

Outlaw shot dead in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A top leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) was found dead in Mirpur upazila of Kushtia yesterday morning.

The victim, Motaleb Hossain, 45, was the chief of the Lal Pataka faction, said Assistant Police Super of Kushtia Chokdar Abdul Halim.

Informed by locals, police recovered the bullet-hit body of Motaleb from Jhutiadanga field at Malihad village in Mirpur around 6:00 am, the ASP said.

Quoting victim's relatives, the ASP said Motaleb went missing on Tuesday night. "He might have been gunned down by his rivals," he said.

Hailing from Gaserdia village in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia, Motaleb was accused in at least 14 cases, including six for murders filed with Mirpur, Bheramara and Daulatpur police stations of the district, police sources said.

Motaleb was accused of killing Abdul Rasul Babu Khan, president of BNP Mirpur upazila unit, in 2005 and Basir Uddin Kachi, an activist of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, in 2003, the sources said.

DCC polls

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It also issued a rule upon the government and the Election Commission to explain within two weeks why they should not be directed to demarcate the DCC wards as per the rules of Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009 before holding the elections.

The DCC (north and south) polls were scheduled for May 24.

During the hearing, Tuhin's counsel Dr M Zahir argued in court that as per its earlier order, any court should not interfere in the process of holding an election after the announcement of the polls schedule; but the HC has stayed the DCC polls after the announcement of the election schedule.

Writ petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid opposed the petition of Tuhin, claiming he (Tuhin) has no jurisdiction to move the petition before the Appellate Division, since he was not a party in the case before the HC.

At this stage, the court told Tuhin's counsel to place their arguments before the HC during the hearing of the rule.

Ruhul Quddus Kazal, another attorney of Tuhin, told The Daily Star that there is no possibility of holding the DCC polls within the next three months if the HC order is not vacated.

31 patients

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medicine consultant at Kurigram sadar hospital, will lead the team.

Aminul Islam, health officer at Kurigram sadar upazila hospital, said all the 31 infected students of the nursing institute were shifted to their dormitory rooms from the isolation unit after treatment.

However, they are not yet allowed to go outside and move around, he added.

A team from Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) on Tuesday diagnosed these students of Kurigram Nursing Institute with swine flu.

"We have kept 89 other students of the institute under medication suspecting they might have contracted the flu. Their 10-day treatment will end on Saturday," said Aminul Islam.

A total of 105 cases of swine flu have been detected from January to March. This year the deadly disease hit the country early although it usually breaks out between April and September.

Suranjit's aide tells

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In a written statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on Wednesday, he claimed that of Tk 70 lakh found in his microbus, he had earned Tk 45 lakh from legal practice and received the rest from his expatriate brother-in-law, said a source.

However, on April 10, Faruq told news agency UNB that the BGB men seized Tk 25 lakh to 30 lakh from the microbus and he owned that money.

The ACC team probing the Tk 70 lakh scandal rejected Faruq's claim about the source of the money and asked him to appear before it in 10 days with evidence for the claim.

After the seizure of the money, a three-member ACC team launched a probe to find out the source of the money as well as the wealth of Faruq and two suspended top Bangladesh Railway officials.

ACC Director General (Special) Md Khondaker Muhammad Aminur Rahman is monitoring the investigation.

Border Guard Bangladesh personnel detained Faruq, his driver Ali Azam Khan, Bangladesh Railway General Manager (East) Yusuf Ali Mridha, and its Dhaka Division Security Commandant Enamul Haque with Tk 70 lakh after the driver drove the APS' microbus into the BGB headquarters on April 9 night.

Suranjit sacked his APS and suspended the two railway officials before quitting as railway minister on April 15 over the scandal.

On Wednesday, Faruq, Mridha and Enamul appeared before the ACC investigators and gave statements separately.

On condition of anonymity, two ACC officials told The Daily Star that Faruq claimed that the seized Tk 70 lakh belonged to him, while Mridha and Enamul said

they didn't have any knowledge of the money.

"But all three told us that they were going to Suranjit Sengupta's Jhigatola residence," said one of the ACC officials.

The ACC investigators said they would serve notice on the three on Sunday for submitting their wealth statements.

They had already sent letters to the National Bureau of Revenue and Bangladesh Bank to provide information about the wealth and all monetary transactions made by the three, the investigators said.

