

MURDER OF 3 KUSHTIA BCL LEADERS Locals point finger at ruling party goons

AMANUR AMAN, Back From Nawda Azampur

Kushtia: Police are yet to find any clue to the March 24 murder of three Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists at Nawda Azampur village in Mirpur upazila or arrest any of the killers.

Mystery shrouds the murders with some quarters blaming a section of ruling party leaders and police suspecting that it could be sequel to a row over reconstruction of the Amla-Halsha road involving Tk 2.22 lakh.

BCL leaders Sanwar Hossain Jibon, Mizanur Rahman Maznu and Liton Hossain were called over cell phone and taken to Durbeel canal at Nawda Azampur village on the night of March 24. Their slaughtered bodies were found there next morning.

"We are trying to find clues to the murders and investigation is going on," Mujibur Rahman, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Mirpur police station told this correspondent.

Other sources in police said they are looking for local BNP cadre Makim and his father Sahajahanin of Nawda Azampur village in connection with the murders.

They said Makim and Sahajahan belong to a gang named Taizal Bahini, which was engaged by the contractor

to supervise the road reconstruction work.

The contractor, Naruzzaman alias Hablu Mollah, is general secretary of Daulatpur upazila Jubo Dal and a relative of a ruling party lawmaker, sources said.

Hablu Mia, accused in several cases including some for murder, is absconding since Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) started its anti-crime drive in the area in 2004.

Sources said Abdul Haq, general secretary of Mirpur upazila BNP and chairman of Sadarpur UP, was supervising the work on behalf of Hablu Mollah. Abdul Haq had also dropped the tender for the work in favour of Hablu Mollah.

This correspondent during a visit to the area also talked to some local people. They said discontent was brewing in the area as substandard and low quality materials were being used for the road reconstruction work but none dared to protest as the contractor was a ruling party man and the work was being looked after by some 'musclemen'.

They said BCL activists Sanwar Hossain Jibon, Mizanur Rahman Maznu and Liton Hossain raised voice and organised people to protest the poor quality work. Sanwar was vice-

president of Mirpur upazila BCL.

Sanwar and Maznu, who worked at Toshiba Rangs factory, recently came home. The three BCL activists were popular in the area, local people said.

The local people also alleged police inaction in investigating the murders and arresting the killers.

However, two days after the incident, outlawed Janajuddho claimed responsibility for the murders. One Rahul Raj, introducing himself as a 'regional leader' of Janajuddho branded the BCL leaders as 'extortionists' and termed the murders as their struggle against 'class enemy'.

On the other hand, Mahub Alam Hanif, vice-president of Kushtia Awami League (AL) at a press conference on March 28 alleged that

a local ruling party lawmaker was behind the killings. But the lawmaker, who is a top leader of Kushtia BNP, dismissed the allegation as false.

"Awami Leaguer leader Hanif is trying for political gains from the incident", he told this correspondent.

"The AL leader is blaming me while an outlawed party has claimed responsibility for the killings", he said when contacted over cell phone.

SATKHIRA STUDENT MURDER

Police station besieged for killers' arrest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Hundreds of teachers, students and guardians yesterday laid siege to Shyamnagar Police Station demanding arrest and punishment to killers of Zahangir Hossain, a student of Shyamnagar Mohsin College and a promising cricketer.

Zahangir Hossain, 17, son of Ibrahim Gazi of Shankarkati village in Shyamnagar upazila was chopped to death at Gobindapur village on Monday. He had a dispute with one Nazmul Hossain Khokon over playing cricket at Shankarkati ground on Sunday.

Earlier, a procession was brought out at Shyamnagar. Processionists paraded the main streets of the upazila headquarters. They chanted slogans against police and demanded arrest to the culprits.

Zahangir's father Ibrahim Gazi filed a case with Shyamnagar Police Station accusing Khokon, his mother Lal Banu and cousin Rezaul. All were arrested soon after the incident.

However, the demonstrators withdrew the siege following intervention and assurance from Jamaat lawmaker Gazi Nazrul Islam, Shyamnagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Wahiduzzaman and Shyamnagar Officer-in-Charge (OC) SMA Zahid.

