

## **A 12-year old girl shot by BSF soldier at the Nawdapara border, Roumari under Kurigram District**

Fact-finding Report  
Odhikar

Name of the victim : Rumi Akhter Nipa

Father's Name : Rokhsudul Islam

Age : 12

Address : District: Kurigram, Police Station: Roumari, Union: Roumari  
Sadar, Village: Nawdapara.

Border/Pillar : Nawdapara Border/ Pillar no: Between 1063 and 1064  
(Bangladesh)

Border/ Pillar : Chadnichawk Border / Main Pillar No: Between 1063 and 1064 pillar  
(India)

Date of Occurrence : 4 October 2009



Rumi Akhter Nipa a 12-year old girl was shot by the BSF at the Nawdapara border in Roumari under Kurigram District on 4 October, 2009.

On the day of the incident Rumi was returning with a group of girls from a pond that falls between the international pillars no. 1063 and 1064 at the border. On their way back Rumi suddenly felt a sharp pain on her thigh and found that she had been shot. Rumi was brought to Roumari Upazila Health Complex at once and had been admitted there for 6 months. The attending doctor informed that the wound has started to heal but it would need some more time before she can walk properly.

The BDR camp in Roumari, being outraged by this irresponsible shooting, asked for explanations from the BSF, who had promised to conduct an investigation on the matter and punish the one responsible. The BSF has apologized for this unanticipated incident.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the incident on 28 and 29 February, 2010. During the fact-finding mission, Odhikar spoke with:

- The Rumi Akhter Nipa and her family
- Local residents
- Local journalist
- Concerned members of the BDR
- Concerned members of the Police

### **Rumi Akhter Nipa (12)**

Rumi Akhter Nipa, a student of class V of Nawdapara Primary School, was shot and wounded by the BSF on 4 October 2009. The incident took place during Ramadan<sup>1</sup>. Rumi told Odhikar that on the day of 4 October 2009 she went to school as usual at 9.00 in the morning. She found that none of her classmates were present. The teacher of Nawdapara School Abdul Karim asked her to fetch them and that the class will start when all of them were present.

To look for her classmates at around 9.15 am she went to their old house which is situated between the international pillars no. 1063 and 1064 and within the 'no man's land'. There is a pond adjacent to that house where she found her friends Sheuli, Mina, Mousumi, Shilpi and couple of her other classmates and friends taking a bath. Rumi's maternal aunt Rubi, whose house is in that area was present there too.

On their way back to the school, suddenly Rumi felt as if she had been hit by a stone. She felt a tingling, sharp pain on her right thigh. When she told Rubi, her aunt, about the stone she brushed it off saying that it was nothing serious. Soon her dress started to turn crimson. Rubi became a little worried and she checked Rumi's thigh and screamed, "You have been shot". Rubi called out to her son Faruk who was working nearby. On that day at around 10.30 am Faruk took Rumi to Roumari Upazila Health Complex where she was admitted for 6 months.

### **Md. Rokhsudul Islam (54), father of Rumi, Nowdapara, Roumari**

Odhikar interviewed Rumi's father Rokhsudul Islam about the incident. He said that on the day of the incident he left home early in the morning for work. At around 9.30 am, his sister-in-law Rubi informed him through cell phone that Rumi has been shot and Faruk had taken her to

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<sup>1</sup> A month for fasting: very sacred month for Muslims

Raumari Upazila Health Complex. Rokhsudul went there at once and found out that the BSF had shot his daughter when she and her friends were returning from the pond.

Rokhsudul Islam is the father of six daughters. Providing for his family has always been a tough job and with Rumi being shot the situation has worsened. The bullet took out a chunk of her flesh when it exited and the wound has been difficult. Rakshudul stated that with out Dr. Abdus Samad's support Rumi's leg would not have healed at all. Though he was happy that his daughter was finally recovering, he acknowledged that the financial burden was too much for him to continue her treatment. He spent a lot of money. He has no savings now. As of 29 February 2010, the date of this interview, 55,000 taka has already been spent on Rumi's treatment and medications.

He also informed Odhikar that Subedar Abul Kalam Azad and other soldiers of Raumari Sadar Headquarters of BDR had donated 10,000 taka to the family.

#### **Anju Ara Begum (40), mother of Rumi**

Anju Ara Begum was all in tears when Odhikar interviewed her. The last 6 months had been a nightmare for her. Anju Ara thought that Rumi would never walk again.

She told Odhikar that on 4 October 2010, Rumi had her breakfast with rice and vegetable at around 8.00 am and went to school at 9.00 am. Anju Ara was busy with household chores. At around 9.30 am her sister Rubi came running to inform her that Rumi had been shot by the BSF and Faruk was taking her to Raumari Upazila Health Complex. All of them went there at once. Rumi was taken to the operation theatre.

