

Rape victim's husband attacked

Criminals beat him up for refusing to withdraw case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The husband of a gang-rape victim was attacked in Patuakhali on Tuesday night for what he said was refusing to withdraw a case filed over the rape.

The 36-year-old man suffered serious injuries to his legs and one hand, and he was being treated at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal, said the hospital's Director Bakir Hossain.

"The victim was admitted to the hospital early yesterday [Wednesday] and his condition is critical," he said.

Relatives of the man, a day labourer, said some 10 to 12 men, armed with iron rods and sticks, swooped on him around 8:30pm on Tuesday when he was having tea at a tea stall in Chapli Bazaar area of Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila.

After the attackers left, locals and family members took him to Kalapara Health Complex and then to the hospital in Barishal.

The family members alleged the attackers also tried to obstruct them

from taking the injured to hospital.

On April 15, some 10 to 12 youths stormed into the victim's house in a village in the upazila and gang-raped his wife after tying him to a pole. The rapists had previous enmity with the family, according to the case document.

The next day, the man filed the case against 12, seven named and five unnamed, with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Patuakhali.

The seven named accused were sent to jail after they had surrendered before the court. They, however, secured bail recently, said the family members of the victims.

Quoting the injured, the family members said the "rapists" had been threatening him to withdraw the case lately. The attack was carried out as the victim did not pay heed to the threats, they said.

Md Sohel Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Mohipur Police Station, said the suspects were on the run and that they were trying to arrest them.



Demonstrators and alleged Chhatra League activists scuffle in front of the business faculty of Dhaka University after the latter swooped on them yesterday afternoon. *Inset*, an injured protester being taken to hospital.

PHOTO: STAR



Pabna OC suspended

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Earlier, Obaidul was closed and attached to police line for his involvement in arranging the marriage while Sub-inspector Ekramul Huq was suspended for forcibly bringing the marriage registrar to the police station.

The OC arranged a marriage of a married woman, also mother of three, with one of the alleged rapists, Russel, at Pabna Sadar Police Station on September 5.

Though the victim was already married, the officer made her sign documents for divorcing her husband, her brother alleged earlier.

On September 9, the victim filed a case accusing five persons of confining her to a room and gang-raping her multiple times between August 29

and August 31.

After the allegations were reported in the media, the district police formed a three-member committee to probe the matter on the same day the case was filed.

Following an instruction of the cabinet, the Pabna Deputy Commissioner formed another three-member committee with Additional District Magistrate of Pabna.

Meanwhile, police arrested Russel and Shariful, joint secretaries of Dapunia Union Awami League, soon after the case was filed.

Rest of the accused -- Hossain Ali, Osman and Sanju -- were also arrested between September 9 and September 13.

They were all sent to jail via court, said police.

Tigers romp in final

FROM PAGE 1

And it was Aminul who grabbed the opportunity with both hands, making an impact by picking up two wickets and conceding just 18 runs from his four overs. More importantly, the 19-year-old was provided with the perfect platform to showcase his talent.

In reply to a challenging 176-run target, Zimbabwe surrendered helplessly and were bundled out for 136 runs in 20 overs at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Richmond Mutumbami fought a lone battle for the visitors and toppedcored with 54 after the top order faltered in front of a disciplined Bangladesh bowling attack.

Mohammad Saifuddin provided the first breakthrough, removing Brendon Taylor for a duck. Skipper Shakib Al Hasan and pacer Shafiqul Islam then removed Regis Chakabva and Sean Williams respectively in quick time and left Zimbabwe struggling on eight for three inside four overs.

But the highlight of the game was young Aminul coming in to bowl in the seventh over and immediately picking up his maiden T20 wicket with just his third ball as Tinotenda Mutumbodzi went for a big shot only to be caught at long off.

Aminul scalped his second when he trapped Zimbabwe skipper Hamilton Masakadza leg before as he went for a slog sweep. The ball did not turn, instead going on to hit Masakadza's back foot.

Earlier, Bangladesh made a decent start after being sent in to bat and added 55 runs in the Powerplay. Liton Das smashed a quickfire 22-ball 38 but his partner, the other debutant Najmul, was dismissed for 11.

Shakib also departed cheaply but the experienced Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim added 78 runs for the fourth wicket before the latter was dismissed for 32. However, Mahmudullah went on and struck a brilliant 41-ball 62, which helped the Tigers gain momentum.

Crackdown

FROM PAGE 1

The club had a Nepalese manager but "we could not detain him", he said.

