

Septuagenarian freedom fighter's different fight

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Naresh Chandra Roy was 27 years old when he joined the Liberation War in 1971.

He is now 75 and still fighting for a society free from exploitation and child marriage.

Known for his uncompromising attitude towards any wrongdoings in Domar upazila of the district, Roy has made a name for himself as a crusader against child marriage.

A marginalised farmer, Roy has so far stopped 20 child marriage incidents. People of the locality say Roy always rushes to the place where child marriage is likely to happen and convince the parents to stop it.

Vested quarters branded him as a bad man who breaks marriages

His selfless endeavour also involved a lot of risks.

Narrating one such bitter experience, freedom fighter Roy said, "Last year one Nabo Kishore arranged child marriage of his teenage daughter late at night. When I rushed there, his relatives attacked me alleging that I have come to break the marriage.

Finding no other way, I informed Domar upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) over cell phone who reached with police to foil the marriage attempt and put the father behind bars. I'm always against this kind of action and prefer to convince the parents' instead," he said.

Anti child marriage campaign is part of his everyday life. You will find him in the local markets to create awareness among people or engage students to stand up against early marriage, said Panga Motukpur Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Emdadul Huq.



Roy's relentless effort ensured Mouja Panga village under Panga Motukpur union child marriage free, recognised Umme Fatima, UNO of Domar upazila.

Roy is the president of Panga Motukpur union unit's Corruption Prevention Committee (CPC), formed countrywide in the district, upazila and union levels at the behest of Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) in 2016.

He voluntarily works against early marriage alongside his ACC role," said Md Nurannabi, Domar upazila unit president of CPC and commander of upazila unit Muktijoddha Sangsad.

The freedom fighter's second wife Minati Rani, however, lamented that the path that her husband has chosen was not smooth as vested quarters branded him as a bad man who breaks marriages of daughters of poor people.

Not only that, some even threatened him of dire consequences.

"Some put pressure on me to shun the fight against child marriage but I shall never retreat from my goal," said a resolute Roy.

Nilphamari Deputy Commissioner (DC) Nazia Shirin, who honoured Roy along with a few others on March 11 at a function, organised in cooperation with UNICEF, said freedom fighter Naresh is a real nation builder.



Influential sand traders using Tangail town protection embankment in Kalihati as a road to transport sand on a large fleet of trucks causing damage to the levy.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Tangail town dyke under threat

Sand is being extracted from river on one side, trucks carrying the sand are damaging its top

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Tangail town protection embankment in Kalihati upazila is under threat due to rampant sand extraction from the Pungli river, a branch of Jamuna.

The embankment, also known as Silimpur-Karatai embankment, is also facing erosion as influential sand traders have been using it as a road to transport the sand on a large fleet of trucks.

Constructed in 2000 under Compartmentalisation Pilot Project (CPP) at a cost of Tk 120 crore, cracks already developed on east side of the 47-kilometre-long embankment between Pungli and Karatai.

Although the levy was damaged in Mohela, Agbethoir, Pachhbethoir, Shalina, and Bartha

areas, necessary repair works were not conducted on it in the last 18 years, alleged locals.

Last year, only two damaged sections of the levy at Ramdevpur and Mohela were repaired with the help of locals, they said.

Sand is being lifted has been going on from the Pungli at various points alongside the levy and the sand trucks have been damaging the levy for several years, but nothing was done to stop the trade as influential people are behind the sand trade, they alleged.

They also said the frequent movement of the trucks on the earth-filled levy are also causing severe dust pollution in the area, resulting in respiratory problems for residents of nearby

villages.

Villagers being run over by the trucks are becoming all too common, but they do not dare to complain against the trade due to the political backing of the traders, several of the villagers said requesting anonymity.

They also said the traders are so powerful that they resume sand lifting within a few days after mobile courts complete conducting drives in the area under local administration.

This correspondent was not able to reach any of the sand traders for their comments over the allegations.

However, the workers engaged in the sand lifting claimed that they were lifting sand from private land only.

Without any sight of action against the sand lifting or any significant repair work on the damaged sections of the levy, the locals are now in fear of being flooded in the upcoming monsoon season.

If the embankment is breached during the monsoon, vast tracts of area in Tangail town, Gala and Gharinda unions in Sadar upazila, and Karatai union and adjacent areas in Basail upazila could be flooded.

Contacted, Amit Debnath, upazila nirbahi officer of Kalihati, said his office did not receive any complaint regarding sand lifting along the embankment.

"However, we will investigate into the matter immediately and take necessary action," he added.

Diarrhoea on the rise in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A woman was found dead in Madaripur yesterday.

The deceased was Selina Akter, 50, wife of Harun-ur-Rashid of Thanatoli area in Madaripur Sadar upazila.

Family members

claimed that Selina was killed by her husband.

Police arrested Harun

in connection with the

incident, said Kamrul

Hasan, officer-in-charge of

Sadar Police Station.

The victim's elder

brother Mazharul Islam

said Harun-ur-Rashid

developed an illicit

relationship with another

woman. Harun often beat

Selina over the issue.

Harun killed my sister

and left her at Madaripur

General Hospital yesterday morning," said Mazharul.



One of the diarrhoea patients getting treatment at Faridpur General Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS



Students of different institutions attend a silent protest, organised by National Children's Taskforce, Dinajpur unit, in front of the deputy commissioner's office in Dinajpur town yesterday, demanding punishment of the culprits responsible for child abuse, torture and murder across the country.

Feud with rivals led to Mahbub murder

Fakhrul visits the slain BNP leader's residence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police have arrested two men on charge of killing Bogura BNP leader Mahbub Alam Shahin.

Mahbub, 55, general secretary of the district BNP and a resident of Jhoggari area in the town, had a feud with local bus owners which resulted in the murder, said Superintendent of Police (SP) Ali Ashraf Bhuiyan at a press briefing in his office yesterday.

Rassel, 28, and Payel Sheikh, 38, were held from Nishindhara area of the town and Gabtoli upazila on Wednesday night. Police also recovered a motorcycle used in the killing mission.

The arrestees revealed the murder was executed according to a plan of the leaders of Bogura Bus Owners' Association, said the SP.

However, the police official did not disclose the names of the murder planners.

Mahbub was being accompanied by two of his associates, Bappi and Alimuddin, when an attack took place at Tingthatar Mor in the town around 10:30pm on Sunday, said police.

Some six to seven assailants attacked Mahbub and stabbed him in the chest and leg, leaving him critically injured and left the scene. Mahbub was rushed to the

nearby Mohammad Ali Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead.

The victim's wife Aktar Jahan Silpi said her husband was the owner of two buses and had been in a feud with a faction of the bus owners' association in the district.

Silpi filed a murder case with Sadar Police Station, accusing 11 men for the murder.

Aminul Islam, secretary of District Motor Malik group and councilor of Ward 15, was mentioned by name as accused in the case.

The case statement said, accused Aminul Islam repeatedly threatened Mahbub Alam Shahin to kill him a few days ago before the murder took place.

The accused include Sohag Sardar, 25, Md Biddut, 32, Md Mahmud, 32, Azizul Islam Kalia, 32, and Md Payel, 30, of Sadar upazila.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday visited the slain BNP leader's residence.

During his visit, Fakhrul expressed deep shock over the death of Mahbub and condemned the incident.

Mahbub was killed only for his political affiliation, said Fakhrul.

He also urged people to unite against all kinds of injustice.