

Bangladeshi

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related charges.

Sadequee, 23, of the Atlanta suburb of Roswell, was picked up by intelligence officials from Dhaka in 2006 and handed over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and sent back to the US.

He was found guilty on four counts of supporting terrorists and a foreign terrorist organisation after a seven-day trial, reports CNN from Georgia quoting a news release of Patrick Crosby, spokesman for the US Attorney's Office.

Sadequee was born and raised in the US and was arrested in April 2006 in Bangladesh on charges arising out of false statements he made in an April 2005 interview with the FBI at New York's JFK International Airport, authorities say.

He was indicted in Georgia in July 2006 and brought back to Atlanta in August the same year.

In June, a federal judge convicted Sadequee's friend Syed Haris Ahmed of conspiring to provide material support to terrorism in the US and abroad. Ahmed had been a student at Georgia Tech.

Sentencing for both Ahmed and Sadequee is scheduled for October 15, the authorities say. Both could be sentenced to up to 60 years in prison, Crosby said.

"With this guilty verdict, a long and successful international counter-terrorism investigation comes to a close," David Nahmias, US attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, says in the news release.

Sadequee was living in Bangladesh in 2001, say prosecutors. They add he sent an email seeking to join the Taliban and their fight against the US and coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Several years later, in late 2004 and 2005, Sadequee returned to his family home in Roswell and "entered an illegal agreement -- a conspiracy -- with others to provide material support to terrorists engaged in violent jihad," the prosecutors say in the news release.

Ahmed and Sadequee were charged in the same indictment. The authorities allege the two travelled to Canada in March 2005 to meet three other co-conspirators they met online.

"While in Canada, Sadequee and his co-conspirators discussed their plans to travel to Pakistan in an effort to attend a paramilitary training camp operated by a terrorist organisation, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, as preparation for engaging in violent jihad abroad or in the United States," the prosecutors' statements say.

"They also discussed potential targets for terrorist attacks in the United States."

In addition, the authorities contended that Ahmed and Sadequee made "casing videos" of landmarks in Washington such as the US Capitol, the World Bank Building and a Masonic temple.

The videos were found on the hard drives of at least two men who were convicted on terrorism charges in the UK.

According to the prosecutors, those two men were found to possess a large quantity of "violent jihad materials."

Ahmed travelled to Pakistan in July 2005 in an attempt to enter a training camp, but his family and others convinced him to postpone that effort, according to Nahmias' statement.

The day before Ahmed returned to Atlanta, Sadequee departed for Bangladesh carrying items hidden in the liner of his suitcase including an encrypted CD and a map of Washington that included all of the targets he and Ahmed had cased, the authorities add.

While in Bangladesh, Sadequee conspired with members of a "violent jihadist organisation known as al-Qaeda in northern Europe," the prosecutors say.

They add Sadequee came to Bangladesh to meet terrorist cells and tried to help a Pakistani group linked to terrorist attacks. But he denied any involvement in terrorist activity at the trial in Atlanta.

At the trial -- where Sadequee represented himself -- he acknowledged that he had spent time discussing jihad in online forums but termed it empty talk.

"We were immature young guys who had imaginations running wild," he told jurors, reports the AP news agency. "But I was not then, and am not now, a terrorist."

US officials established that Sadequee had communicated with Mirsad Bektasevic, a Balkan-born Swede con-

victed in 2007 of plotting to blow up a European target to force the pullout of foreign troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

But Sadequee's family said the case was an example of over-zealous prosecution in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

"Even though [US President Barack] Obama has communicated there's going to be a shift, it hasn't really gone down to the general understanding of the community and social attitudes," his sister, Sonali Sadequee, told AP.

After Sadequee was picked up in Bangladesh, his father Sardar Md Sharif, a garment exporter by profession, told a press conference in Dhaka that eight to ten armed plainclothesmen of different government intelligence agencies "abducted" his son on April 17, 2006 when he and his wife reached Kalachandpur Bridge Police Post at Baridhara on their way back home from shopping.

Policemen at the check post cooperated with the "abductors" as they identified themselves as intelligence officials.

They identified themselves as personnel of Criminal Investigation Department, Detective Branch, Special Branch and Rab as Sadequee's wife wanted to know their identity, Sharif had said.

He had added he also filed an abduction case with Cantonment Police Station on April 17, 2006.

As The Daily Star enquired yesterday, duty officer at Cantonment Police Station Assistant Sub-inspector Mohammad Alaiddin said the investigation officer of the case submitted final report on February 21, 2007 as he found the allegations false.