"We will also ask the BGB officials concerned to explain actually what happened on April 9 night and tell us whatever they know," said another ACC official.

The investigators expressed frustration over the mysterious disappearance of the microbus driver, Ali Azam. He has been missing since the incident.

"We have doubts whether the driver would appear before us. We are yet to have any trace of him. We decided to send a letter to his village address," said one of the investigators.

The railway ministry and Bangladesh Railway also formed two separate committees on April 11 to probe the incident.

Another ACC committee is probing the source of Tk 5 crore of Suranjit's son Soumen Sengupta with which he recently obtained an Interconnection Exchange (ICEX) licence from Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

The ACC sent letters to the BTRC and the telecommunications ministry asking for the facts about Soumen's obtaining the ICEx licence.

The ACC is also looking into the income sources of Soumen, his wealth and that of his family members.

Kamal postpones

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order yesterday afternoon.

"Because of this ruling from the court, the board is not in a position to commit to the Tour of Pakistan on the dates agreed (April 28 - May 01, 2012) upon recently by the BCB and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). This has been communicated to the PCB and the International Cricket Council (ICC)," stated a BCB press release.

Halting the tour for four weeks, the court ordered the sports secretary, the National Sports Council chief and BCB chief Mustafa Kamal to explain as to why the decision to send the Tigers on a tour of Pakistan should not be declared illegal.

The order was issued following a writ petition filed yesterday morning by Daffodil International University teacher Khandaker Dider-us-Salam and Supreme Court lawyer Kamal Hossain Meah who, citing concerns over security, challenged the BCB's decision to send the Tigers for the three-day tour.

MS Azim, one of the lawyers for the petitioners, said, "Pakistan is not safe for any foreign teams now. Their own media say so. For that reason, no country agrees to play there. Under the circumstances, we should not go there also."

The petition was filed as public interest litigation on the basis of four separate reports published by The Daily Star and the daily Prothom Alo on April 17 and April 18.

The Daily Star's reports were headlined "Pak trip decision questioned - Cricketers taken for Kamal's ride" and "It's none but Kamal decides: Board directors against Pak tour over security", while the Prothom Alo's reports were headlined "Pakistan safer e masei (Pakistan tour this month)" and "Bideshi doler jonno Pakistan onirapod (Pakistan unsafe for foreign teams)".

Yesterday in court, Additional Attorney General MK Rahman opposed the petition saying that the BCB has not yet made the final decision to send the cricket team to Pakistan.

When The Daily Star asked him later on if they would appeal against the stay order, MK Rahman said he was yet to receive any directives on the matter.

The order, however, came as a sigh of relief to many, especially the players.

"I'm really relieved now because I was really scared about the tour..." said a player on condition of anonymity.

This untoward situation manifested allegedly due to the whims and personal agenda of BCB President AHM Mustafa Kamal who had taken up the risky mission and in the process put the country's cricket diplomacy at risk.

The trouble began on December 17, 2011, when Kamal announced the Tigers' tour of Pakistan in April, 2012. He had said that a security team would ascertain in January whether the country was safe for the Tigers to visit.

The safety issue, however, was reportedly never a priority for the BCB boss, rather he was desperate to become the International Cricket Council's vice-president.

It was almost clear even then that Kamal was trying to get the PCB's nomination for vice-presidency by offering Bangladesh team's tour of Pakistan, a country where no international teams go to. The actions and words of the BCB boss, who too had visited Pakistan with the security assessment team, almost confirmed rumours that there was a deal between PCB and Kamal that PCB would nominate Kamal for the position of ICC vice-president if Bangladesh agreed to tour Pakistan.

This decision to tour Pakistan was never made in a transparent way as the issue was not discussed in the board meeting of the BCB and all in the board of directors had admitted of being consistently left in the dark.

Kamal's decision apparently has cornered Bangladesh in terms of cricket diplomacy. The PCB chairman has already said that the PCB would review its relationship with Bangladesh if the Tigers refuse to tour Pakistan.

BCL men

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of the city corporation, said they did not give permission to anyone to use the land for any business purpose.

"We will take legal steps against those responsible for grabbing the area on receipt of a formal complaint," he added.