Arrestee Milon Hossain, who hails from Madhabdi in Narsingdi, said in the last six months he lost Tk 1.5 crore at the "casino" and he gathered the money selling off his family land.

In another drive, the Rab mobile court arrested and sentenced 40 people at "casinos" in Muktijoddha Sangsads Krirachakra in Gulistan and Muktijoddha Chetona Club in Shahjahanpur, Rab officials said.

They seized gambling materials, drugs, cash, and even touchstone idols.

The mobile court also raided the Golden Dhaka Bangladesh located in Ahmed Tower in Banani and Wanderers Club in Motijheel area.

It sealed off Golden Dhaka Bangladesh finding no one there, Rab said.

A huge quantity of gambling materials, drugs, and counterfeit currencies were seized at Wanderers Club, which was also sealed off.

Rab officials said that they learnt that two leaders of two ruling party affiliated organisations ran the "casino" in Wanderers Club. The Daily Star could not verify the claim.

According to Rab, there is no legal way to run a casino in Bangladesh.

Jubo League is the youth wing of ruling Awami League and the drives came after AL President Sheikh Hasina expressed annoyance on Saturday over allegations that some Jubo League leaders were involved in various crimes, including extortion and running "casinos".

She was presiding over the AL Central Working Committee meeting when she showed her party colleagues a photo on her mobile phone in which a Jubo League leader was seen brandishing a firearm, meeting sources said.

"Not a single protest procession was brought out after Bangabandhu's assassination. But now these people are staging show-downs with firearms," she was quoted as saying.

One of the senior AL leaders at the meeting identified the Jubo League leader in the photo as Khalid.

Rab sources, wishing not to be named, early yesterday said they discovered and were raiding the "torture cell" of Khalid near Kamalapur Railway Station. They claimed to have recovered torture equipment from the spot.

They said Khalid used the cell to torture people who would not pay him the money he demands. The raid was going on as of 1:00am, when this report was filed.

Meanwhile, Jubo League Chairman Omar Faroque Chowdhury during a meeting at Darussalam in the capital yesterday afternoon said, "You [law enforcers] are saying there are 60 casinos in Dhaka. What were you doing all this time? If that is true, the policemen of the police stations and the Rab personnel of the Rab units concerned should be arrested.

"I've never seen a casino... I'd love to see one. If you want to arrest me then arrest me... But you [law enforcers] have given tacit approval to these casinos."

income to Tk 50,000 to encourage individuals to invest more in the stock market.

In July, Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, the regulator of the stock market, held a meeting with stakeholders and took 22 initiatives to win back the confidence of investors.

The measures include raising quota for general investors in case of initial public offering (IPO) to 50 percent from 30 percent, increasing lock-in period for sponsors' shares to three years and a ban on giving bonus shares by mutual funds.

But these steps failed to yield any results.

On Monday, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal held a five-hour meeting with stakeholders and independent analysts to find out ways to stabilise the stock market.

Emerging from the meeting, he gave assurance that good governance would be ensured in the stock market and state-run companies would be listed with it.

Yet, the DSEX dropped 30 points the following day and 41 points yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of stakeholders and experts blamed liquidity crisis, deteriorating health of banks, lack of quality stocks and share manipulation for the slump in the stock market.

Mizanur Rahman, professor of accounting and information systems at Dhaka University, said, "Share prices have been going down due to the ongoing liquidity crisis of financial institutions."

These institutions don't want to invest in the market now as they fear

further "pressure" in the coming days, he said.

The asset quality of banks is questionable, and their operating cash flow is also very low, which will ultimately put more pressure on liquidity, mentioned Mizanur.

He recommends solving the liquidity crisis by ensuring good governance.

The financial sector, especially banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFI), has been facing severe liquidity crisis since February 2018.

Seeking anonymity, a senior bank official said the banks and the NBFI are the drivers of the stock market but they have been plagued by rising nonperforming loans (NPLs), scams and lack of governance.

NPLs stood at Tk 112,000 crore or 11.50 percent of the total outstanding loans. If rescheduled and written-off amounts are included, the stressed assets of banks would be around 20 percent of the total loans.

Though the BB has widened the BSE's scope for investing more in the stock market, they have hardly any money for that, added the bank official.

Another banker said, "The regulator's decision to extend the tenure of the closed-end mutual funds from 10 years to 20 years has dampened the investors' confidence."

Many invested in the mutual funds to gain profits within a certain period, but now they will have to wait for another 10 years to get the benefits, added the banker.