Mugger

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Officer-in-charge of Sutrapur Police Station Tofazzol Hossain said Roman succumbed to his injuries at Pangu Hospital at around 6:00am.

He added around 3:00am Roman and his two accomplices intercepted a rickshaw and tried to snatch money from two vegetable traders at Faridabad.

On hearing the victims screaming, police on duty reached the spot. Criminals tried to stab a police prompting them to open fire that left Roman severely injured.

In Gulshan, Billal, who was crossing Sattala Basti on bike, got bullet hit by the armed criminals.

Hearing the gunshot, locals chased after the criminals. Hotel boy Babul was injured when they fired on the locals while fleeing the scene.

Police could not ascertain the cause behind the shooting.

JUBO LEAGUE MEN CLASH WITH COPS

Local Jubo League activists yesterday clashed with Mohammadpur police at Dhaka Udyan following arrest of their mates on charges of conducting an attack that vandalised a rehabilitation centre and a construction firm in the area on Wednesday.

Witnesses said some 25 Jubo League activists attacked the police team at around 12:30pm to snatch the arrestees, Shafiq and Akter, from police custody.

By the time the police informed their high-ups of the incident seeking additional force the criminals regrouped and increased in number.

Locals said DCC ward Councillor Abu Sayeed Bepari along with some 300 pro-judging party men from the adjacent areas being equipped with brickbats and bamboo sticks attacked the police team. Police retaliated with at least four rounds of bullet.

Meanwhile, around 100 additional police personnel and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members reached the spot. Five people including three police officials sustained injuries.

Officer-in-Charge Bhuyan Mahub Hasan said "We made the arrest in a case filed by Iqbal Hossain, a staff of Jiboner Alo Drug Rehabilitation Centre. The criminals attacked us while we were taking the arrestees to the police station."

Local Jubo League activists Wednesday morning vandalised Jiboner Alo Drug Rehabilitation Centre and Salam Enterprise at Dhaka Udyan on refusal of toll of Tk 50 thousand from each office for the National Mourning Day programme. They also looted Tk 16,600 and two mobile phone sets.

Govt to slash

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increased as the government has taken all necessary steps to ensure adequate supply of these items to meet the demand of consumers during the Ramadan," he said.

He mentioned that supply of the essential items is sufficient in the local markets, as the traders have imported a huge amount of essentials despite a good production of those this year.

The government is importing edible oil, sugar and other essentials through Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, which would reach the local markets within a few days.

Annissul Huq, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, its Vice-president Abul Quasem Ahmed, Amir Hossain Khan, president of Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association, were also present at the meeting.

Hunger, threat

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Village security guard Md Rafique of Bishnupur told The Daily Star that Tushar and his gang, suspecting that he had spoken to the police about the rape, threatened him with life.

Tushar married a girl only a few months ago by force. He abducted the girl when she had sat for only six papers of her SSC exams.

Finding no way her father had to marry her off to Tushar.

He was a student of Adarsha High School of Charbhadrashan and studied up to class-VIII before dropping out.

Tushar has no jobs and has Romeo reputation in the locality.

His three brothers are Saudi expatriates while the eldest one is a construction contractor in Faridpur who has influence. Money and influence were never a problem for Tushar.

Locals fear Tushar and his gang so much that they retreat to the side of the road whenever Tushar and his gang approach on motorbikes.

They say that he and his friends carry arms and use drugs.

Kalam Khan is a little different but not less dangerous than Tushar, locals claimed.

A neighbour of the victim and a retired schoolteacher wishing anonymity said, "They [Tushar and his gang] are very dangerous and influential. They can kill the victim's father any time."

Madrasa shut

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and join Ahab.

"Concerned about these men, we made the decision to close the madrasa indefinitely," said Salafi, former Nayeb-e-Amir who resigned from Ahab along with some 48 others in April for the outfit's anti-state activities.

Sources said just before the closure, the Ahab adherents prevented the students from attending a discussion on the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and a special prayer on the occasion of the national mourning day.

Around noon, when the madrasa authorities were about to start the programme, Abdur Razzak Bin Yusuf, a madrasa teacher, kept the students from joining the function.

The students said Razzak told them not to attend the function because Galib does not like Bangabandhu.

The madrasa premises is the property of Toubid Trust, an NGO from where Galib was ousted for financial anomalies, said Salafi, adding, Galib has been occupying a building on the campus that was meant for a medical centre.

Drive stalled

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court did not understand it, they added.