The grabbed land is part of the area where the government is going to establish a Marine Academy. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of the academy, situated on the bank of the Kirtankhola, on March 21 this year.

Withdraw

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came following the dawn-to-dusk nationwide hartal for Sunday called by BNP protesting the "disappearance" of Sylhet BNP organising secretary M Ilias Ali.

In a statement, he said, "The examinees and students irrespective of party and opinion are our children; the future of the nation. It is our collective duty to ensure their examination uninterrupted and safe."

Earlier, the government postponed yesterday's HSC examinations under Sylhet Board and Technical Education Board due to a division-wide dawn-to-dusk hartal called by Sylhet BNP.

The HSC and its equivalent examinations began on April 1 with 9.26 lakh examinees sitting under 10 education boards across the country. The written exams will end on May 20. The practical exams will be held from May 23 to June 6.

Hen lays

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of the hen's body and being incubated outside, the egg was incubated in the hen for 21 days and then hatched inside the hen.

The chick is fully formed and healthy, although the mother has died.

The government veterinary officer in the area said he had never seen anything like it before.

PR Yapa, the chief veterinary officer of Welimada, where it took place, examined the hen's carcass.

He found that the fertilised egg had developed within the hen's reproductive system, but stayed inside the hen's body until it hatched.

A post-mortem conducted on the hen's body concluded that it died of internal wounds.

The BBC's Charles Haviland in Colombo says that the story has made headlines in Sri Lanka, with the Sri Lankan Daily Mirror's concluding: "The chicken came first; not the egg."

Khaleda

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resolving outstanding problems between the two countries.

She expressed the view when the Indian diplomat, Pankaj Saran, made a courtesy call on her at her Gulshan office in the capital around 8:30pm.

The Indian high commissioner told reporters after the meeting that India wished to develop relations with Bangladesh based on mutual respect, benefit and respect to each other's sovereignty.

Termed "good" the meeting with the main opposition party leader, he said he informed her about the latest condition of relations between India and Bangladesh.

BNP Vice Chairman Shamsar Mobin Chowdhury, who was present at the meeting, later told reporters that the meeting discussed the importance of the relations between the two sides.

He said Khaleda and Saran also discussed ways to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two neighbours.

Saran told Khaleda that top Indian officials would visit Bangladesh in the future and hold talks with her for enhancing bilateral relations, Shamsar said.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir was also present at the meeting.

India tests new missile

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of the coast of Bay of Bengal in Indian state of Orissa at 8:07am.

The indigenously developed missile travels faster than a bullet and has the capacity to carry 1,000kg of nuclear weapons, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

India views the rocket as a key boost to its regional power aspirations and one that narrows, albeit slightly, the huge gap with China's advanced missile systems.

Hailing the successful trial of the missile, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said it represents another milestone in India's quest to add to its security preparedness.

The Indian Prime Minister said, "Today's successful Agni-V test launch is another milestone in our quest to add to the credibility of our security and preparedness and to continuously explore the frontiers of science."

He congratulated DRDO scientists and technical personnel for the successful test launch of Agni-V and said, "The nation stands together in honouring our scientific community who have done our country proud."

Currently only the five permanent members of the UN Security Council -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- possess a declared ICBM capability.

"The mission today was successful. This launch gives a message to the entire world that India has the capability to design, develop, build and manufacture missiles of this class," said VK Saraswat, chief of India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) that made the missile.

He said India was now a "missile power".

DRDO spokesman Ravi Gupta insisted the Agni V was a "non country-specific"

deterrent, but analysts noted it extends India's missile reach over the entire Chinese mainland, including military installations in the far north-east, reports AFP.

While the shorter-range Agni I and II were mainly developed with traditional rival Pakistan in mind, later versions with a range of 3,500 kilometres -- are perceived as China-centric deterrents.

A team of 800 have worked on the indigenously developed Agni V over the last three years, using new materials and technology to build motors capable of increasing the propulsion and speed of the new missile.

"Firstly you have a phenomenal range and so every single significant city -- Beijing, Shanghai -- will come within its range," said retired Air Force officer Kapil Kak.

"Secondly, it has a very, very high speed compared to previous missiles... But the key issue is that this missile can be pushed to 8,000 kilometres."

There was no official reaction in China, but the state-run Global Times newspaper warned India "should not overestimate its strength" in an editorial published yesterday.

