

# Alaich confesses to murdering Buddhist monk

BSS, Chittagong

Alaich Mohammad, arrested on Saturday with an AK-47 rifle from the City Gate area, yesterday gave a confessional statement before the magistrate that he himself killed Buddhist monk Gyanjoti Barua on the night of April 22 inside his monastery at Hingula village under Raozan upazila in the district.

"We were seven in the killing squad including Azizul Haq. I myself slit the monk's throat," Alaich said while narrating the gruesome killing before the magistrate under section 164 yesterday, court sources said.

Police said Alaich is a cadre of the self-styled Aziziya Bahini and Aziz, its leader, is one of the notorious criminals of Raozan.

First Class Magistrate Mohammad Quamaruzzaman recorded Alaich's confessional statement.

Sources said the alleged killer in his confessional statement also said that he and the others in the squad were hired by a certain quarter and they acted according to the plan for the murder.

CID officials said they are now optimistic about digging up the real clue to the sensational and mysterious murder of the Buddhist monk within a short time.

"We hope the investigation of the case would be completed soon,"

said a CID official on condition of anonymity.

Alaich said Putul Barua, a teacher of the monk who founded Warapunya Monastery cum Orphanage, was the mastermind of the killing, which might have occurred centring the huge property of the monastery.

Immediately after the killing of the monk, Putul Barua was arrested on suspicion and she later obtained bail from a court.

Yesterday morning, a metropolitan magistrate's court granted the police three days remand of Alaich following a prayer for a five-day remand by the city detective branch to interrogate him in connection with an arms case filed after his arrest.

Alaich also confessed yesterday to the joint interrogation team comprising officials from DB and CID about his involvement in the killing.

Both Azizul Haq and Alaich hail from Hingula village under Raozan upazila where Buddhist monk Gyanjoti was killed by unidentified assailants on April 22 midnight inside his Warapunya Monastery cum Orphanage.

Immediately following the confessional statement of Alaich, a CID team led by ASP of CID Chittagong range ANM Mohiuddin, also the investigation officer of the case, left the city for the spot, about 35 km from here.

## Train collision: 5 suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The committee to investigate Saturday's freight train collision, in which seven people were killed at Koidanga in Pabna, suspended five people, including two drivers and a station master Sunday.

The five-member committee led by Zahurul Islam, divisional transport officer of the eastern region of the Bangladesh Railway, suspended drivers Rafiqul Islam and Abdul Mannan, guards Golam Azam and Helal Uddin, and the station master of Laheri Mohonpur, Nurul Alam Khan, for negligence to duty.

Mushfiqur Rahman, divisional railway manager (Pakshi), told The Daily Star yesterday that the committee completed its primary task.

He claimed that the accident took place not due to negligence by the Bangladesh Railway or the Indian railway firm Ercon International, which is in charge of fitting rail tracks between Sirajganj and Ishwardi.

Although fog descended on the rail tracks, it is not true that it led to the accident, he said.

By contrast, a Bangladesh Railway official said on condition of anonymity that the accident took place due to dense fog.

Meanwhile, Ercon gave Tk 10 thousand to each family of the dead and Tk 5 thousand to each family of the injured on an emergency basis.

## Meshbah Kamal asked to show cause

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka University syndicate yesterday issued a show cause notice on Prof. Meshbah Kamal, a history department teacher of the university, for behaving like a non-academician.

Prof. Kamal was accused of slapping a fourth-year female student of Sociology department at his office at the university on November 25.

The syndicate also formed a five-member committee led by Pro-vice-chancellor Prof. Yusuf Haider to investigate the matter, university sources said.

In the show cause notice, Prof. Meshbah Kamal was asked to explain within a week why he should not be sacked from his job or why should not any other actions be taken against him for his behaviour unbecoming of a faculty member.

The syndicate meeting was held at the administrative building with Vice-chancellor Prof. SMA Faiz in the chair yesterday evening.



Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina speaks at an AL Central Working Committee meeting at the party office on the Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

## Khosru refutes press report

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Khosru went to Kolkata on December 19 on a two-day trip in connection with a trade fair where Bangladeshi entrepreneurs also participated with their products.

