

MURDER OF PROF TAHER, PROF YUNUS AT RU

Families turn to CG for justice, 'denied' by elected govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Family members of slain Rajshahi University professors Dr S Taher Ahmed and Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged the caretaker government headed by Dr Faruddin Ahmed to take steps to ensure fair and speedy trial of the sensational murders, saying investigations were stalled during the previous elected government on political considerations.

The prime suspects in the gruesome murders managed to get bail from High Court (HC) and were freed from jail as police delayed submission of charge sheets, they alleged.

Taher's son Sanjid Alvi Ahmed told newsmen that police high-ups did 'not allow submission of charge sheet in the murder case to save criminals belonging to Jamaat-Shibir'.

Prof Taher, teacher of Geology and Mining Department, was missing on February 1 last year. His body was found on February 3 in the morning inside a sewer behind his campus residence. Quoting a police report, Sanjid said Rajshahi police completed investigation into Prof Taher murder in May last year and sought permission from home ministry to press charges. But they were not allowed.

"I met present IGP (Inspector General of Police) Khoda Bux Chowdhury several times when he was in charge of the monitoring cell for sensational cases. He always reasoned that the case lacked a key-witness".

In the meantime, mastermind suspect in the murder RU Islami



Prof. Muhammad Yunus

Chhatra Shibir president Mahbubul Alam Salehi who was avoiding arrest managed anticipatory bail from HC. Another prime suspect -- Prof Mia Muhammad Mohiuddin--was also released from jail on bail.

Four persons-- Zahangir, Salam, Nazmul, and alleged mastermind Prof Mia Muhammad Mohiuddin--were arrested within a week of the murder in February last year.

Three of the arrestees provided judicial confessions and five among the 43 witnesses gave judicial statements proving that Mohiuddin and Salehi were involved in the murder done by Zahangir, Salam and Nazmul for their personal and political gains, Sanjid said.

"How many witnesses and evidences the killers can leave in a murder?" Taher's wife Sultana Ahmed posed the question amid tears.

Meanwhile, former Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner



Dr S Taher Ahmed

Naim Ahmed (who was abused by Jamaat-Shibir leaders in meetings for proving Salehi's involvement) was transferred after he told the media that he was ready to press charges.

Investigation officer of the case, while seeking a property attachment order from court on March 8 last year told the court that police have evidences that Salehi was directly involved in the murder.

"He (Salehi) went into hiding to avoid arrest. Charges will be pressed against him", the IO had told the court.

Yunus Murder Case Prof Yunus, teacher of Economic Department, was murdered on December 24, 2004, when he was on a morning walk near the university.

Rashed Zaman Shovon, son of Prof Yunus said, "Something peculiar is happening with investigation of my father's murder".

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) already brushed

aside previous police findings that Shibir was involvement in the killing. It blamed militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahidin, Bangladesh (JMB), he said.

The CID informed Rajshahi Metropolitan Magistrate court that JMB Rajshahi zonal commander Shafiqullah Tarik while giving judicial statement on April 13 last year on a bomb blast case in Joydevpur, said JMB was involved in Prof Yunus murder. But the JMB militants arrested in this connection denied their involvement, said Shovon.

Five arrested Shibir cadres including former Binodhpur Shibir president Sirajus Salekin and Zillur Rahman, close aides to absconding Shibir cadre and an accused in the case--Zafar Babu--were freed on bail later.

Despite the confessions, police are yet to submit charge sheet, Shovon regretted.

Two eyewitnesses in separate statements narrated the murder of Prof Yunus by a gang of four and police said the statements were substantiated by some other circumstances and witnesses.

Witness rickshaw-van puller Zahangir Ali in his January 5, 2005 statement said that he could identify only Shibir cadre Zafar Babu of Satbaria among four killers. Police attached properties of Zafar Babu on this statement.

Another witness rickshaw-puller Shahidul Islam Babu on May 8, 2005 said he could identify Zillur Rahman, a RU guard.

He also stated that Zillur threatened him (Babu) with death and drove him away as he was watching the murder.

Gun snatched from cop in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A gang swooped on cops at Bairagir Hat 'police investigation centre' in Gobindaganj upazila Monday night and snatched away a short gun.

Police said the center in-charge SI Shamsul Huq and constable MA Aziz were patrolling Basain village at night. All of a sudden, a gang attacked them with sharp weapons and snatched away a shot gun. Two cops were injured.