"India should be clear that China's nuclear power is stronger and more reliable. For the foreseeable future, India would stand no chance in an overall arms race with China," it added.

The two Asian giants have prickly relations and a legacy of mistrust that stems from a brief but bloody border war in 1962.

China's military arsenal is far larger and far more technologically advanced than India's, which is why the Agni Vis so important, said Monika Chansoria, a senior at the Delhi-based Centre for Land Warfare Studies.

"What this missile does is

enable India to upgrade its present strategic posture towards countries like China from one of dissuasion to one of credible deterrence," Chansoria said.

Indian security experts consider the successful launch of the Agni V missile as a major step for India to move ahead with its extensive military modernisation programme.

India boosted military spending to \$40 billion in its last budget and is currently the world's largest importer of military hardware with Jane's Defence Weekly forecasting the country's total purchases between 2011 and 2015 will top \$100 billion.

Cops

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emerging from a meeting at the Department of Narcotics Control, reports leading Bangla daily The Prothom Alo.

When the reporters told her that police have admitted their failure to the court, she noted, "I said what I wanted to say."

Sagar Sarwar, news editor at private TV station Maasranga, and his wife Meherun Rumi, a senior reporter at another TV channel ATN Bangla, were killed in the wee hours on February 11 at their rented apartment in the capital's West Rajabazar.

During the hearing of a rule, the HC on Wednesday directed the inspector general of police to instantly comply with the order.

The Detective Branch of police has failed to unearth anything fruitful in the case till date and this has disappointed everybody, said the court.

Deputy Commissioner of DB Monirul Islam and its Inspector Rabiul Alam told the court that detectives tried their best to find out the motive of the homicide and arrest the killer(s).

BNP turns up heat on govt

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Two cars belonging to the television channels RTV and ATN news were parked in front of BNP office. The protesters damaged them as well.

A bus at Farmgate around 8:30pm and another at Malibagh around 9:30pm were seen burning.

The opposition supporters exploded five homemade bombs near the party's Nayapalton office, witnesses say.

Also yesterday, local units of the BNP enforced dawn-to-dusk hartals in four districts under Sylhet division to protest the missing of Ilias, an organising secretary of the party and president of its Sylhet district unit.

The BNP on Sunday will observe a nationwide hartal, to which the party-led 18-party alliance has extended its support.

"We will be on the streets on the hartal day to protest the missing of Ilias Ali. The 18 parties will jointly enforce the shutdown," said Oli Ahmad, president of the Liberal Democratic Party, after a meeting of the alliance at the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office.

The new alliance sat last night for the first time after its formation on Wednesday.

Termed Ilias' going out of trace a bad omen for democracy, Oli asked the government to give the leader back to his family.

Former lawmaker Ilias, 51, along with his driver has remained untraced since Tuesday night. His car was found abandoned in the capital's Mohakhali.

Kazi Mainul Islam, officer-in-charge of Banani Police station, yesterday said the abandoned car had marks of damage on its rear bumper. Experts were now examining what might have happened to the automobile before it was abandoned.

DEMONSTRATION AND CLASH

The main opposition party yesterday staged demonstrations in all divisional headquarters, including Dhaka.

A swarm of leaders, workers and supporters joined a rally held in front of the BNP's Nayapalton office around 4:00pm, with BNP city unit convener Sadeque Hossain Khokain the chair.

Mirza Fakhrul and other party leaders addressed the

gathering.

After the rally, opposition men tried to take out a procession led by the acting secretary general but police obstructed them at Nightingale crossing, triggering the hour-long clash.

Police fired several teargas canisters and baton-charged to disperse the angry activists, who were pelting them with bricks.

Traffic was suspended at Bijoynagar, Fakirapool and Nayapalton.

Nazrul Islam Khan, a BNP standing committee member, said law enforcers swooped on their procession without any provocation while police officer Nikhil said they charged batons when the BNP men started throwing bricks like rain.

BNP BRIEF DIPLOMATS

The main opposition party yesterday briefed foreign diplomats about its former lawmaker going missing and urged them to exert pressure on the government for his immediate rescue.

A BNP delegation at a meeting with the diplomats at a Gulshan hotel alleged that some government agencies had picked up Ilias Ali on Tuesday night.