Hearing the news, lawmaker Mojaharul Haque Prodhan of Panchagarh-1 constituency, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Panchagarh Banomali Bhowmik, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Abdus Salam and Officer-in-Charge (OC) Jamiruddin rushed to the spot and freed the mobile court members at about 9:30pm after a discussion with local people.

DC Banomali Bhowmik assured people of forming an investigation committee in this regard.

When contacted, Magistrate Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star that they conducted the mobile court according to law. Trader Helal Uddin incited others to act against the court when he was fined Tk 500 for having 30 sacks of non-jodised salt, the magistrate added.

Si Tariqul Islam was closed Thursday morning following the incident, said OC Jamiruddin.

Army Act sought

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raise questions in view of article 35(1) of the constitution.

It suggests that President Zillur Rahman seek opinion from the Supreme Court on two issues: if the notification to be published under section 5 of the army act can be given retrospective effect for applying all or any provision of the act to BDR, and if the restriction imposed under article 35(1) of the constitution applies in case of disciplined forces in view of article 45.

According to article 35(1), no person shall be convicted to any offence except for violating a law in force at the time of committing the offence, nor be subjected to a penalty greater than or different from what the law provides.

Article 45 says the laws on fundamental rights will not apply to any provision of a disciplinary law relating to members of a disciplined force.

Sources said the president might seek the Supreme Court's opinion on Sunday.

LIMITATIONS OF BDR AND CIVIL LAWS

Serious offences like murder, attempt to murder, looting, arson and others cannot be tried under the BDR law because those offences are not mentioned in its law. Departmentally promoted officers like assistant directors, deputy assistant directors and civilian employees of BDR cannot be tried under the BDR law because there is no provision for trying these persons under the BDR law.

There are two types of courts under BDR laws--Special Court and Special Summary Court. As per article 2(1) of the BDR Order, 1972, the BDR DG has to preside over the special court in person to try the offences. The draft says considering the huge number of offenders, it will be practically impossible for him to hold all the trials besides performing all day-to-day operational and administrative functions including reorganising the force.

The highest punishment for the offence of mutiny under the BDR Order 1972 is seven years' rigorous imprisonment, which is very much inadequate in view of the gravity of the February 25-26 mutiny, the draft says.

It adds that the Penal Code and other penal laws have not dealt with the offence of mutiny, desertion, absent without leave and other offences of military nature. Procedurally, trial under the Criminal Procedure Code takes a longer time, which will hamper the operational effectiveness of BDR if it is held under the Penal Code.

It will be impossible for the criminal court to hold the trial of such a large number of accused, the draft says.

A total of 1,779 persons have been arrested so far in Dhaka and 1,721 others outside Dhaka in connection with the BDR carnage.

If the number of accused increases or further investigation is required, the BDR will face serious challenges to protect the border, the reference says, adding that therefore the trial under the Criminal Procedure Code may put national security at risk.

So, through notification the government may apply all or any provision of the army act to any force in Bangladesh, says the reference proposal.

SUGGESTIONS FAVOURING ARMY ACT

The draft reference says all offenders including departmental officers and civilians can be tried under the army act. The authorities concerned might form several courts to hold trial of all offenders at a time.

No amendment to the army act is required for holding trial in the case. The accused will have the right to self-defence through appointment of a counsel at his choice and also the right to object to any member of the court on reasonable grounds.

"The court martial being an open court the press media and other persons may be allowed to witness the trial. The sentence of the court is subject to the confirmation of the confirming authority, and the superior authority and the government may always have the power to remit or commute sentence."

"No in-absentia trial can be held; therefore the accused will always have the opportunity to defend himself. Appropriate and adequate punishments can be awarded under this act," the draft says.

According to the provision of sections 94 and 95 of the army act and section 549 of the Criminal Procedure Code, all

cases filed with the criminal court can be transferred under the concurrent jurisdiction of the court martial for trial.

"Any person aggrieved by the finding or sentence of the court martial may submit a petition to the appropriate authority or to the government for redress. If once trial commences by a court martial, it continues without adjournment; therefore, the trial by a court martial is speedy by nature and it can dispose of the offences very quickly," it says.

The application of the rules of evidence in proceedings before court martial is the same as those of criminal court. The proceedings of a court martial are subject to review by Judge Advocate General's Department at headquarters; and any finding or sentence, not supported by evidence, may be sent back to the court for revision by the appropriate authority.

THE 19 OFFENCES

BDR personnel along with some civilians at the Pikhana headquarters and outside Dhaka committed mutiny, murders and attempt to murder and also caused injuries and grievous injuries by dangerous weapons or means.

