

Ctg triple murder Former union chairman main accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Monday's triple murder has sparked widespread resentment among local people over the deteriorating law and order situation.

Armed criminals shot dead Abul Kashem, Abul Bashar and Badsha Alam, sons of Abdul Khaleque, at Charia Kazipara of Mirzapur union under Hathazari upazila.

Kazi Mazfal Ahmed, the eldest brother of the three killed, filed a murder case with the Hathazari Police Station accusing 18 persons with eight specific names on Monday night, police said.

Mirzapur union former chairman Abul Kalam was made the prime accused followed by Shahjahan, Mohiuddin, Jamal, Nurul Alam, Osman, Abul Hossain Bhola and his son Sekandar.

Abul Hossain Bhola and his son Sekandar were arrested a few hours after the murders. They were produced before the court yesterday with a five-day remand prayer. Officer-in-charge (OC) of the Hathazari PS Mahfuz Alam said. But no further arrest could be made till yesterday.

Meantime, a police team led by Additional SP (north) Hasib Aziz raided some places in Hathazari yesterday.

A police camp manned by 25 cops was set up at Kazipara following the incident to maintain law and order, sources said.

Local people and police said the killing might have been a sequel to the long-standing enmity between Abdul Khaleque and Abul Kalam

Student strike at CU begins today

CU CORRESPONDENT

Chittagong University is to go through a spell of student strike from today.

The Progressive Student Alliance (PSA), a conglomeration of three leftist student organisations - Socialist Student Front (SSF), Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) and Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF) -- will enforce a strike today.

The Bangladesh Chhatra League will also enforce a strike tomorrow to protest the new Public Service Commission (PSC) rules for BCS examinations and fee hike.

Vegetable

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lateral announcement of freight increase has poured cold water on their interest in exporting fruits, vegetables and betel leaf.

The freight hike that would raise the export costs in the middle of the year has puzzled the exporters, said another exporter. He mentioned that export of these goods on the basis of contracts usually begins in January.

Earlier, during the Afghan war, the authorities had also announced a war risk surcharge at a rate of five cent per kg of perishable goods. It could not, however, be implemented in the wake of a movement by the exporters.

The country earns on an average Tk 200 crore a year from export of fruits and vegetables to the Middle Eastern countries, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Singapore, according to available statistics.

7 get life term

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SI Shahabuddin, who investigated the case, filed the chargesheet on September 23, 2001, accusing 13 persons for the murder. Nineteen prosecution witnesses made depositions during the trial. Two of the accused made judicial confession under section 164.

US embassy

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Department official stated that nationals of countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), mainly Western European countries, who do not require a visa to enter the US must have machine-readable passports that include biometric indicators to enter the US after October 26, 2004.

Nationals of countries such as Bangladesh, who are required to obtain a visa to enter the United States, will be issued a visa containing biometric data. These changes are being made in accordance with recent US laws that require temporary foreign visitors to present documentation containing biometric identifiers to enter the United States after October 26, 2004. The United States encourages the government of Bangladesh to improve the security of its travel documents, the US Embassy said.

Our Reply: The Daily Star news was based on a briefings summary sent to different government offices in Dhaka including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the office of the Consul General of Bangladesh in Los Angeles.

The consul general of the Bangladesh mission in Los Angeles attended the briefing session on May 16, 2003.

In his briefing summary the consul general mentioned that from October 6, 2004 only machine-readable biometric passports will be acceptable to the US authority. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after receiving the summary, informed the Ministry of Home on May 24, 2003 to take necessary actions.

Vajpayee

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December 13, 2001 terrorist attack on Parliament.

Indian Foreign Ministry, in a surprise announcement Monday evening, said the government has decided to approve revival of Delhi-Lahore bus service on bi-weekly basis as soon as details were worked out by technical authorities of the two countries.

The foreign ministry statement also announced the decision to release 130 Pakistani civilian prisoners, including 70 fishermen, now in Indian custody.

Vajpayee, during his three-day visit to Germany beginning today, will hold discussions with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, President Johannes Rau and meet captains of German industry.

On May 30, Vajpayee flies to St Petersburg to attend the tricenarian celebrations of the historic northern Russian city along with 46 heads of states and governments.

The Indian Premier then travels to Evian, France, where he, along with heads of states and governments of 11 other countries, will attend an informal summit with top leaders of the Group of eight industrialized countries. Brazil, China and Malaysia are among the other countries invited to Evian.

The Evian meeting is of particular significance for Sino-India ties as Vajpayee would have a meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao. Official sources here say this meeting would set the tone for Vajpayee's visit to China in the first week of next month.



PHOTO: STAR

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, speaks at a press briefing of the Dhaka Civil Society Forum yesterday. Regional Media and Advocacy Coordinator for South Asia Mona Lacro, right, and Dr Zafar Ullah Chowdhury, far left, of Consumers Association of Bangladesh also attend.