Representatives from the US, the UK, the European Union, the Netherlands, Germany, Turkey, France, Canada and several other embassies were present.

The BNP delegation included party Vice-chairman Shamsar Mobin Chowdhury, standing committee member Moyeen Khan and BNP chief Khaleda Zia's adviser Riaz Rahman.

"The meeting was part of the BNP's regular discussion with diplomats. Today we informed them about the recent killings and disappearances. We also exchanged views on Ilias Ali's going missing," Shamsar told reporters after the meeting.

He said the diplomats assured them of informing their governments about the BNP leader's being without trace.

Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday issued a rule on the government to explain within 10 days as to why it should not be directed to produce Ilias Ali before the court.

The HC bench of Justice Farid Ahmed and Justice Sheikh Hasan Arif issued the

rule following a writ petition by the BNP leader's wife, Tahsina Rushdi.

Earlier in the morning, the HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim also issued a suo moto order on the government asking it to find Ilias Ali.

The bench led by Justice Manik issued the suo moto following news reports that Ilias Ali along with his driver went missing on Tuesday night.

It, however, withdrew the order after Moudud Ahmed, a lawyer for Tahsina, informed it that the bench of Justice Farid and Justice Hasan had already given a rule on the same matter.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday directed Banani police to submit reports to it every 48 hours on the progress of the investigation into the whereabouts of Ilias Ali.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Moniruzzaman gave the order after Kazi Mainul Islam, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, submitted a petition before his court seeking permission to probe the general diary filed by Ilias' wife in this connection.

SHAHARA ASSURES FAKHRUL

Home Minister Shahara Khatun yesterday assured the BNP that the government was making all-out efforts to rescue Ilias Ali.

She gave this assurance to a BNP delegation that met her at her secretariat office where State Minister for Home Shamsul Hoque Tuku was also present.

Mirza Fakhrul led the delegation.

After the meeting Tuku told reporters that the detectives, police and Rapid Action Battalion had been asked to investigate the matter and the government was trying to rescue Ilias as early as possible.

"The government is embarrassed at Ilias Ali going missing. We've taken all measures to find him. We've also asked the BNP leaders to remain alert so no political unrest is created over the issue," he said.

Mirza Fakhrul later told reporters, "We've faith in the assurance. If the government really wants to trace him, it is possible."

Abducted student's body found

3 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday recovered the decomposed body of Sumon Banarjee, a student of Jessore Science and Technology University, from Kaliganj upazila town in Jhenidah district.

Sumon, abducted from Biharpara of the town on Monday evening, was strangled to death on the night, Rab said.

Rab arrested three people - Kutub Uddin, 42, and HSC examinees Ashrafur Islam, 18, and Sajedul Islam, 19, in this connection.

"Informed by Sumon's uncle Shyam Sundar Banarjee about the abduction on Monday night, I took urgent initiative and arrested Kutub Uddin and Ashrafur Islam from Noapara where they were receiving ransom of Tk five lakh from Shyam Sundar on Wednesday," said Jhenidah Rab commander Ashrafur Islam.

"Following their confessional statement, we recovered Sumon's body from a room of a two-storied building owned by Nurul Islam at Arpara village in Kaliganj upazila town and arrested HSC examinee Sajedul Islam, 19, from Amjad Ali and Faizur Rahman Women's College centre.

A few days ago, Ashrafur and Sajedul rented the room at Nurul Islam's house, saying that they would appear at the HSC examinations from there, said house owner Nurul Islam.

After Sumon's abduction, Sajedul and Ashrafur left the room and continued appearing at the examinations staying at another place.

Rab on Wednesday recovered Sumon's body from the room that had been kept under lock and key for three days.

Jessore Science and Technology University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abdus Sattar demanded exemplary punishment of the killers of Sumon, a third-year student of marine and fisheries department of the university.

"Sumon's father died 12 years ago. Since then I had been looking after him. Sumon obtained GPA-5 in SSC and GPA-4.76 in HSC. I demand exemplary punishment to the killers," Sumon's uncle Shyam Sundar Banarjee said.

Sumon's mother Anita Banarjee, who was wailing over the gruesome killing of her only son, said, "After the death of Sumon's father 12 years ago, I underwent serious hardship to bring him up. My son did private tuition to bear expenses of