

Shibir leader held in rape, forced abortion case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Police have arrested four people, including a leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir, in a case filed over the rape of a woman and allegedly forcing her to undergo an abortion in Cumilla.

The arrested Shibir leader is Jisan Mia Pradhan, 28, now expelled central assistant secretary for international affairs, said Cumilla Superintendent of Police Md Anisuzzaman yesterday.

Another arrestee is Jisan's cousin Sajib, while the identities of the two others could not be known immediately.

On June 12, Jisan's family filed a general diary with Daudkandi Model Police Station, claiming that he had been missing since 8:30pm on Thursday.

A police investigation found that Jisan went into hiding after a woman he knew brought allegations of rape and forced abortion against him, added the SP.

Meanwhile, the woman filed a case against Jisan as the prime accused, bringing allegations of rape, abetment of rape, forced abortion and criminal intimidation.

Islami Chhatra Shibir Central Committee relieved Jisan of his post as central assistant secretary for international affairs following his arrest in the case.



Vehicles struggle through the muddy and pothole-ridden Khulna Shipyard Road near Khan Jahan Ali (Rupsha) Bridge yesterday. The road, stretching from Rupsha Traffic intersection to the bridge, has become a nightmare for passengers, businesses, and students, as even light rain leaves large potholes waterlogged and vehicles often break down or get stuck.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Govt sets aside Tk 200cr for blue economy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has proposed allocating Tk 200 crore to support research, innovation, and development activities in Bangladesh's blue economy.

Of the total amount, Tk 100 crore has been earmarked for a "Blue Economy Research Fund", while the remaining Tk 100 crore will be allocated for the development of the blue economy, according to the budget proposal for the next fiscal year.

The allocation comes as the government seeks to tap marine resources and increase fisheries exports to \$1 billion by 2030, up from around \$450 million recorded in fiscal year 2024-25.

In his budget speech, Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said the government has adopted a plan to operate commercial vessels for harvesting tuna and other pelagic fish in deep-sea waters and to expand seaweed cultivation in order to promote marine-based economic activities.

To strengthen marine conservation efforts, Kuakata and Salimpur will be declared new marine protected areas, while a modern fishing port will be established at Matarbari to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources.

The government is also implementing a project to upgrade the Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation's fish landing centre in Cox's Bazar to support the optimal utilisation of marine resources.

Won't give govt 'much time'

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Invoking historical parallels, the Jamaat chief said if the government refuses to accept the referendum outcome or the public demand, a situation akin to that of 1996 will ultimately emerge. Just as it (the then BNP government) was forced to introduce and pass the caretaker government bill in 1996, it will also be compelled to implement the referendum verdict this time. It should accept the mandate willingly rather than forcing people to take to the streets.

"A previous regime attempted to establish fascism and is now hiding out in the forests, fleeing through rivers and canals. Where will you flee?" he warned.

The 11-party alliance organised the rally to press a set of demands, including immediate implementation of the referendum mandate, strict control of soaring commodity prices, improvement of law and order, and protection of public rights.

In his speech, Shafiqur launched a sharp critique of the proposed national budget, also targeting the prime minister's remarks suggesting that the opposition opposed it due to reduced duties on alcohol and cigarettes.

"The opposition's role is to deliver logical and constructive criticism of the budget. What is there to be angry about? Why lose patience so easily?" he said, advising the prime minister to identify

individuals within his inner circle who, he claimed, were misguiding him. "Those who take receptions while riding in the vehicles of notorious bank defaulters can offer you nothing of value," he added.

He further alleged that parliamentary proceedings were being bypassed on key national security issues. Despite formal opposition notices seeking discussion on border concerns, he said, the government had continued to delay. "What is there to fear? Who are you afraid of? History shows that no one escapes after betraying the nation."

Expressing concern over the law and order situation, Shafiqur said people had expected extortion to end under an elected government but that it had instead worsened.

He also criticised the government for failing to curb corruption. "Before the election, you promised to take a stand against corruption. Instead, we are seeing that corruption has effectively been nationalised," he said.

Speaking at the rally, Nahid Islam, convener of the National Citizen Party (NCP) and opposition chief whip, strongly criticised the budget, saying it lacked clear measures to stop financial looting and institutional corruption.