Asked about the Indian press report, Khosru told The Daily Star yesterday, "I did not say anything like that and did not mention we are ready for a trade off on our free-market access demand to Indian markets. The Indian press misquoted me."

He went on, "What I said is that Bangladesh as a least developed country expected India to allow Bangladeshi products on zero-tariff basis. This sort of move would enhance relations between the two neighbours and then we could move forward to discuss all the issues. But, it did not mean there would be any condition on the part of Delhi to offer free-market access to Bangladeshi products."

The Times of India quoted Khosru as saying that Bangladesh expected India to accommodate its neighbour and that "if this was done, Indian requirements would also be favourably considered."

Bangladesh's long-standing

demand for zero tariff access of 25-category (about 170 items) products to Indian markets is yet to be met by Delhi despite its commitments. Delhi was willing to have a trade-off on Dhaka's demand against its demand for transit and transshipment through Bangladesh territory.

At the last commerce-secretary-level trade talks in Dhaka in April, Delhi offered duty free access of 40 Bangladeshi products to its markets. But most of those goods are not produced in Bangladesh. And at the meeting, Delhi agreed to delink its demand for transit and transshipment with trade issues.

Against the backdrop of over one-billion-dollar trade gap with India, Khosru said, "Trade should grow on the basis of regional cooperation. With such a huge trade gap, we are not in a position to offer India anything at this moment."

He went on, "India should provide free-market access on a non-reciprocal basis and we have been discussing this issue for long."

He also referred to Thailand's move to allow 124 Bangladeshi items access to its markets at zero to five per cent tariff on a non-

reciprocal basis. "This is a very good gesture on the part of Thailand and obviously we will try to return them the favour."

## Missing ships

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78,83,810, according to the documents.

The ships were driven from Haldia port of West Bengal by captains Akhtar Hossain and Mofizuddin of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Customs official Abdur Rahim filed the two cases for evasion of Tk 55,58,600 customs duty for the imported rice.

Owner of the ships are SS Shipping Lines of Kakrail and one Rabulul Islam of Uttara, Dhaka.

It is the negligence or ill motive of a section of Mongla customs officials which helped the ships "flee" Angthara checkpoint, alleged a high official of BIWTA in Khulna.

On the other hand, the complainant of the case said the ships can not disappear without the knowledge of BIWTA officials.

## N 'ganj Poursabha

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They include Anisul Islam Sani, Sabir Alam Khodokar. Advocate Jakir Hossain, Nurul Islam Sarder, Jamaluddin Kalu, Abdul Majid, Jahangir Alam and Jakir Khan.

Of them, Anisul Islam Sani, Abdul Majid and Jahangir Alam were held by the joint forces but released on bail recently.

Nurul Islam Sarder, Jamaluddin Khan and Zakir are absconding to avoid arrest.

BNP leader Advocate Taimur Alam Khandokar also filed nomination paper but withdrew it later on the day.

Four persons from opposition Awami League filed nomination papers for the post of chairman. They are Selina Hayat Ivi, Abdul Kadir, Khaza Rahmatullah and Anwar Hossain.

The other chairman candidates are Abdur Kashed Rashu, Sabir Khan, Advocate Mahubur Rahman Masum and Delwar Hossain

Chunnu.

"He wanted listed terrorists" who have filed nomination papers for posts of ward commissioner are Sawkat Hashem Shaka (Ward No 3), Belayet Hossain lavlu (Ward No 4), Anwar Mahmud Bakul (Ward No 4), Anwarul Karim Bhuiyan Titu (Ward No 2).

They are also absconding since launch of drive by the joint forces.

Nomination papers of the absconding candidates were filed by others on their behalf.

Returning officer Zinnatul Huq and District Election Officer Ali Haider Bhuiyan accepted the nomination papers at a special call opened at the district commissioner's office.

## Four arrested for killing Jagannath College student

BSS, Dhaka

Police in separate drives on Sunday night arrested four persons from Badda and Bashabo areas for their alleged involvement in the murder of Jasim, a student of Jagannath University College.

Jasim was critically injured after a group of snatchers stabbed him when he tried to help a female rickshaw passenger who was robbed by the muggers in front of Khilgaon Community Centre at 10:30pm on December 4.

The muggers stabbed Jasim severely and later he succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on the same day.

