

# Bogura cop's brutality

## "Torturer' ASP also threatened to cripple the victim businessman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A local businessman was brutally tortured allegedly by an assistant superintendent of police (ASP) at Bogura Police Lines on Sunday night.

The victim is Ahmed Sabbir, 30, proprietor of Art Line Communication at Altafunnesa Playground in Sutrapur area of Bogura town.

Sabbir said ASP (Shibganj Circle) Md Kudrat-E-Khuda also threatened to cripple him when he went to the office of superintendent of police (SP) to file a complaint in this regard on Monday.

The victim said he used to supply various event management items like banners, photo albums and printed mugs for different programmes of police for the last one and a half years.

On December 10 last year, Sabbir got an order to supply 400 photo albums from the SP's office. He was supposed to be paid Tk 2.40 lakh for the work.

On December 16, the ASP said the quality of photo albums was substandard and refused to pay the amount. However, in the meantime, Sabbir paid Tk 1.50 lakh to the printing press for the photo books.

"In February, I got another order to supply 1000 ceramic mugs from the same office. I was supposed to get Tk 1,34,500 and ASP Kudrat paid me this amount in three installments," said Sabbir.

However, Kudrat took Tk 1.92 lakh for 1200 mugs from the fund of Bogura Police Lines School and College, alleged the businessman.

He bought 1000 mugs for Tk 1.24 lakh from local trader Abul Kalam Azad of the town but he paid Azad Tk 90,000, said Sabbir, adding that after that, Azad continued giving him pressure to pay rest Tk 34,000.

At one stage, Azad filed a complaint to the ASP in this regard. On Sunday, ASP Kudrat called him over phone to appear before the Bogura Police Lines Officers' Mess.

Kudrat also said if he did not come, he would be picked up by policemen, alleged Sabbir.

At the time, Sabbir asked the ASP to pay him the due money of photo albums because if he got the dues, he could pay Azad his dues and Kudrat got very furious then.

When Sabbir reached the officers' mess around 11:00pm, the ASP asked his bodyguard Toukir to beat him.

"At one stage, ASP Kudrat took away the stick from Toukir and beat me mercilessly, saying I did not pay Azad the full money back," said the victim.

"Two police constables then arranged a rickshaw for me. Later, I took treatment from a private clinic," said Sabbir.

"I went to file a general diary but Sadar police did not take the GD," he said.

"Meanwhile, I was given dues of Tk 1.50 lakh from the SP office on Monday," said Sabbir.

OC SM Badiuzzaman said he suggested Sabbir to go to the SP as the accused is a high ranking policeman.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach the ASP for his comment on the issue as he did not receive the phone calls.

SP Ali Ashraf Bhuiyan said, "A probe committee, headed by an additional SP, has been formed to investigate the matter. Action will be taken against the accused after getting the report."



Rampant looting of trees threatens Tengragiri reserve forest in Barguna's Taltali upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

# Coastal forest under threat

## The reserve forest at Tengratila in Barguna's Taltali faces erosion, tree looting

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Tengragiri reserve forest in Barguna's Taltali upazila faces extinction due to erosion by the Bay. Furthermore, indiscriminate looting of trees threatens the forest, also known as Fatraban forest.

The authorities concerned cannot look after the forest covering 13,634 acres of land on the beach at Sakhina forest bit in the upazila due to shortage of manpower.

Meanwhile, tourists are losing interest in visiting Sonakata Eco-Park in the forest as the park saw no renovation since it was set up in 2010-11 and 2011-12 fiscal years.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest

and Climate Change set up the eco-park at a cost of Tk 2.64 crore, said Md Zahid Pramanik, Sakhina forest bit officer.

There are few wild animals including deer, crocodile and monkey in the eco-park. The authorities also set up some picnic sheds there to attract tourists.

In 1977, the forest was declared as reserve forest. Around 2,000 acres of forest land and over one lakh trees disappeared as erosion by the Bay and different natural disasters like super cyclone Sidr in 2007, Aila in 2009, Mahasen in 2013, Roanu in 2016 and Mora in 2017 caused serious damage to it.

The forest department also set up at least 15 wooden bridges on its internal

walkways but most of the bridges got badly damaged due to lack of maintenance, said Md Alaluddin, a tourist from Khulna.

The authorities should take immediate steps to modify the forest with modern equipments to make it more attractive, he suggested.

A section of local forest robber and fishermen loot trees from the forest indiscriminately, said Abul Kasem, a local resident of Fakir haat area.