Talking to this correspondent, a stock broker said a lack of quality stocks is a key reason behind poor participation of investors in the stock market.

Such share manipulation affects the investors' confidence, the broker added.

If the government fails to bring reputed local and multinational companies to the market, it will be difficult to restore the investors' confidence, the broker pointed out.

Foreign investors are also selling off shares over the last few months due to confidence crisis and the tussle between the telecom regulator and Grameenphone over audit claims, added the broker.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) made an audit claim of over Tk 12,500 crore from GP. The BTRC also sent a show-cause notice to GP, asking it to explain why its licence would not be cancelled for not paying dues.

The price of each GP share, the largest listed company, dropped to Tk 308 yesterday from Tk 504 on February 18. If the price of a GP share goes down by Tk 1 only, the DSEX drops 3 points.

Requesting anonymity, a stock broker said the stock market depends heavily on the financial institutions. When they reduce investment, the market goes down.

"We need to come out of such a situation by building up a strong investor base. To do so, stocks of well-known firms need to be brought to the market and the stock market regulator will have to curb share manipulation."

The DSE data shows the share prices of 10 poorly-performing companies soared surprisingly by 9 to 37 percent when the overall market fell 4.26 percent in the last three weeks.

Such share manipulation affects the investors' confidence, the broker added.

BANGABANDHU KILLING

Bangladesh's application for Nur Chy's info valid

Says Canadian court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Federal Court of Canada in a judgement said Bangladesh's application for information about the status of Bangabandhu's killer Nur Chowdhury is valid and the disclosure of such information would not hamper the public interest.

This verdict is one step forward for Bangladesh High Commission in Canada to get pre-removal risk assessment (PRRA) information from the Canadian government. Judge James W O'Reilly delivered the judgement on Tuesday.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the judgement.

Nur and his wife were granted visitor status in Canada in 1996. Later, they applied for refugee protection.

He was tried and convicted in 1998 in absentia as a co-conspirator in the 1975 coup in which Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman and most of his family members were killed.

In 2002, Nur and his wife were found to be excluded from refugee protection for having committed a serious non-political crime. Then, they were found to be inadmissible to Canada for serious criminality in 2006. In 2009, Nur requested a PRRA.

The Bangladesh government has been in discussions with Canadian officials about Nur's status in Canada and has expressed concern about the delay relating to his PRRA application since 2010.

In 2018, the high commissioner of Bangladesh to Canada wrote to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship requesting to disclose, in the public interest, information about the status of Nur's PRRA application and his immigration status in Canada.

But the minister refused saying that there was no information-sharing agreement between the two countries.

Bangladesh sought judicial review of the minister's decision to disclose the status of Nur's PRRA application. In response, the Canadian minister as well as Nur said Bangladesh's request was premature and non-justiciable.

But the justice rejected Nur and the Canadian minister's claim in the verdict.

"In my view, Bangladesh's application for judicial review should be allowed because the minister failed to be serious consideration to the public interest that would be served if the information sought were disclosed," the justice said in the observation of the verdict.

RIFAT KILLING

Court accepts charge sheet against 24

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Barguna court yesterday accepted charge sheet against 24 accused in Rifat Sharif murder case.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Sirajul Islam Gazi accepted it after hearing both prosecution and accused.

The court also issued arrest warrant against nine accused who were absconded. Besides, it rejected bail plea of six more, said defence lawyer Mahbubul Baris Aslam.

Of the 24 accused, nine went into hiding, seven were in Barguna jail and six were in a juvenile correction centre in Jashore. Rest of the two -- Ayesha Siddika Minni and Arian Sharbon -- were on bail.

On September 1, Humayun Kabir, investigation officer of the murder case, submitted the 624-page charge sheet to the court.

Rifat, 25, an internet service provider by profession, was hacked by some youths in front of Barguna Government College in broad daylight on June 26. Later that day, he died of his injuries at Barishal Medical College Hospital.

The victim's father filed the murder case with Barguna Sadar Police Station on the same day.

Spain to hold repeat election in Nov after talks fail

AFP, Madrid

Spain will hold a repeat general election in November -- its fourth in four years -- after acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez failed to secure the support he needs from other parties.

"Spain is bound to hold new elections on November 10," Sanchez told a news conference late on Tuesday after King Felipe VI met with party leaders and concluded there was no candidate with enough support to form a government.

Sanchez's Socialists won an April general election but only secured 123 of the parliament's 350 seats. That left him dependent on