Acting on a secret message, a team of police led by sub-inspector Mohammad Mahubur Rahman raided the Merul Ananda Nagar Basti and Bashabo Kadamtali Basti, and arrested the four persons.

They were identified as Mohammad Sohel Rana, 22, Mohammad Nazrul, 22, Mohammad Ferdous, 26, and Mohammad Sadiq Bachchu alias Tablet Bachchu, 25.

## Shahriar

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Kalandiar and Mumu stayed with him for about 20 minutes.

Earlier, Kalandiar and Mumu, carrying the written permission of the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka given as per the High Court order, arrived at the jail gate at 9:00am from the capital. And they had to wait there till 12.45pm before they were allowed to go inside the jail.

The on-duty prison guards also misbehaved with the journalists at the time.

Kalandiar after meeting his brother, told the journalists that Shahriar Kabir was kept with some general prisoners and listed criminals, despite the High Court order giving him division in jail. "The jail authorities are blatantly violating the court order, we should say," said Kalandiar.

## City feels

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suffering to the people, especially the poor.

The lowest temperature, according to the meteorological office, recorded in the country yesterday was 11.7 degrees Celsius in Rajshahi.

However, a BSS report says that the lowest temperature recorded in Joypurhat yesterday by the Department of Agriculture Extension of the district was six degrees Celsius.

According to the news agency report, three people died of cold-related diseases in Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday.

And all the 16 districts of the northern region have sent an urgent message to the Ministry of Relief and Disaster Management for allocation of warm cloths for the poor people.

## Intern docs

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At this, the interns stopped work amid a horrible situation with the road accident victims lying on the hospital floor without treatment, the witnesses said.

But he left open the possibility that his country, home to a massive US-built air base, might cooperate in a war if it receives UN support.

He said Riyadh would allow US warplanes to fly through Saudi airspace in the event of a UN-sanctioned war.

And while many observers believe the Pentagon is intent on waging war, Wolfowitz said Washington is also planning for a peaceful resolution of the standoff with Baghdad.

## Joint forces nab Enamul

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reports. The arrested include BNP activist Atiqur Rahman and two workers of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) - Abul Kader and Abul Kalam Azad.

Our Rajbari correspondent reports that the joint forces arrested eight listed criminals from different parts of the district. The arrested include Abdul Wahab, Khud Sikder, Anju Sheikh, Ali Noor, Kausshru Mia, Faruq and Amjad Hosain.

In Sylhet, a team of the joint forces raided different parts of the district and seized three pistols and one air gun with bullets and magazines.

Our Rajshahi correspondent reported that 12 people were arrested from different parts of the district.

In Barisal, joint convener of district BCL Monir Uddin Tareq was arrested from the city's Kalibari road area, our correspondent reports. Police said Tareq is suspected of involvement in bomb planting at a

local clinic on December 16. The joint forces recovered the bomb.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna reported that a powerful bomb was recovered from an apartment at TB Boundary road at Khalishpur. Police said they also recovered some other substances including explosives from the same place.

According to a press release of the coast guard yesterday, they have arrested two pirates and seized one double barrel gun and 50 bullets. Later, the arrests and the firearm were handed over to Mongla police.

The police headquarters in a press release said police picked up 1,387 people including four listed criminals across the country in the 24 hours till 6:00 am yesterday. They also recovered five firearms.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in a press release said they arrested 222 people including a convicted criminal yesterday.

## Iraq opens doors to CIA

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"rabid campaign" against Baghdad. UN experts carried out a 24th day of inspections yesterday, with Washington having already started sharing sensitive intelligence with the arms experts.

Meanwhile, in an interview with CNN Sunday, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, spoke out against a unilateral US war.

"I cannot imagine a war waged on Iraq on a bilateral fashion, that the United States goes alone," he said.

"It is not a conflict between the United States and Iraq. It is about United Nations resolutions and about the government of Iraq's implementation of those resolutions."

But he left open the possibility that his country, home to a massive US-built air base, might cooperate in a war if it receives UN support.

He said Riyadh would allow US warplanes to fly through Saudi airspace in the event of a UN-sanctioned war.

And while many observers believe the Pentagon is intent on waging war, Wolfowitz said Washington is also planning for a peaceful resolution of the standoff with Baghdad.