4 US soldiers killed

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Memorial Day, when the United States honours its war dead, and undercut coalition claims that it was getting a hold on security in the capital nearly seven weeks after Saddam's overthrow.

"Order in Baghdad is present. Any time you have a large group of civilians there's going to be some bad guys.

"I have seen it getting better and better every day. There has been a drastic improvement in the last 30 days."

In the second attack on Monday, one soldier was killed and another injured when their convoy was ambushed in the former Iraqi strongman's Sunni Muslim tribal heartland close to the Syrian border.

"An unknown number of attackers fired small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns at the convoy" near Hadithah, some 190 kilometers northwest of Baghdad, US Central Command said.

The attacks overshadowed an announcement by the head of the US-led administration, Paul Bremer, that he was establishing a large credit facility for exports to Iraq to promote trade as the rebuilding of the war-torn country entered a new phase after the lifting of UN sanctions last week.

Bremer gave no figure for the amount of money on the table but said it would come from a raft of private banks as well as the Central Bank of Iraq.

"It will be a substantial credit facility that first symbolically indicates to the world that Iraq is open for business and also provides a practical incentive to people who want to trade with Iraq," he told a Baghdad news conference.

Bremer insisted post-war reconstruction was "now nearing the end of the first stage," with

Digital lines

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in the capital.

Subscribers of the new lines will have the caller line identification protocol (CLIP) by which they would be able to note the numbers of callers.

BTB officials however said the exchanges would bring a little impact as some 2.11 lakh applications for phone lines are pending.

Currently, around eight lakh fixed line telephones exist.

Robbers, burglars rule

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floor.

When Abu Sayeed Molla, a garment owner, and his wife came down to go out for a walk at 5:20am, the robbers, who were waiting at the landing, also tied them up and taped their mouth.

They treated Amjad Hossain, a businessman, in a similar way when he and his wife came down five minutes later. They took the couple's wristwatches and ornaments.

Later, three robbers took Sayeed's wife to their flat (No. 12/204) and forced her to give them the keys of lockers. They took Tk 15,000, 10 tola of gold ornaments, computer accessories and three mobile phones.

Then they took Amjad Hossain and his wife to their flat (No. 3/501) and inquired about a "bag of money". As the couple expressed their ignorance about it, the robbers threatened to kidnap their teenage daughter.

They took Tk 52,000, 50 tola of gold, one camera and two mobile phone sets from their flat.

Meanwhile, as Jahurul Islam, a tax and VAT commissioner of customs, returned to the apartment after morning walk at 6:10am, the robbers also took him to his flat.

"They came down from his flat within 10 minutes with some bags and asked us to turn our back on them as they were preparing to leave," said one victim.

"One of them was saying they have got what they were looking for," he added.

The robbers left the apartment in a hurry.

Jahurul Islam was not available for his side of the story but he told police that the robbers took away

JCD men beat up 2 JU students

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres of Jahangirnagar University (JU) allegedly beat up two students on Monday.

The two students were beaten up at around 8:45pm as they refused to vacate their room, defying an 'order' by a JCD cadre.

The victims were Masum and Shipon, third year students of economics department and residents of Moulana Bhasani Hall (MBH).

On April 30, Hamzar Rahman Shamim, a JCD cadre and a third year student of electronics and computer science department, asked the two to vacate their room, as they had not taken his permission before taking possession.

On Monday night, Shamim along with four cadres of Dhaka University (DU), went to their room and threatened to shoot them.

Masum and Shipon tried to take shelter a few rooms off but the cadres followed them and beat them up mercilessly.

They were later taken to the university medical centre.

One of the four DU cadres was identified as Monir, a resident of Jasimuddin Hall. The others could not be identified.

Meanwhile, about 57 students of the MBH submitted a memorandum to hall Proctor Prof. Abdul Mannan and Proctor Saleh Ahmad Khan demanding punishment of the persons involved.

Harun-Ur-Rashid, general secretary of JCD, JU unit, said proper steps would be taken to investigate the incident.

HSC exam

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actions would be taken against examinees and teachers found involved in any unfair means.

The most trouble-prone centres are six each in Naogaon and Gaibandha, five in Dinajpur, four in Rangpur, three each in Natore, Bogra, Sirajganj and Nilphamari, two each in Pabna, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Kurigram and one in Rajshahi.

At least 1,49,639 students from 937 colleges are likely to sit for the HSC examinations at 257 centers under Rajshahi education board this year.

Death anniversary

Today is the first death anniversary of Nasima Nargis Ahmed, wife of late Ashrafuddin Ahmed, executive commercial manager of BIWTC, says a press release.

A member of Narayanganj 'Apwa' Women's Association, she was associated with a number of welfare organisations.

Prayers will be offered at her Pallabi and Purana Paltan residences and at her village home at Tili, Comilla.

Lutfunnessa Begum

The 19th death anniversary of Mosammam Lutfunnessa Begum will be observed today, says a press release.

A milad mahfil will be held at 1/7 Block # A, Lalmatia after Maghrib prayers.

Mother of late Syed Mozammel Haque, special correspondent of BSS, she hailed from village Beshanal under Tongibari thana, Munshiganj.

Housewife chopped to death for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A housewife was chopped to death yesterday allegedly by her husband over dowry at Baintain village under Bhuapur Police Station of the district.

The victim was identified as Shahida Begum, 20.

The victim's father Atabali, 50, younger sister Rashida Akhter, 14, and Saidur Rahman, a neighbour, were also injured during the attack.

The miscraent, Saidul Islam, is absconding. The neighbour was admitted to the Sirajgonj Hospital in critical condition.

A case was filed with the Bhuapur Police Station.

DU M.Phil. students

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last year. But the departments concerned did not respond," said a top DU official, seeking anonymity.

One of the frustrated admission seekers of sociology department said she could not understand how the department's chairman could sit on such a vital issue. "Who will pay for the year that we have lost for their carelessness?"

Chairman of the sociology department Prof. Ishrat Shamim refuted the allegation and said she has no responsibility as regards admission to M.Phil course. "The chairman of the four-member M. Phil committee of the department looks after the admission process."

But Chairman of the M.Phil committee Prof. Qamrul Ahsan said, "My responsibility is to conduct the written test and viva voce for M.Phil admission. It is not my job to send papers to the registrar's office, it is the responsibility of the chairman of a department."

Dr Tashlima Mansur, dean of the law faculty and chairperson of the M.Phil committee of the faculty, refuted the allegation of negligence on her part and said the chairman of the department (law faculty has

Civil society

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a two-day meeting between May 29-30 on "Advancing LDC interests in the fifth WTO ministerial", will adopt a declaration ahead of a meet of trade ministers from the LDCs, said Dr Debapriya.

The DCSF meeting will try to influence the declaration by the trade ministers' meet, set for May 31 and June 2 in Dhaka, and the WTO fifth ministerial meeting, scheduled for September in Mexico.

Twenty-six overseas participants will attend the DCSF meeting, said forum organisers. The participants include Malaysia, Zimbabwe, Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Switzerland, the UK and Nepal nationals.

The civil society forum will focus on the WTO Doha-mandated agenda such as market access, special and differential treatment, implementation issues and agreement on agriculture.

The CPD is pivotal in the DCSF, with the Consumers International, EU-LDC Network, Oxfam International, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment, and the Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute as co-organisers.

Asian women

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were probably a thousand women in Australia working as sex slaves.

But she said those who were brave enough to complain were not treated seriously by police and many were a deported soon after being apprehended because they were in Australia illegally.

"They're told it's not true what they're saying then they're invariably deported from the country, told Sky News.

"Many more women would come forward if they were offered the slightest amount of protection, now they have nothing."

The problem was highlighted last month by a New South Wales state coroner's report into the death of a 27-year-old Thai woman, Puongtong Simaplee.

She died in an immigration detention centre in 2001 from heroin withdrawal symptoms. She had told authorities she was brought to Australia as a 12-year-old forced into prostitution.

The case prompted deputy coroner Carl Milovanovich to urge authorities to do all they could to stamp out the trade in young women.

"(It) is not only illegal and morally offensive but a practice which law enforcement agencies should

only one department) did not submit necessary papers in time.

Prof. Mizanur Rahman, ex-chairman of law department, admitted that the department failed to send the papers to the registrar's office for 'some reasons'.

According to the DU M.Phil admission procedure, the department chairman has to submit admission form and all other necessary documents to the registrar's office through the respective dean's office.

Some teachers said the 25 students of sociology and 12 students of law could not get admission due to political and personal conflict between the department chairmen and M.Phil committee chairman.

DU Vice-chancellor SMA Faiz told The Daily Star that the university authorities would investigate the incident.

A notification for admission to M.Phil course in the next academic session would be given by the first week of July, a DU official said.

OIC FMs' meet

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ence while OIC secretary general will also address today's opening ceremony.

Earlier, Morshed Khan told BSS that the OIC should proceed with a limited number of targeted, specific time-bound programmes. Too many agenda, he felt, should not impede the focal point of ICFM objectives.

"OIC should not be used merely as a grouping for issuing statements," he said.

"We must proceed with mutual trust among the members and mistrust should not stand in the way of consolidation of the OIC position on vital issues," Morshed said.

There is a long list of draft agenda, which the conference is likely to take up for discussions. The agenda include discussion on the US roadmap for the Middle East and future of Iraq. The conference will also take up for discussion the Kashmir dispute.

The city of Al-Quds Al Sharif, current situation of the peace process in the Middle East, the Palestine problem, situation in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Somalia and Chechnya are expected to figure prominently in the conference.

Prior to the foreign ministers' conference, the foreign secretaries of the OIC member countries would sit to finalise the draft for the ministers.

address with vigour," he said.

The government estimated the sex slave industry was worth 50 million dollars a year when it introduced its 1998 legislation and welfare groups estimate its value may have trebled since then.

But Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said investigators had found little hard evidence of organised sex slave rackets.

He said while 13 women had come forward with complaints since 1999 their cases had not been strong enough to lay charges.

"It comes down to a question of the adequacy of the evidence," he said.

Aerial spray

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Uddin, chief health officer of the DCC.

Isolair Inc. of USA has provided the equipment for the operation. The company also provided the pilot, Steve Tolle, who has trained four Bangladesh pilots in the technique.

"Aerial spraying is also used in the USA, especially in Florida, for eliminating mosquitoes. It is considered eco-friendly," said Michel Powel, chairman of the company.

BSS project

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letter to the PMO seeking permission to conduct a thorough investigation into alleged corruption and irregularities in the project activities.

Upon the PMO's nod, an official of the BAC Task Force-1 recorded statements of the then news editor and an accounts officer concerned with the project on May 19.

Earlier on May 12, in a letter to Managing Director and Chief Editor of BSS Amanullah Kabir, the official had sought his permission to do so. The BSS chief responded positively.

Allegations of irregularities and corruption in the project were made to the PMO, information ministry, BAC, Danida and BSS by those who contributed reports on human rights issues, participants in training workshops and others concerned. Funds for various programmes were misappropriated using false and manipulated vouchers.

A journalist in Khulna alleged that only Tk 27,000 was spent for a training workshop in the city against the allocation of Tk 1 lakh. He had lodged a complaint with Danida.

The BSS authorities, instead of investigating the allegation and taking action, absorbed the news editor and the accounts officer concerned in BSS in violation of the

service rules and the organogram of the official news agency. Moreover, the news editor was promoted, superseding some seniors, sources said.

Amanullah Kabir on Monday said two earlier audits -- one by the government and the other by Danida -- did not find any irregularities in the human rights project. Danida is now conducting a fresh audit.

He mentioned that as per agreement, the funding authorities could audit the project any time it liked.

He admitted that an investigation by the BAC was now going on.

In reply to a question, the BSS chief said the news editor in charge of the project had resigned and applied for a job in BSS. He was then recruited as a news editor.

Amanullah Kabir claimed that the person (news editor) was not promoted. He was serving the project as news editor and he was recruited in BSS also as news editor, placed in the special grade.

BSS sources said the cases of the news editor concerned and some other newcomers have sparked off discontent in the news agency.

A good number of journalists joined BSS immediately after the BNP-led alliance assumed power. The BSS authorities sacked several journalists recruited during the Awami League rule.

Water project

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for the project. The conditions are giving priority to the community demand for safe water options, instead of imposing mitigation services, and leaving financial management to the community leaders themselves.

The government has already accepted the first condition but expressed doubts about the community leaders' ability to handle financial resources effectively since the question of accountability will arise.

It has proposed that community leaders be trained on handling financial resources and only then given the authority to handle such matters.

According to sources, the WB mission held several meetings with the government officials and stakeholders including the secretary of the local government division and the chief engineer of the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE).

The WB experts also visited several arsenic affected areas where BAMWSP intervention is going on. The spots include Brahmanbaria, Narayanganj, Chapainawabganj and Chandpur.

The extended BAMWSP project is expected to receive about Tk 80 crore including funds from the government exchequer.

Sources also said a separate fund might be allocated for mitigation of arsenic in water supplied in towns.

More than 80 million people in 62 districts are now exposed to drinking arsenic contaminated water, mostly from hand-pumped tubewells. Surveys show in many areas naturally occurring arsenic has been found in concentration more than the WHO-approved permissible level of 50 parts per billion (ppb).

There are many upazila where all tubewells have been painted red to prohibit people from drinking water from the tubewells.

DHAKA TODAY

Satyajit retrospective

Dhaka University Film Society screens 20 films of famous Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray on the occasion of his birth and death anniversary. On the 5th day, four films titled 'Kanchan Jangha', 'Sonar Kella', 'Devil' and 'Agantuk' will be screened. Venue: TSC auditorium, Dhaka University. Time: 10.00am, 12.30pm, 3.30pm and 6.00pm.

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a French film titled 'Tess'. Venue: 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Classical music

Alliance Francaise organises an evening of classical music by Ram Kanai Das. Venue: Alliance Francaise auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 7.00pm.

Bangla Academy

Bangla Academy will hold a discussion on the occasion of the 27th death anniversary of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin. Venue: Academy auditorium. Time: 11.00am.

Prize giving ceremony