Anju Ara wanted to know why Rumi was shot when she had not done anything. *"Allah jeno oder bichar kore. Paye khutwala ai meye ke biye korbe".<sup>2</sup>*

#### **Faruk (19), witness and cousin of Rumi**

Odhikar spoke to Faruk, a resident of Nawdapara village, who took Rumi to the Roumari Upazila Health Complex after she got shot on 4 October 2009. Their house is situated between the International pillars no. 1063 and 1064 and within the 'no man's land' and also very close to the pond where Rumi had been shot.

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<sup>2</sup> May Allah bring them to justice. Who would marry a girl with scars and wounds on her leg?"

Faruk informed Odhikar that he was working near their house on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> October at around 9.30 am. He heard two gun shots. At first he thought it was in the Indian side of Chadnichawk border. A few minutes later his mother Rubi, called him and informed that his cousin Rumi had been shot. According to Faruk when he got to the spot with his mother, he saw Rumi and a couple of other girls were 10 yards near the pond. Rumi had fallen on the bank and was crying because a portion of her dress was drenched with blood. After seeing that he immediately looked the other sides of Chadnichawk border but found the place was empty and no BSF member was there. He ran to Rumi and took her to the Health Complex of Roumari by a rickshaw van.

**S M Sadeq Hossain (40), Local correspondent of the Daily Jugantor in Roumari**

On the 4 October 2010 he came to know that a young girl was shot by the BSF and had been admitted to the Roumari Upazila Health Complex. On that day at around 11.30 am he went to the hospital and found that a crowd of villagers and the BDR had collected there. According to him, while Rumi was lying in the bed at the hospital he had a chance to see her wound which was bleeding and a chunk of flesh was missing from her thigh. She was crying and screaming in pain.

Sadek also informed to Odhikar the BDR was really angry about the incident. There was no provocation of any sort or any reasonable cause for the BSF to open fire. He heard that the BDR had charged the BSF in the flag meeting about this uncalled for shooting.

**Subedar Abul Kalam Azad, Roumari Sadar Headquarter, Kurigram**

Subedar Abul Kalam Azad informed Odhikar that the BDR was not aware of the incident when it happened. The patrol team, while returning to the base at around 11.00 am after its duty, saw a crowd surrounding the Roumari Upazila Health Complex. When they asked what the fuss was about, they were informed that a 12-year-old girl was shot by the BSF while walking to school. The patrol team of the BDR informed the Base immediately and one team of officials went to the hospital to visit her. Another patrol team visited the spot and heard from the villagers that two rounds of gun shots were fired by the Shapara BSF members of Chadnichawk border of India into the Nawdapara border of Bangladesh. The Camp Commander also confirmed that the pond where Rumi got shot belonged to 'no man's land' and it was situated exactly in between the international pillar no. 1063 and 1064. The BDR had informed the police about the incident.

Outraged by this uncalled for shooting, the BDR contacted Shahpara BSF camp. Two flag meetings were held one on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2010 in the morning at 10.00 between camp level officials and other one on the 7<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 am where the Battalion Commanders participated. Both meetings were held at the international pillar no. 1064. In the flag meetings the BSF apologized profusely for the incident. On 7 October, at the Commander level meeting, the BSF Commander Brajesh, who was in charge of the 151 Battalion of Shahpara Camp came and apologized again. Commander Brajesh assured that the person or persons responsible would be inquired about and proper punishment given.

**Mohammad Kofiluddin, Officer-in-Charge, Roumari Police Station**

Mohammad Kofiluddin, Officer-in-Charge of the Roumari Police Station confirmed that he was informed about the shooting at 11.10 am on 4 October 2010 by Subedar Abul Kalam Azad of BDR over the phone. The BDR Camp Commander told him that the BSF had fired 2 rounds of bullets and a school girl had been shot. A General Diary was lodged with the Roumari Police Station numbered 421/2009 and a further message on the matter numbered 129 dated 4/10/2009 was sent to the higher authority in Kurigram.

**Dr. Abdus Samad, Roumari Upazila Health Complex**

Dr. Abdus Samad was the attending doctor who treated Rumi. He was helped by Dr. Ashraful Islam. Dr. Abdus Samad informed that Rumi was admitted to the Roumari Upazila Health Complex on 4 October 2009 at 10.37 am.

According to him, Rumi was shot on her right thigh and the bullet entered on the right side and went out through the left. It took out a chunk of her thigh and she was in a serious condition when brought in. She was attended to instantly, and being the only capable doctor in the complex to carry out the operation, he skin grafted her thigh.

He also stated that Rumi wanted to return to her daily life and start school soon. In January 2010 she was discharged from the hospital. After a couple of days, she started walking and going to school despite a prohibition from the doctor; as a result the wound became infected. She was brought back again by her parents to the hospital and has been staying there since then.

**-End of Report-**