A local influential group also grabbed around 50 acres of forest land and due to this, the picturesque mangrove forest is losing its natural beauty, said another resident of the area.

Hundreds of tourists from home and

abroad visit the reserve forest as well as the eco-part every year to enjoy its natural beauty, said locals.

The beat officer said earlier 20 guards worked there but only five forest guards work now which is insufficient.

They are repairing the wooden bridges considering the interest of the tourists.

Aminul Islam, divisional forest officer (DFO) in Patuakhali, said a local group has already grabbed about 40 acres of forest land in Lathimara area. They have already filed a case with the court to evict them.

They have informed the higher authorities about manifold problems of the forest, said the DFO.



Jamena Begum sits beside her son Ataur Rahman, chained up for his mental disorder, in Piprul village of Natore's Naldanga upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: BULBUL AHMED

# Life passing by in chains

## Impoverished family unable to treat 40-year-old for his mental illness

BULBUL AHMED, Natore

He spent more than half his life, nearly 22 years, being chained to a tree next to a mud hut that belongs to his family.

Ataur Rahman is the name of the mentally ill man, now 40. But to the villagers of Piprul in Natore's Naldanga upazila, he is known as pagla (crazy).

When this correspondent came across the man in chains at the backyard of the house recently, his mother Jamena Begum said they could not provide proper medical treatment to Ataur due to severe financial hardship.

The mother, in her sixties, said she did not know how else she could ensure safety for her son, considering extreme poverty of her family.

"How would I explain the pain that I bear when I put my son in chains by the house? I'm worried sick thinking about who would look after him when I'm gone," she said.

If let loose, Ataur cannot find his way back home. Moreover, if found roaming in the village, children taunt him and throw stones at him.

The situation gets ugly if agitated Ataur throws back a stone or two at his tormentors, the elderly woman explained.

Sometimes people even physically

assault him if he tries getting close to them, said his younger brother Firoz Ahmed, 37. "So, we keep my brother chained up at home."

Ataur's mental disorder resulted from injuries he sustained during birth, his mother said, adding that ever since, they could only afford to treat him by kobiraj (practitioners of an ancient form of alternative medicine).

Faruk Hossain, 34, Ataur's youngest brother, said, "We don't have anything but the house. My brother turned forty, but we still couldn't get him proper medical care."

But, if someone comes forward and helps him get necessary treatment, he might get well, Faruk hoped.

Their neighbour Hafizul Islam said, "It's so sad that a young man is having to be chained up in his house. But otherwise he becomes restless and goes out of control."

He also said the departments concerned should ensure proper treatment for Ataur.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Natore Mohammad Shahriaz said he was not aware of Ataur's being chained up for his illness and that he would ask Natore civil surgeon's office to ensure proper treatment for the man.

# Cut off all support to Myanmar military

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750,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh since August 2017 and joined some 300,000, who had faced earlier waves of violence since 1980s.

Myanmar has yet to create conducive conditions for return of the Rohingyas, though it signed a bilateral deal with Bangladesh and a tripartite deal with the UN refugee agency and UNDP on repatriating them.

The FFM, formed by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2017, submitted a report to the council in September last year where it documented how Myanmar's military brutally and systematically violated the human rights of ethnic minorities throughout the country.

Following the violence, Myanmar authorities have levelled empty Rohingya villages with bulldozers, effectively destroying criminal evidence, while making no substantive progress in resolving the ethnic animosities that have helped fuel the crisis.

Both military and civilian sides of Myanmar's government persistently deny the facts and disclaim any responsibility for crimes under international law.

The FFM report also condemned

ethnic armed organisations for violating international humanitarian law and committing human rights abuses.

Darusman said operations conducted by Myanmar security forces in Rakhine State in 2017, 2012 and 2016 were not isolated incidents, rather they were the result of structural problems fuelled by the absence of a political and legal system that is willing to accommodate diversity.

He said Myanmar's government should focus on the real betterment of the remaining Rohingya community in Myanmar where many live in fear.

FFM expert member Radhika Coomaraswamy said, "The repatriation of refugees remains remote unless and until the Myanmar government takes concrete measures to provide conditions that are conducive for voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable return, including full and equal inclusion in Myanmar society."

Another expert member Christopher Sidoti emphasised, however, that the FFM "has seen no evidence that the Myanmar government is acting in good faith

to resolve the crisis or facilitate the safe return of refugees. The situation demands an increase in international pressure."