"We genuinely wanted to applaud the government and the prime minister, but you have taken zero concrete steps to halt public looting, financial corruption, or hostile bank takeovers," he said, adding

that corruption could not be eliminated without structural state reforms.

He also alleged that due to the absence of police reform, a national team cricketer was subjected to harassment in Chattogram. "If the government chooses the path of autocracy, the masses will inevitably choose the path of an uprising," he warned.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Chairman Oli Ahmed urged the prime minister to exercise executive authority directly rather than through proxies.

"You must declare directly: 'I am the prime minister; I do not need sycophants.' While you have the legislative support of the 11-party alliance, you must identify and purge the foreign agents and opportunists surrounding you," he said.

Questioning the government's hesitation on reforms, he added, "You have the constitutional provision to serve terms spanning up to two decades as prime minister and president. How many more years do you need? You cannot survive with enemies on all sides. Build a bridge of friendship with the opposition."

Jatiya Gonotantrik Party (JAGPA) leader Rashed Prodhan claimed the current administration's rapid decline in public popularity was unprecedented.

He alleged that the government was quickly repeating authoritarian patterns of the past regime.

Rape victim arrested

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(*Names have been changed to protect identities and avoid confusion in the narrative.)

On Tuesday night, Anjum, along with an associate, allegedly took Rima from her home with the intent of trafficking her. On the way, Rima's husband allegedly intercepted them, rescued his wife and took Anjum and her associate to their home, where they were confined, the statement alleged.

On information, police arrived at the house on Wednesday morning and detained Anjum and her associate.

Later that night, Rima's sister filed a human trafficking case against Anjum and her associate, who were subsequently shown arrested in the case.

A court later sent Anjum's associate to jail after police produced him before it.

Within a few hours, Anjum's father filed a rape case against Rima's husband, Atikur Rahman Gittu, 28, Md Abu Raihan, 24, Abdul Karim, 24, and around three unidentified individuals.

Among them, Gittu has given a confessional statement in court and was sent to jail on June 11, said AFM Ashaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Sariakandi Police Station.

According to the rape case statement, Anjum had a cordial relationship with

Rima and her sister, who filed the human trafficking case.

The statement said that around 9:00pm on Tuesday, Rima called Anjum and sought help, alleging that her husband was torturing her.

When Anjum and her associate were on their way to help, Rima, her husband and others intercepted them and took them to the couple's home.

The rape case statement said Rima's husband and his associates, along with several unidentified men, raped Anjum in the house. Later that night, Rima's sister filed a human trafficking case against Anjum and her associate.

Contacted, the OC said, "Two people were arrested in a trafficking case, while two others were arrested in a rape case."

"The accused in the trafficking case, who was reportedly raped, has been sent to a hospital for tests. Meanwhile, one of the men arrested in the rape case has made a confessional statement before a court."

Hospital sources said the rape victim bore several injury marks on her body, and there were signs of multiple sexual exposures.

Contacted, Bogura Superintendent of Police Mirza Sayem Mahmud said both cases had been registered.

"Necessary legal action will be taken following the investigation."

Interim US-Iran deal

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due to the hesitation of the other side, we must be cautious in making any comments about this process."

A US official who spoke to reporters later declined to be drawn on the timing but said: "It's a great deal and a very strong deal."

It is not the first time the two sides have appeared close to an initial agreement on ending the war that began on February 28 with joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

The war has sent global energy prices sharply higher and killed thousands of people, mostly in Iran and Lebanon, where the war has revived a conflict between Israel and Iran-aligned Hezbollah militants.

WHAT IS IN THE DEAL?

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Friday that while changes in the deal were still possible, the tentative agreement showed his country had emerged stronger from the conflict.

"Iran is the winner of the war with the US," he said on state television.

Hours after those remarks, US forces shot down multiple Iranian one-way attack drones heading toward the Strait of Hormuz, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity,

said the drones had posed a threat to commercial traffic.

Iran has for months effectively blockaded the strait, and the US navy has blocked Iranian ports to reduce its oil exports.

The proposed memorandum of understanding calls for reopening the strait and lifting the US naval blockade, sources on all sides of the talks said. Negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme – Trump's stated rationale for starting the war – would take place afterwards.