They used force to deter public servants from the discharge of duty, confined the officers' family members and took them as hostages, committed desertion, remained absent without leave from units, broke open arms and ammunition store and used firearms without authority, it adds.

The perpetrators resorted to mischief by fire or explosive substances, theft, extortion, robbery, criminal intimidation, conspiracy, abetment of mutiny, murder and other offences and also caused explosion to endanger life or property and disappearance of evidence of murders by removing bodies, says the draft.

They distributed leaflets with false information, used the media for spreading propaganda to draw sympathy of people, put up blockades on road, terrorised people by indiscriminate fire, caused loss and destruction of government properties (arms and ammunition), used force against superior officers; and committed disobedience to lawful command.

The BDR needs to be reorganised for restoration and maintaining discipline in the border security force.

It further says exemplary and appropriate punishments to the offenders through a fair and speedy trial will help restore order and discipline in BDR.

3 suspects

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the incident came to limelight, an arbitration was arranged in the locality where Tushar's father tried to settle the matter by giving Tk 5 lakh to the victim's family.

However, with all these developments police only moved to arrest the accused after the court had sent the case for investigation.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Charbhadrashan Police Station Ariful Haque said he joined the police station a few days ago and was making an all-out effort to arrest the accused.

Meanwhile, police picked up a number of computer and CD shop owners on Wednesday. They were later released.

The victim's mother alleged that police took her husband to locate the residences of the accused during the raid on Tuesday. After the raid police confined him in the police station till 3:00pm the next day without any food. As a result he fell unconscious as he returned home.

She also alleged that while interrogating her husband police held her mother responsible as the victim was coming from her grandmother's house. "Police even threatened to fire my mother from her job at Charbhadrashan Health Complex," said victim's mother.

While tears rolled down her cheeks she said, "Though my daughter was raped, police tried to put the blame on us." She alleged that the police are talking the words of the accused.

She, however, could name the police officer who interrogated her husband. She said her husband, who at the moment went to visit her ailing daughter, could provide more details of the cop.

Asked, the OC denied the allegation of such racking interrogation.

BNP prepares

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leaders on Wednesday night discussed preparations for party council and outlined a few sub-committees including the one on party constitution, said sources.

The party has taken up plans to reorganise its ward, upazila and district units across the country by holding council at all levels and complete preparations for holding the central council at the same time, party insiders said.

Party leaders said BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain might be appointed convener of the committee on preparation for the council while standing committee member Shamsul Islam might lead the sub-committee on international affairs.

They said party standing committee member Moudud Ahmed and Vice President MK Anwar might lead another sub-committee for amending the party constitution in line with the Representation of People Order.

Party's Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan and Office Secretary Rizvi Ahmed will be in charge of the council management committee while Sadeque Hossain Khoka will lead the sub-committee on refreshment, insiders said.

When contacted, some party leaders refrained from making any comment on the issue, saying that the party will make an official announcement after finalising all sub-committees related to the party's national council.

BNP formed convening committees for its districts units on June 9 and asked all committees to complete the reorganising process through holding local councils from ward to district level by November 15.

The party will go for inclusion of new members and launch a programme for renewal of party membership from August 16. The party chairperson is expected to inaugurate the programme.

Nazrul Islam Khan said it is mandatory for all current members including the chairperson and secretary general to renew their membership.

ODI today

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slow track.

So, there needs to be a special effort from Prosper Uteyasa's men if they want to stop the Tigers taking an unsalable 3-0 lead.

On the other hand another win would be the eighth in a row for Shakib's men.

Today's match starts at 2:30pm Bangladesh time and TEN Sports and Bangladesh Television (BTV) will telecast the game live.

Bangladesh made two changes from their winning unit with right-arm paceman Mahbubul Alam replacing Nazmul Hossain, who strained his thigh during practice yesterday. Also, Mehrab Hossain came in place of struggling left-handed opener Zunaid Siddiqui.

Swine flu

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to keep separate units for the treatment of swine flu patients if the situation worsens," said Prof Mahmudur Rahman, Director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

The civil surgeons of 64 districts are already provided with necessary training in this regard and they refer patients with the symptoms of swine flu to the IEDCR. The government has enough stock of Oseltamivir to treat swine flu, sources said.

Though the government ordered all the airlines to distribute health card to passengers while they are on board to ensure their health screening, some of the airlines are still not following the order, officials said.

3 MORE DEATHS IN INDIA

Swine flu claimed three more persons in India -- one in country's Information Technology hub Bangalore and another two in the worst hit western city Pune yesterday taking the death toll to 20, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Meanwhile, Indian Health Minister Gulam Nabi Azad sought to calm the people saying there was no reason to panic.