Shamsul Huq fired six shots from his pistol but the miscreants fled away with the gun.

Both the cops have been admitted to Bogra Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

Police in drive arrested one Rafiqul Islam in this connection, but the gun is yet to be recovered.

A case was filed with Gobindaganj police station.

Tk 10 lakh hides seized in Sylhet

Smuggling bid suspected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday seized hide worth Tk 10 lakh from the bank of the Kushiara at Baro Paturia in Zakiganj upazila.

Smugglers kept 79 bags containing 610 pieces of hide of sacrificial animals on the bank of the river in a bid to smuggle out those to India.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab rushed to the spot and seized the bags lying abandoned there.

Earlier, sensing presence of Rab, smugglers escaped from the scene abandoning the bags.

Later, Rab handed over the bags to the Customs Department personnel.

11 sued for 'embezzling' school fund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Commissioner Nazmul Haque Monday night filed an FIR with Sonadanga Police Station as a complainant accusing 11 persons for misappropriating over Tk 50 lakh from the fund of South Herald English Medium School.

The KMP commissioner is ex-officio chairman of the governing body of the school.

The accused include Chief Engineer of Khulna Development Authority (KDA) ATM Wahid Azhar, Proprietor of Hotel Millenium, industrialist Sharifuzzaman Topy and prominent physician Dr Abdul Malek, all members of the governing body of the school.

Foundation of bus terminal laid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At last the Chairman of Moulvibazar Poursava has taken an initiative to solve the traffic jam in Moulvibazar district town by constructing a mini-bus terminal. Fayzul Karim Mayun yesterday laid the foundation of the mini-bus terminal at Jugidhar on Sylhet-Moulvibazar-Dhaka highway.

The function was attended by ward commissioners, leaders of political parties and local elite.

Illegal sand lifting makes Moulvibazar dam vulnerable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The Moulvibazar town flood protection embankment has become vulnerable as a portion of it has been cut at Barhat point to carry illegally lifted sand from Monu riverbed.

A local BNP leader is lifting the sand indiscriminately and doing brisk business by selling those, they said.

The illegal sand lifting and removal of soil from the embankment will accentuate flooding and

erosion in the coming monsoon, locals told this correspondent.

They alleged that the BNP leader cut the flood protection embankment to create passage for tracks to carry sand. The district town will also be threatened with flood if the embankment is not repaired before the monsoon, locals said.

They alleged that they protested while the embankment was being cut but it was ignored by the BNP leader.

Moulvibazar office of Water Development Board (WDB) was also informed, but to no effect, they

claimed.

Moulvibazar WDB Executive Engineer Sharafat Hussain Khan said action will be taken against the person if the flood protection embankment is damaged.

Some WDB sources and local people alleged that a section of officials are involved with the BNP leader in the illegal sand lifting.

When contacted, the BNP leader claimed that he is lifting sand after taking permission from the authorities. He however denied that the flood protection embankment was damaged.



PHOTO STAR

Sand being gathered on Monu river bed for transportation through a passage created by cutting the embankment on the right.

Launch owners continue 'rotation' on Dhaka-Barisal route

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The Barisal Launch Owners Association yesterday continued its self-imposed 'rotation system' in plying vessels on Barisal-Dhaka-Barisal route, defying a BIWTA order to follow the timetable and

Outlaw killed by rivals in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) shot dead a rival belonging to New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) at Durbachara village in Kushtia Sadar upazila Sunday night.

The dead was identified as Milon Hossain, 30, son of Sazzad Malitha of Boroitupi village in the upazila.

On Thursday, GMF cadres gunned down two NBCP cadres at the same village.

According to police, GMF men went to Milon's house Sunday night and picked him up at gunpoint. They took him in front of NBCP leader Lattu at Durbachara village and shot him dead at about midnight.

The outlaws left the body there. Later, Simul Biswas, central general secretary of GMF, phoned to local journalists and claimed responsibility for the killing, saying Milon 'a traitor'.

Sources said, Milon was involved with GMF. He left the outfit recently and joined NBCP.

conditions of route permits.

According to their rotation system, MV Surovi-7, Sundarban-7 and Tipu left Barisal for Dhaka and Surovi-6, Dweepraj, Kirtonkhola-1 and Sundarban-2 left Dhaka for Barisal yesterday, according to sources.