Cellphone network demanded at Benapole

TRADERS USERS OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Lack of cellphone network at Benapole, the largest land port in the country, hampers export-import, compelling traders and clearing forwarding (C&F) agents to use smuggled Indian mobile SIMs to run business.

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) in a recent order asked mobile phone companies to remove their towers from eight-kilometre areas inside Bangladesh territory to reduce

smuggling and cross-border movement of criminals and militants.

Cellphone companies have snapped links and started removing their towers.

Lack of cellphone network has created a stalemate in export-import business with India, traders and C&F agents said. They protested the decision and threatened of greater movement.

Sources in C&F Agents Association told The Daily Star that government earns around Tk 1200 crore revenue from Benapole land port every year. Bangladeshi importers send TT (message) to

different nationalised and private banks at Benapole to pay the revenue. Bank branches in Benapole depend on mobile phone to send and receive messages.

They said networks of most of the Bangladeshi mobile phone companies operating in Benapole are limited to the border areas only while those of Indian companies cover up to about 10 kilometres inside Bangladesh territory.

Many Bangladeshis in border areas now use Indian mobile phone facilities at cheaper rates. Cell phone networks of at least four India companies including Airtel and

Hush are available in border area inside Bangladesh.

As smuggled Indian SIMs are available, importers, exporters and C&F agents now use those to maintain link with clients at cheaper rates, which is between Tk 1.50 to Tk 1.75 per minute, the sources said.

They said smuggling and cross-border movement of criminals and militants can be stopped by intensifying patrol by law enforcers.

Sources in GrameenPhone said, they have started removing their towers following the BTRC order.

Surf Excel Protibhar Lorai held in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The 'Surf Excel Protibhar Lorai', a children's competition to express their creativity, was held at Dinajpur Stadium yesterday.

Fifty 50 students from 15 schools in the district took part in the contest, held from 9 am to 3 pm. It was organised by Unilever Bangladesh Limited.

KBM Collegiate High School became the winner in the competition. It will take part in the final competition to be held in Dhaka.

Additional Police Superintendent Md. Ruhul Ameen handed over prizes among winners as the chief guest.

Raju Chowdhury, Managing Director of Gallery Sarang, Deepak Kumar Roy and Himangshu Kumar Roy, Assistant Teacher of Fine Art at Dinajpur Zilla School, were judges in the competition.

The contest includes a range of exciting and challenging games.

The competition created a lot of enthusiasm among school children.



A school girl portraying features of Bangladesh on the face of her friend during the Surf Excel creativity contest, held at Dinajpur Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'Unite against defeated forces, militants'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a discussion meeting yesterday called upon freedom fighters and the people to unite against the defeated forces of 1971 and Islamist militants, saying they are hatching conspiracy against the country's sovereignty.

They also criticised the BNP-Jamaat government for what they called distorting the actual history of Liberation War.

The discussion, organised by Satkhira district unit of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, was held at Shaheed Abdur Razzak Park with Enamul Haque Biswas in the chair.

District Awami League General Secretary Nazrul Islam was the chief guest at the discussion.

The speakers said, Jamat-e-Islami, a key partner in the BNP-led coalition government, is the parent organisation of Islamist outfits Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMJB).

They said militant kingpins Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Sidduqul Islam Bangla Bhai organise the militant outfits and carried out bomb blasts across the country under the shelter of Jamaat and BNP leaders.



PHOTO: STAR

Satkhira unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad brought out a procession in the town yesterday demanding trial of collaborators during the Liberation War.

Attack on Puja committee for toll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A gang of hoodlums attacked a meeting of Shaghata Puja Udjapon Committee yesterday as it refuse to pay toll for holding the traditional Baishakhi Mela (fair held on the first day of Bangla year) on the premises of Bharakhali temple.

Protesting the attack, the committee has decided to suspend the fair.

President of Shaghata Puja Udjapon Committee, Santosh Kumar Dev, told this correspondent that the hoodlums also threatened to stop all Hindu religious rites during the fair if toll is not paid.

He said he informed Shaghata Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and the police station about the incident.

9X3

9x2

12X3