School-teacher and mother of two children Roopa, 26, the first victim of swine flu in Bangalore, health officials said.

Following her death, authorities asked all her colleagues and students of the school to undergo swine flu test.

With yesterday's deaths of an 11-year-old boy and a 75-year-old woman in Pune, the Maharashtra state's toll went up to 12.

Health minister also said it is unnecessary for everybody to wear a protective mask but only swine flu patients should use it to help prevent further spread of the disease.

Yunus changed

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Obama Wednesday conferred America's highest civilian honour on 16 examples of unshakeable human spirit, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu and British scientist Stephen Hawking.

Former Irish president Mary Robinson and screen legend Sidney Poitier were also honoured with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a ceremony in the White House.

"No barriers of race, gender or physical infirmity can restrain the human spirit, and that the truest test of a person's life is what we do for one another," said Obama, as he introduced the 2009 honourees.

"There are many honours and privileges bestowed on the occupants of this house. But few mean as much to me as the chance to award America's highest civilian medal to the recipients that are here today."

Before placing the blue-ribboned medal around the neck of wheelchair-bound scientist Hawking, Obama joked he was a "brilliant man and a mediocre student."

"From his wheelchair, he's led us on a journey to the farthest and strangest reaches of the cosmos. In so doing, he has stirred our imagination and shown us the power of the human spirit here on Earth."

Obama lauded Tutu for preaching amid tear gas and police dogs during the horror of apartheid South Africa.

"Later, when a free South Africa needed a heart big enough to forgive its sins, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was called to serve once more," Obama said, praising him as a "voice of the oppressed, cantor of our conscience."

Obama's selection of Robinson to receive the medal sparked anger among some pro-Israel lobby groups, who accused her of bias against the Jewish state.

But Obama described the former United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights as an "advocate for the hungry and the hunted," though his spokesman Robert Gibbs earlier said the president did not agree with all of her beliefs.

"It's been said that Sidney Poitier does not make movies, he makes milestones--milestones of artistic excellence, milestones of America's progress," Obama said of the

famed star of "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner."

Poitier, the president added, had not only entertained but shifted racial attitudes, broadened hearts and brought Americans together.

Poignantly, another medal recipient, Senator Edward Kennedy, was missing from the ceremony, and was represented by his daughter Kara.

Kennedy, who is battling brain cancer, suffered another blow Tuesday with the death of his sister Eunice Kennedy Shriver.

"The life of Senator Edward M Kennedy has made a difference for us all," Obama said.

Obama also presented medals to breast cancer crusader Nancy Goodman Brinker, medical campaigner Pedro Jose Greer Jr, tennis legend Billie Jean King, civil rights leader Reverend Joseph Lowery, native American tribal chief Joseph Medicine Crow, former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, actress Chita Rivera, and cancer researcher Janet Davison Rowley.

He awarded posthumous medals to former Republican congressman, football quarterback and vice presidential candidate Jack Kemp and gay rights campaigner Harvey Milk.

Inflation down

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Another government official Abdul Hye expressed his concern over the further price hikes of essential commodities during the month of Ramadan. He wished the government would announce the pay scale before the Eid.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies research director Zaid Bakht said, prices of different food items were much higher in June last year compared to this year.

Good agricultural production and price fall of different commodities in the international market due to recession contributed to the drop in the prices of commodities this June, he added.

There is no room for satisfaction as the inflation might rise in the coming days. This time Aman production is not up to the expectation. If the next crops are not good due to natural disaster the prices of essentials may go up again, he continued.

He said the government should import and distribute daily necessities through TCB efficiently and the process should be free from corruption.

Philippine troops

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suffered 31 dead. Troops did not recover all the bodies because the militants dragged away some, he said.

A spokesman for the Moro rebels, Eid Kabalu, confirmed that 10 of the dead were the group's members and accused the military of attacking them. He said they were not with the Abu Sayyaf and only happened to be in the area when the fighting erupted.

Unlike the Abu Sayyaf, which is considered a terrorist organisation, the larger Moro rebel group has been negotiating with the government an autonomy deal for minority Muslims in the southern Philippines. Sporadic clashes have erupted in recent months.

Although weakened by years-long US-backed offensives, about 400 Abu Sayyaf gunmen on Basilan and nearby Jolo Island and the Zamboanga peninsula have recently turned to ransom kidnappings to raise funds for terror attacks, officials said.