"Iran is going to open up the Strait of Hormuz, that's a requirement. It could be open with no tolls. As they do that, we will lift our blockade," said the US official who spoke yesterday.

"It's going to happen in conjunction, and part of the next step, the phase after that, is going to be the demining of the straits," the official said, indicating countries in the Group of Seven major powers could have a role in this.

FROZEN ASSETS

Draft terms described to Reuters by multiple sources indicate the US would begin releasing billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets and waive sanctions on its oil exports, in return for Iran opening the strait.

Iran's Fars news agency

quoted Baghaei as saying the release of Iran's frozen assets was an integral part of the agreement and also that Iran would have to charge for services in the Strait of Hormuz.

Fars also quoted him as saying foreign military bases in the region must end without providing details.

Iran's nuclear programme would be addressed during a 60-day period of talks. A US official said the agreement would ultimately lead to the dismantling of Iran's nuclear programme, with its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to be destroyed and removed.

But Araghchi said that Iran, which sources said has not accepted the dismantling of its nuclear programme, wanted to retain the uranium in diluted form.

The proposals also include dropping longstanding US demands for limits on Iran's missile programme, the sources said. The US official disputed that account.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his country would not be a party to the agreement. Araghchi said the agreement would end the war in Lebanon, implying an Israeli withdrawal from occupied areas.

Israel's defence minister said it would not withdraw.

Revisit Abdul Kadir's works

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evaluation of Abdul Kadir's literary works is a pressing need. He said many critics have not read Kadir's books, leading to widespread misconceptions.

The poet's work had long been neglected, despite demonstrating a deep command of language and rhythm that are appreciated by contemporary scholars, he said.

"Kadir's contributions require in-depth, objective research to present his true legacy to future generations," he said.

He suggested compiling Kadir's essays on Kazi Nazrul Islam into a separate volume to add a new dimension to Bangla literary studies.

Masud Rahman said inaccuracies in biographical information and identity-related confusion have long obscured Kadir's contributions.

While interest in the poet has recently grown on social media, his life and works remain poorly documented, he said.

"To address this interest, Kadir must be studied more deeply and critically," he said.

"Biography books published by Bangla Academy generally present complete accounts of a subject's life and career, but this is lacking for Kadir, with several of his major works missing from such documentation," he said.

He said this was partly

because the poet was not keen on publishing his writings, leaving many works unpublished. The responsibility of researching his life now lies with future generations.

Rokshana Kadir said her father was not only a major prosodist but also a skilled editor and critic who helped compile the works of Kazi Nazrul Islam, Begum Rokeya, and Abul Hossain.

"However, his own collected works are yet to be fully published," she said.

She said she and Emran Mahfuz recently initiated efforts at Bangla Academy to publish Kadir's complete works.

However, the process was halted following the July movement.

Ordinance repeal stalls HC judge

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law ministry issued a notification on November 20 last year.

Subsequently, a circular was issued inviting applications from candidates for the posts of HC judges and more than 250 candidates, including lower court judges and practising SC lawyers with at least 10 years of experience, applied, SC sources said.

Contacted, SC Registrar General Mohammad Habibur Rahman Siddiquee said a requisition had been sent to the president for appointing the new HC judges.

But the activities of the council came to a halt after the repeal of the SC Judges Appointment Ordinance, he

said.

The registrar general said there were shortages of judges in both the Appellate and HC divisions.

However, the number of case disposals in both divisions has increased in recent months after Chief Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury took initiatives for early hearing and disposal of long-pending cases, he added.

The number of HC judges reached its peak at 113 on August 25 last year, following the appointment of 25 new judges. The number has since fallen to 101 after the resignation, removal and retirement of nine judges, and the elevation of two others to

the Appellate Division.

The SC currently has five judges. One of them will retire on July 15. Around 38,000 cases are pending before this division.

The highest number of judges ever to serve in the Appellate Division was 11, recorded in June 2009.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman declined to comment on the issue.



People attend a rally organised by the 11-party alliance led by Jamaat-e-Islami at the historic Laldighi Maidan in Chattogram yesterday. The alliance organised the rally to press a set of demands, including immediate implementation of the referendum mandate, strict control of soaring commodity prices, improvement of law and order, and protection of human rights.

PHOTO: COLLECTED