"It would not be responsible to plan only for the worst case. Things could break in a more favourable direction, and we need to be prepared for that too so that we do not

proceed on assumptions that lead to unnecessary American or Iraqi deaths," he wrote in a letter published in Monday's Washington Post.

"President Bush has not made any decision about the use of force to achieve the goal of disarmament of Iraq's arsenal of terror," Wolfowitz continued.

Prince Saud's remarks came as the six Gulf monarchies turned on Saddam, ending a summit in Qatar Sunday by condemning his "threats" against them.

Kuwait had called on the Gulf Cooperation Council to adopt a tough stance on a recent speech by Saddam, who apologised for the August 1990 invasion of the country but also uttered what the emirate considered to be a serious threat.

Saddam's "message contained pure fabrications and incitement against the Kuwaiti government and support for terrorist acts in the country," the summit's final communiqué said.

"This message constitutes a threat against Kuwait and the members of the GCC and an interference in their affairs," it added.

German Finance Minister Hans Eichel warned, meanwhile, that war would represent a "big risk" to the still ailing global economy, and that Berlin was not willing to provide any financial support for the effort.

"No one can predict the consequences such a war would have for

the global economy and therefore for us, for example in terms of growth and oil prices," he said in an interview with Bild daily.

"In any case, it's a big risk," Eichel said.

## GDP growth

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basis in the last three months.

Bangladesh has emerged as one of the largest recipients of ADB funds, the amount of annual lending rising from US\$33 million in 1973 to \$330 million in the 1990s. As of December 31, 2002, the bank's total public sector lending to the country would amount to \$ 6.7 billion as loans and \$151.4 million as technical assistance.

## DMCH

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strike. Police were mounting guard on the college premises.

Sources said Dr Javed is the first VP of the DMCSU, who was holding position even after expiry of the union's tenure.

Police launched a manhunt for a few other union leaders for alleged involvement in the ransacking.

Ramna police said Dr Soleiman was produced before the court yesterday.

## Bangabandhu murder and jail killing cases

# AL demands repeal of SPP withdrawal

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League has petitioned the government asking for withdrawal of the orders cancelling the dismissal of the law officers appointed for conducting the Bangabandhu Murder and jail-killing cases.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament M Abdul Hamid, in a letter addressed to the law minister, said yesterday that elderly lawyer late Sirajul Huq, Syed Rezaur Rahman, Shahara Khatun, Anisul Huq and Nurul Islam had been appointed special public prosecutors as per the law.

But the Law Ministry recently issued orders relieving them of their duties of conducting the cases after death of Sirajul Huq, he said. "Such action is unlawful, unacceptable and ill-motivated," he said.

Hamid mentioned that as per the "special rules in special cases", the Law Ministry could cancel the appointment only after recommendations by the district judge and magistrate concerned.

So, the ministry's order of removal of the other lawyers from prosecution of the cases is considered "unlawful and naked interference".

The Awami League government had given them the responsibility of conducting the cases under provision of the existing constitutional and judicial system.

In the petition, Hamid noted that Awami League, while in power, had upheld the legal system to ensure fair disposal of the cases, although the accused were "self-confessed killers".

Meanwhile, Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim yesterday deplored the termination of appointments of the special public prosecutors of the jail-killing case and said the aggrieved would challenge the order in a court of law.

Nasim, son of late Captain Mansur Ali, one of the four national leaders killed in jail on November 3, 1975 amid a chaotic political situation, said all measurers would be taken to force the government to cancel the marching orders for the SPPs.

The ex-home minister said termination of the jobs of the SPPs, appointed by the previous Awami League government to conduct the case, was an outcome of "malafide intention".

Addressing a press conference at the party central office, he said

## Saleem Samad

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The two foreign journalists, main accused in the case, were released and deported on December 11.

Meanwhile, the state prosecutors yesterday failed to satisfy the High Court in explaining why the government had detained Saleem. Earlier on Sunday, the court sought an explanation in this regard.

Also yesterday, the same bench granted a two-month ad interim bail to Mymensingh Awami League leader Principal Motiur Rahman in the cinema bomb blast case.

Motiur was arrested on December 9, and shown arrested in the case on December 14 before being taken on a three-day remand.