"Due to the gravity of the past and continuing violations, attention must be given to the political, economic and financial ties of the Myanmar military -- to identify who and what should be targeted so we can cut off the money supply as a means of increasing the pressure and reducing the violence," Sidoti said.

The crisis has been exacerbated by new fighting between the Arakan Army and security forces in Rakhine and Chin States, which has displaced another 30,000 people, said the FFM.

Humanitarian agencies have extremely limited or no access to the affected communities in Rakhine and Chin States. The FFM continues to receive allegations of human rights violations and abuses being committed there.

In Cox's Bazar, the FFM experts also visited the Bangladesh side of a small, desolate strip of land at Konarpara on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border where around 4,000 displaced Rohingyas remain stranded.

Due to the restrictions that Myanmar places on humanitarian actors, the people on the Myanmar side of the border face a particularly desperate situation.

Myanmar must take confidence-building measures, including lifting restrictions on freedom of movement and humanitarian access, providing livelihood opportunities and ensuring safety, to allow these 4,000 Rohingyas to return to their original villages, added the FFM.

The FFM will present its final report on the experts' visit to the UN Human Rights Council in September this year.

Myanmar military spokesman Major General Tun Tun Nyi said the military would investigate allegations backed by evidence but the fact-finding mission had levelled false accusations at troops, reports Reuters.

"Our country is an independent country, so we don't accept our matters being interfered with," he told Reuters by telephone.

The military was cooperating with a government-appointed panel on alleged abuses in Rakhine, Nyi said. Human rights campaigners say it lacks credibility.

# 6 get life term for raping housewife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pubna

A Sirajganj court yesterday sentenced six men to life term imprisonment for raping a housewife in Shahzadpur upazila in 2016.

The lifers are Md Tota, Alhaz Hossain, Alamgir Hossain, Md Bulbul, Jewel Rana and Md Ratan of Dargachar village in the upazila.

Judge of Sirajganj Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-1 Fazle Khoda Md Nazir also fined them Tk 1 lakh each, in default, they are to suffer another one year in jail.

According to the prosecution, the six raped the housewife when she along with her husband was returning home from an orosh (religious meeting) at the village on February 26 in 2016. At the time, they also beat her husband mercilessly.

The victim filed a case with Shahzadpur Police Station and police later arrested the six accused.

# 'Deprived' ones threaten

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committee, said at the press conference.

The faction demanded punishment of those involved in the attack on them on Monday.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tilotamma Sikdar, another deputy cultural affairs secretary, said at least 30 committee post holders would resign if they were not given their desired posts.

She said that many dedicated leaders and activists were deprived, while those who allegedly have connections with the BNP, its pro-student wing Chhatra Dal, as well as Chhatra Shibir have been included in the new committee.

The new committee has 61 vice-presidents, 11 joint secretaries, 11 organising secretaries, 32 secretaries, 126 deputy secretaries, 47 assistant secretaries and 11 members.

There are different allegations against at least 50 of them.

drug dealing, and four are said to be expelled from Chhatra League.

Two people became vice presidents even though they exceed the age limit for that post.

They also brought allegations of nepotism. They said one person of Jagan-nath University was given a post because he is the brother of a top Chhatra League leader and 22 people of Madaripur got posts because they are from the same district as another top Chhatra League leader.

While talking to reporters Chhatra League President Rezwanul Haque Chowdhury Shovon said he would inform Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina about the leaders protesting.

He said the PM's decision would be conveyed to the people who have been dropped from the committee.

Citing the allegations, Chhatra League General Secretary Golam Rabbani said a probe committee was formed to investigate all allegations against the newly formed committee members.

"As per the body's report, we will take legal action ...," he said, adding, "It is not possible

to include everyone in the 301-member committee."

Chhatra League formed the three-member probe body early yesterday after a clash ensued between the factions on Monday.

New Vice-President Al Nahian Khan Joy, Law Affairs Secretary Fuad Hossain Sahadat, and Research Secretary Pallab Kumar Barman are the probe committee members. It has 48 hours to come up with the report, said a press release.

Meanwhile, Awami League acting General Secretary Mahbub-Ul-Alam Hanif yesterday termed the scuffle between the two factions of Chhatra League a "trifle" matter.

"It is a trivial incident. I think there is nothing to be much concerned over. We hope, the president and general secretary of the organisation will settle the issue and they will work for their organisation unitedly," he told re-porters at the AL President Sheikh Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi yesterday.

He said Chhatra League has thousands of activists and it was not possible to accommodate everyone in the committee.