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[Calcutta](#)
[Bengal](#)
[Opinion](#)
[International](#)
[Business](#) Stocks Live
[Sports](#) Cricket Live
[At Leisure](#)
[Sudoku](#)
[Gallery](#)

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[Insight](#)

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12-complaint 'torture' in husband suicide

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Krishnagar, Jan. 3: A 30-year-old man committed suicide in a Nadia town last night. Bijoy Biswas's father told police that he was unable to cope with "mental torture" inflicted by his wife.

The woman had dragged her husband to the local police station on at least a dozen occasions in the past five years, also complaining of "torture".

But Nadia additional superintendent of police Subrata Mitra said: "To be very frank, we never found the allegations true. Villagers always came forward in favour of Bijoy."

As the news of Bijoy's death spread this morning, about 500 villagers surrounded his house in Hanskhali and ransacked his widow Tagari's room.

The villagers also dragged her to the police station, where they threatened to kill her if she was not arrested.

Tagari was held after Bijoy's father Mukunda, a mason like his son, lodged the complaint against her.

Mitra said: "A case has been registered, charging Tagari with the mental torture of her husband."

Only recently, the Centre promulgated a law to prevent domestic violence against women. According to the new law, even a husband's threat to commit suicide constitutes mental torture.

Mukunda, 60, alleged that his daughter-in-law had forced his son to live separately in the same house five years ago.

"I was leading a retired life. But after my only son — the sole breadwinner of the family — separated from my family, I had to start working again as a mason to feed my wife and daughter," said Mukunda.

He added that Tagari had many demands from Bijoy that he was not able to meet with a princely monthly income of Rs 2,000.

Tagari would apparently want from her husband around Rs 500 as pocket money and cosmetics and *taant* saris.

The father-in-law said that "knowing that the law favoured women, she used to blackmail my son and frequently visit the police station to lodge complaints against him".

The police confirmed that had the "villagers not come to his rescue, Bijoy would have been arrested long ago".

An officer working on the case said that Tagari had also lodged complaints against her husband with village elders.

"*Shalishi* (conciliation) meetings, where he had to prove his innocence, were held," he added.



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Ananda Mondal, an elderly neighbour of the Biswases at Bogula village, around 70 km from Calcutta, said: "We know Bijoy since he was a baby. He is innocent. It was because of Tagari that he split with his parents."

"Every time the couple returned home after being advised by the elders to sort out their differences and live happily, Bijoy's wife started quarrelling again," said an officer of the Hanskhali police station.

Last night, Bijoy had another tiff, after which he locked himself in his room.

Tagari went to sleep with their nine-year-old son Sunny, a Class IV student in a local school, in another room.

After repeated knocks on the door of Bijoy's room did not elicit a response this morning, his parents broke it open and found him hanging from the ceiling.



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