resident of the area, said Sabur Khan, 50, and Mostofa Mir, 52, sons of Jalal Khan and Azgar Mir respectively built the roads across the canal so that earth-laden tractors can ply to and from different brick kilns.

The two are very influential persons of the locality, said Mojibar.

Member of Bangalipur union parishad Luthfar Rahman said the two agents even neglected their



Another earthen road across the canal, only 300 metres from the above one. PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

repeated pleas to remove the roads.

Finding no way, villagers wrote to executive engineer (ex-en) of WDB's Saidpur divisional office for removing the roads, he said.

Ex-en of WDB's local office Krishna Komol Chandra Sarker said he requested Saidpur upazila nirbahi officer (LNO) to conduct a mobile court against the offenders.

Executive Magistrate Porimal Kumar Sarker, also the assistant commissioner (land) of Saidpur, said they

conducted a mobile court in the area on March 5 and arrested earth trader Sabur Khan with his tractor. However, another earth trader Mostofa Mir managed to flee the scene, leaving behind his tractor.

The court, led by the magistrate, later fined Sabur Tk 50,000 and issued directive to remove both earthen roads from the canal by three days.

But the roads are yet to be removed, said local people.

Cops torture youth for bribe

Victim tells press conference

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police allegedly tortured a youth at Birganj Police Station on Monday for refusing to pay bribe of Tk 80,000.

The victim, Aminul Islam, 34, son of Abdul Kader of Doulatpur village in the upazila, also plaintiff of a cow lifting case filed with the police station, came up with the allegation at a press conference at Dinajpur Press Club yesterday noon.

Three people--Rafiqul Islam, Mohammad Moyna and Khalilur Rahman of the village--were made accused in the case filed around three years ago.

Aminul told the press conference that a police team, led by Officer in Charge (OC) of Birganj Police Station Shakila Parvin, raided his house around 2:00am on Monday and detained him for his alleged involvement with a recent motorcycle theft incident.

When he denied the allegation, OC Shakila slapped him twice on the face, Aminul alleged, adding that the on-duty policemen also assaulted his wife Siraja Munira.

They later picked up Aminul and took him to Birganj Police Station, he said, adding that on the way they asked him to admit his involvement in the motorbike lifting incident or pay Tk 80,000 bribe.

"As I declined to obey their order, Sub-Inspector Mohammad Touhid beat me up at least 30 times in presence of the OC," Aminul said, adding that failing to get his confessional statement police released him next day after taking his signature on a blank paper.

OC Shakila said no such incident occurred at her police station.

A passage shrinks to suffocate them

Over 200 Hindu families in Pabna's Bera upazila face difficulty

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The once spacious corridor that the members of about 200 impoverished Hindu families used to get access to the nearby road has been shrunken so much so that it is impossible to carry a person on wheelchair now.

The passage has now turned into around one cubit in width due to the construction two buildings by two influential businessmen of the locality, causing immense sufferings of around 1000 Hindus living in Pukurer Chala area under Bera upazila of Pabna.

Last month, Sunil Kumar Sheel, an elderly person in his 60s, died at Pukurer Chala area. The family members of the deceased had to carry the body on their shoulders through that narrow passage leading up to the main road from where they could use the cot," a member of the Hindu community told this reporter a few days ago.

"This was the only road for our movement. We are now enduring endless sufferings as it has been occupied," said Manik Kumar Sheel, a youth of the locality.

"Due to the lack of passage we cannot carry dead body on cot from our home to the crematorium, elderly people can't go to doctors and we face a lot of trouble to carry household goods. The administration is not doing anything for us," said Jagannath Sheel, an elderly resident of the area.

The process of shrinking the passage, which the locals use as road for the last six decades, started eight years ago, said Sheel.

"When the influential persons started construction a few years ago, the Hindus requested them to keep enough space for movement. But the building owners did not pay heed to our request and constructed the buildings occupy-

ing khas land, the villagers said.

Abdul Awal Miah and Nazrul Islam, who constructed the buildings occupying both sides of the road, however refuted the allegation.

"We did not occupy others' land. Rather we have constructed building on our own land. When we started the construction, the Hindu people could have bought some land from us for their road. But they did not do it," Nazrul Islam told this correspondent.

He even claimed that the Hindu people are living in others' land.

The Hindu settlers admitted that they do not have any document of ownership of the land, which covers an area of 10 bighas surrounding a big pond.

But they said that they are now the rightful owner of the land they were offered to live by the then lord's assistant Harindranath Shaha and Upendranath Shah in the 60s, when their forefathers migrated to this place after becoming landless due to erosion by the Jamuna.

The minority community went to the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office on February 20 demanding a road.

Contacted, Pabna DC Md. Jasim Uddin told this correspondent that he had directed local authorities to look into the matter and take necessary measures to ensure a road for them.

Asked about the matter, Md Rafikullah, chairman of Puran Varena Union Parishad, said that he has taken an initiative to solve the problem.

"I have already talked with the victims and the building owners. They (owners) have agreed to give road for the people living in Pukurer Chala area. They will dismantle a portion of their constructed structure to make the road for the residents," Rafikullah said.



People from a neighbourhood, inhabited by around 200 Hindu families, at Pukurer Chala in Pabna's Bera upazila move with difficulty through an awfully narrow alley between houses as the once spacious path has shrunken to a width hardly enough for a single person. PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU