

Trader sprayed with bullets in front of mosque

Killers also shoot his son, Mirpur erupts into fury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shahidullah had just finished the noontime Jumma prayers. His son Prince was still praying. As he emerged from the local mosque, a gust of bullets served him a violent death right at the Masjid's gate.

Hit by eight bullets in the forehead and across the chest, Kazi Shahidullah, 46, died on the spot at around 1:40pm yesterday at South Bishil of Mirpur in the city.

As Prince rushed out hearing the firing and tried desperately to save

his father, the three-member killer gang shot him in the abdomen, wounding him critically.

The entire suburb burst into furious protests against the monstrous act. Frenzied demonstrators smashed at least 25 vehicles, barricading Darus Salam, Mirpur Mazar and Bashil Bazar roads.

Shahidullah was an eminent businessman, chairman of Prince Group of Companies, and very popular in the area. He served on a number of Mirpur-based traders and co-operative associations as presi-

dent, general secretary or some other office bearer.

His eldest son Kazi Tofazzel Hossain Prince, second-year higher secondary school student of Dhanmondi Ideal College, was admitted to Samarita Hospital after the gory incident.

Family members said the assailants, still unidentified, might have killed Shahidullah for refusing to pay up illegal tolls. Witnesses said all the three killers were young in age and fired at least a dozen bullets during the attack.

PROTEST ERUPTS IN MIRPUR

Thousands of locals took to the streets at the news. They poured out of houses, markets and mosques, blocked Darus Salam Road, Mazar Road and Bashil Bazar Road, and ransacked more than 25 vehicles.

The demonstrators took out several processions in Mirpur-1, shouting demands to arrest and punish the killers.

Troopers of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and a few hundred

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Locals demonstrate carrying the body of businessman Shahidullah (inset), who was shot dead by unidentified assailants in front of a mosque near his house at South Bishil in the city's Mirpur area yesterday, left, and slain Shahidullah's son Prince, also bullet-hit during the attack, undergoes treatment at Samarita Hospital in the capital.



PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of local people and traders block the Darus Salam Road in Mirpur-1 protesting the murder of businessman Shahidullah.

PENDING MONEY LAUNDERING CASES Finance wants CID cell till framing of new law

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Finance ministry acting on Bangladesh Bank's advice has suggested the home ministry to form a temporary Criminal Investigation Department (CID) cell to deal with the money laundering cases now lying idle since the dissolution of the Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac).

After invalidating the Anti-Money Laundering Law 2002, the Bangladesh Bank (BB) last month worked out a draft of an "anti-money laundering and terrorist financing law" and sent it to the finance ministry. In the draft, the BB also recommended to task a CID cell with handling the money laundering cases until a regular body is formed for the purpose.

Forty-one money laundering cases have been pending since the formation of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in November 2004, dissolving the Bac, as the ACC does not have the authority to deal with them.

In May this year, the ACC sent all the documents including case histories and investigation reports to the BB.

Again, since all legal procedures of these pending cases were halted, the BB's anti-money laundering drive also got stuck.

Sources said although the BB has its own taskforce to deal with the money laundering cases and the banks are supposed to send cases related to money laundering to the taskforce, it has received no such cases in the last two or three months.

The sources said the BB discussed the matter with the CID and the secret agency reportedly agreed to work on it.

The new draft law proposed by the BB includes formation of an enforcement and prosecution bureau under the office of the attorney general.

The proposed bureau will be constituted with members of different agencies of the police, including

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EVICION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE EU cancels funding of Dinajpur project

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

European Union (EU) yesterday cancelled its funding of the Adarsha Gram Project-II at Baradal village under Parbatipur upazila of the district in reaction to the incident of eviction of the indigenous people from the village.

Following a report published in The Daily Star on July 31, Esko Kentschynsky, ambassador and head of the delegation of the EU in Bangladesh, yesterday visited the village and regretted the June 22 eviction that left 65 families homeless.

Terming the eviction "a major instance of rights violation" in the country this year, the ambassador told newsmen that Bangladesh government has violated the rules of Adarsha Gram Project Agreement by evicting the indigenous people of the village.

The EU will not fund anymore in the Baradal project, the ambassador said, adding that the EU will urge the government to stop the Baradal programme.

On the arrival of the EU delegation at 10:30am, the villagers gath-

ered around the team and described their unbearable sufferings since the eviction.

Julian Francis, European Project Director of Adarsha Gram Project II, was with the ambassador.

During the three-hour visit under tight police security, the delegation listened to the villagers, who alleged that their houses were looted during the eviction.

Government also filed false cases against 39 villagers on July 8 accusing them of resisting the law enforcers doing their duties, the villagers told the delegation.

There was apparently no landless family at Baradal, rather, the government officials made many of the villagers, who had been living there for some 40 years, landless by demolishing their thatched houses, Julian Francis told the press.

The ambassador urged the government to rehabilitate the evicted families as soon as possible.

He also asked the government to withdraw the false cases filed and probe the incident of eviction in order to bring those responsible under trial.

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AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Death shatters her dream

BISHAWJIT DAS

Hanif Miah had promised his son-in-law a job as a dowry in a bid to send his loving daughter Asma back to her in-laws', but August 21 upset everything.

Asma Akhtar and her son have been staying in her mother's Tk 1,200 single-room house with her two brothers and their families since freedom fighter Hanif Miah, 62, was killed in the August mayhem.

"I will spend the last drop of my blood to send you to your husband's place," fish-vendor Hanif used to tell his daughter to cheer her up, who still believes her father would have kept his word if he had not been killed in the grisly attack.

Hanif Miah was killed along

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Asma Akhtar shows her son the photo of her father Hanif Miah, a freedom fighter, who was killed in the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League rally in the capital.



PHOTO: STAR

Bombs hurled at Rab patrol in Chuadanga

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Eight members of the elite crime busting Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) narrowly escaped unhurt when criminals hurled bombs on an on-duty patrol team near the Judge Court in Chuadanga town on Thursday night.

When the team was patrolling the Judge Court area at about 11:15pm, criminals hurled two powerful bombs at the Rab vehicle from a darkened roadside, Rab-6 in Chuadanga said.

The bombs blasted with big bangs behind the Rab transport. As the panicked passers-by started running all around, the law enforcers ordered them to stand still on the road.

At least 10 people were injured when the law enforcers charged baton on the crowding people.

The Rab, police and joint forces

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AL in dilemma over party reform or anti-govt agitation

SHAMEEM MAHMUD

Internal feuds raging through Awami League, from the grassroots up to the highest plane, if allowed to drag on, may cost the main opposition party dearly in the coming general election, like it did in 2001, apprehend party insiders.

Party sources said its policymakers are in a dilemma of whether to concentrate on revamping the party units across the country by resolving the disputes before the next elections or to dedicate themselves to revving up a combined opposition movement for reforms in the caretaker government and electoral systems.

They said long-standing factional conflicts in many a district unit seems to be getting worse as the general election slated for early 2007 approaches.

In a bid to resolve squabbles at

the grassroots, an AL Central Working Committee (CWC) meeting had asked its seven organising secretaries to assess the organisational situation in the districts units. A few months have passed since the direction, but none of the seven has come up with any report.

"It's true we have not submitted any report yet, but we have verbally informed the party president about the status of the district units," AL Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said.

But, referring to the task assigned by the CWC, another organising secretary told The Daily Star, "These are but empty words. Actually, we don't have the power to take any such organisational step."

The party in its last council opted for seven organising secretaries, instead of one, expressly to bolster up organisational activities. Six of them deal with the six administrative

divisions and the seventh looks after greater Rangpur. But the initiative is yet to make any positive impact on the party's organisational strength.

Sources said top leaders of more than 30 district and numerous thana units are locked in acute factional conflicts. Apart from that, the relations between the party's general secretary and a number of presidium members have been anything but normal since formation of the present central committee in December 2002.

Political observers believe internal feud at district and thana levels was one of the causes of the election debacle in 2001, when rebel candidates fought against AL candidates in at least 50 constituencies.

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