

## Shock across social media as lawyer Imtiaz Mahmood emerges as sexual predator



Bangladesh's social media was rattled yesterday as allegations of sexual harassment and exploitation surfaced against a lawyer, Mr. Imtiaz Mahmood, 60. Mr. Mahmood who represents one of the law firms in the country, namely Abdul Jabbar and Associates, is also a familiar name amongst feminist writers, media personalities, online activists and the like. He is also a regular contributor in social media outlets, known for his uncensored coverage of topics such as woman's rights.

On 23rd January several screenshots of a private conversation Mr Imtiaz Mahmood held with Bangladesh Microsoft's brand ambassador Ms Jannatul Naim Prity, were uploaded on to FaceBook. The contents of screenshots revealed Mr Mahmood, who is married and the father of two no less, having a lewd and inappropriate conversation with Ms Prity. Ms Prity who has claimed that Mr Mahmood is a sexual predator by character and that he preys on women by claiming to love them. He would achieve this feat by lying to women that he is unhappy in his marriage, by belittling his wife and also by stating that he is 'alone and helpless'. Ms Prity took to Facebook on the 23rd January and uploaded a short post detailing her relationship with Mr Mahmood.

She stated that she admits it was 'her fault', as she led herself be oblivious to the fact that Mr Mahmood was married. She also stated that all he had done is 'deceive' her and that she just wants to 'identify' this man for what he is, in hope that no one else falls victim to him like she did.

Meanwhile social media channels were rife with discussion and debate as details of the allegations of sexual exploitation emerged against Mr Mahmood. Activists and writers who update their social media pages regularly, know Mr Mahmood as a sagacious and adept writer and activist, particularly because of his work on women's rights. As such were left befuddled and embarrassed by these charges against him. It is understood that Mr Mahmood wrote most of his posts and articles from Dhaka.

We contacted a few people for comments and response on the allegations made againts Mr Mahmood including his current wife Mrs Jennifa Jabbar but were unable to reach her on her cell. We also contacted Mr Mahmood's employers, Abdul Jobbar, and Associates, but they squarely declined to make any comments on this matter. It was later revealed that the firm is actually under the ownership of Mr Mahmood's father-in-law. Mr Mahmood actually claims on his Facebook profile that he works as an advocate on this law firm.

Mr Mahmud was recently the subject of a lawsuit filed against him in accordance S.57 of ICT Act. He was accused of spreading 'fake news' and generate unrest, on issues affecting the hilly regions of Chittagong. The lawsuit in question is still in effect and is making routine progress.

## Modhukhali Besieged: Minority households looted, demolished



The Modhukali upazila Faridpur district was the scene of utter devastation this past 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2018 as around 50 households, all belonging to minority inhabitants were destroyed, leaving at least 2 people with major injuries.

The attack was carried out by Mr. Babu, the Chairman of Dumain, a village right next to Modhukhali. Mr. Babu and his gang of hooligans unleashed their fury upon the innocent families of Modhukhali after learning that one of Modhukhali's own, one Mr. Suranjoy Sarker, a resident of New Zealand currently, has been writing blasphemous content against Islam and its constituencies in his personal blog ([www.suranjoysarker.wordpress.com](http://www.suranjoysarker.wordpress.com))

Mr. Suranjoy Sarker, son of Modhukhali local Kamol Chandra Sarker, was accused of publishing blasphemous articles about Islam on his blog and across other media channels. Mr. Babu and his goons reportedly invaded Mr. Suranjoy Sarker's and demanded to speak to his father. It is reported that he verbally abused his father, Mr. Kamol Chandra of afterward Babu constantly berated Mr. Kamol Chandra Sarker by telling him that his son has been posting crude, abhorrent and lewd articles about Islam and its "Beloved Prophet (PBUH)" on the internet and his personal blog.

Later on, our correspondent queried some of the locals about the incident. They stated that Babu demanded a public apology from Mr. Kamol Chandra over his son's antics and he was being very aggressive. His goons were armed with machetes, small to large knives and thick wooden bats and had surrounded the place.

That upset some of the younger local inhabitants of Modhukhali and they stepped in to help Mr. Kamol Chandra Sarker. Chairman Babu and his goons did not take very well to that and it prompted them to launch an all-out assault on Mr. Sarker and his family (those who were present in the house at that time) along the young men who showed their support for Mr. Kamol Chandra Sarker. The goons managed to gravely injure two young men in the process, one Arunavh Bishwas, and Bikash Ronjon. They have been taken to Faridpur Medical ever since and are receiving treatment.

Unfortunately, that began at Mr. Kamol Chandra's house, quickly spilled over to other minority households in the area as the goons demolished everything within their arm's length. There are

several reports of looting and property destruction from more than 4 dozen or so minority households.

Meanwhile, there is an air of apprehension amongst the majority of the inhabitants of Modhukhali as they live in constant fear of another small-scale attack. We can confirm that representatives of the Faridpur Kotowali Police Station have inspected the scene of devastation. One of their spokespersons who was initially reluctant to speak to our correspondent at first did manage to inform us that the police has completed preliminary inspections of the crime scene.

However, he denied that a formal complaint has been lodged as told us that the matter needs “proper investigations” before being pushed up to the next stage. He declined to comment on when that will take place.

---