Golam Mawla, central vice-president of Bangladesh Launch Owners Association and president of its Barisal district unit said letters has been sent to the advisor in charge of transport ministry and BIWTA explaining problems in withdrawing the rotation system.

Golam Mawla, also convener of Barisal Bibhav Unnayan O Swartha Sangrakkhan Parishad, led the movement against illegal rotation system.

Saiful Islam, BIWTA port officer at Barisal, said higher authorities were informed about violation of the official order by launch owners. Action would be taken according to decision of the authorities, he said.

Rafiqul Islam, deputy director (passenger transport) of BIWTA, said if the rotation system continues, show cause notices would be issued to launch owners and association leaders; and after receiving the reply, BIWTA authorities would go for legal action.

Manzurul Hassan Ferdous, owner of Kirtonkhola launch, said an emergency meeting of the association would be held soon to review the situation and take decision about the BIWTA order.

33 held by army in four districts

STAR NATIONAL DESK

At least 33 people were arrested in army drives conducted in Khagrachhari, Satkhira, Barisal and Manikganj districts yesterday and Monday night. The arrested included leaders and activists of both Awami League (AL) and BNP.

Our Khagrachhari Correspondent reports: At least five AL and BNP activists were arrested in two separate drives conducted in two upazilas in the hill district yesterday, security sources said.

Four of them who were arrested in Panchhari upazila included AL activist Mohammad Zahir Mia and Monir Hossain. Both of them were arrested with country made gun and knives.

Two other BNP activists, Sanjib Barua and Abdul Latif, were arrested with sharp weapons in the same upazila.

Another BNP activist Mohammad Hossain, also accused of some murder cases were arrested from Mohalchhari upazila.

All were sent to Khagrachhari jail, security sources said.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: Army Monday night arrested 16 people in the district. The arrested are AL and BNP leaders including some local government leaders.

They are Abdus Selim and Nazibullah Ailu, two commissioners of Satkhira municipality, Rezaul Islam chairman of Noapara Union Parishad (UP) in Debhata upazila, Abdul Gaffar, a member of Tala Sadar UP in Tala upazila, Mamun

Acid victim fights for life as accused move freely

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Acid victim Kalpana Rani is fighting for life at the Acid Survivors Foundation in Dhaka for about a month while the accused are moving freely in Jaldhaka.

Locals and Kalpana's relatives said her husband Sudin Chandra Baishya had a long-drawn feud with a Jamaat-e-Islami leader in Nekbakh village in Dauabari union under Jaldhaka upazila over possession of 15 decimal of land.

Clashes also took place between them on several occasions.

They alleged that the Jamaat leader and his companions earlier threatened Sudin to leave the country.

Talking to newsmen earlier, Sudin alleged that on the night of December 16 last year, when they were asleep, the Jamaat leader and his associates opened the window of their room and sprayed acid on Kalpana's body, causing severe burn injuries on the face, chest, arms and other parts of her body.

Their screams drew neighbours who claimed that in torch light focus, they saw the Jamaat leader and some of his associates fleeing, Sudin had told newsmen.

Kalpana was taken to Jaldhaka Upazila Health Complex and later

shifted to Acid Survivals Foundation in Dhaka. NGO BRAC and Bangladesh Manobadhikar Sangshta (Bangladesh Human Rights Organization) stood beside the victim.

Sudin filed a case with Jaldhaka Thana (case No. 13, dated 20/12/2006) accusing Jamaat leader Rousan Ali and activists Monirul Islam Monju, Mahabubul Islam Bablu, Habibur Rahman and some others.

But none of the accused was arrested yet. Talking to this correspondent yesterday, Sudin alleged that police are not arresting them as they are influential in the area. Jaldhaka is a stronghold of Jamaat.

Sudin also alleged that local Union Parishad chairman Saiful Islam Mukul, also a Jamaat leader, is protecting them. When contacted, Mukul denied the allegation and claimed that the whole incident is a conspiracy hatched by Sudin to out Roushan Ali and other Jamaat men in the area in an awkward position.

Sudin also alleged that he requested Jaldhaka police to arrest the accused, but to effect.

The Officer-in-Charge of Jaldhaka police station, when contacted, said the incident is 'mysterious' and the accused are absconding.

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