On his behalf, Abdul Matin Khasru told the court that instead of arresting the actual perpetrators of the blasts, the government was harassing innocent people for narrow political gains.

## Khaleda in Beijing

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Minister Khaleda Zia left Dhaka for Beijing leading a 91-member team, including a 28-member business delegation.

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the prime minister and her entourage, took off from the VVIP terminal of the Zia International Airport at 11:53 am.

During the visit, Khaleda will meet with her Chinese counterpart Zhu Rongji. She will also meet both current and future leaders of China, including President Jiang Zemin and Vice President Hu Jintao, who is the new general secretary of the Communist Party of China, and Chairman (Speaker) of the National People's Congress (parliament) Li Peng.

The prime minister's delegation includes Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Telecommunications Minister Barrister Aminul Haque, State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmed, State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and State Minister for Health Amanullah Aman.

Prime Minister's eldest son and senior Joint Secretary General of BNP Tarique Rahman, daughter-in-law Dr Zubaida Rahman, granddaughter Zaima Rahman and youngest son Arafat Rahman are also accompanying the prime

the law minister had "lied" about the withdrawal of the SPPs and was now talking about the death of adv Sirajul Huq to show a lame excuse for sacking the other SPPs who assisted the late Huq.

Nasim said he did not trust the lawyers or the PP's appointed by this government to conduct the case and demanded reinstatement of the SPPs.

The government on December 15 cancelled the appointments of SPPs adv Syed Rezaur Rahman, adv Anisul Huq, Nurul Islam Sujon and ABM Reazul Huq of the jail killing case, and adv Anisul Huq, Nurul Islam Sujon, Mosharrif Hossain Kajol, Shahara Khatun and Towfika Karim of the death reference case on Bangabandhu murder.

Blaming Moudud Ahmed for delaying the Bangabandhu Murder Case, the former home minister said the law minister by doing this made it clear that he was "trying to save" those accused of the killings in jail and the killers of Bangabandhu.

Addressing the news conference, Suranjit Sengupta said by withdrawing the lawyers Moudud breached his oath of office because he did not uphold the Constitution.

Former additional attorney general adv Mahubul Huq, who was also present in the press briefing, described the withdrawal orders as ill-motivated and questioned where lay public interest in cancelling the appointment of the SPPs as mentioned in the order. "If it is the question of public interest, the government should not have cancelled their appointments."

He pointed out a dichotomy between the law minister's sayings and actions. "On the one hand, the law minister said the appointments of the SPPs had been cancelled for completing trial of the case quickly and on the other, he was delaying the process of constituting a bench in the Supreme Court to hear the death references in the Bangabandhu Murder Case."

## Half-baked plan

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not know when she would get delivery of vehicle.

Hasan Ahmed of Cantonment area said he bought a CNG three-wheeler from Diganta Auto Ltd at Maghbazar for Tk 226,000 as Uttara cannot deliver vehicles.

Amit Bhattacharya, general manager of Uttara Motors Ltd., however said the vehicles are ready to be delivered.

"Eight hundred vehicles are ready at our Tejaon factory," he said. "More are at the land port. It is the processing of papers that is delaying the delivery."

Amit said some buyers sold their three-wheelers to auto-shops to get some profit. He also claimed that Uttara is not supposed to import meters for the auto-rickshaws. "The owners have to buy meters from outside."

Abdur Rouf, deputy director of the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), said permissions for 5,000 auto-rickshaws have been given initially and more route permits may be given later.

He said all the importers are supposed to import meters along with the vehicles. From now on, registration would not be given to auto-rickshaws without meters.

## Partial ban

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Ministry yesterday between the government and the private TV authorities. Information Minister Tariqul Islam presided.

In the meeting, two private television channels - Channel-I and ATN Bangla -- also agreed to telecast two news bulletins of the state-run BTV everyday.

The two channels will incorporate the BTV bulletins in their satellite telecasts as per provision of a clause of the private television channel installation and operation policy 1998.

As per the decision, Channel-I will air live BTV Bangla bulletin at 11:30pm from today and also telecast the recorded 10:00pm English bulletin immediately after the Bangla bulletin.

ATN Bangla, after finishing some technical preparations, will start airing BTV 11:30pm Bangla bulletin live and recorded 10:00pm English bulletin by this month.