

# Contradictory

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investigation that Limon Hossain, son of the plaintiff, was injured in Rab firing...."

The SI submitted this report to a Jhalakathi court in connection with a case filed by Limon's mother, Henoara Begum, against Ibrahim Hawlader, once a Rab informant.

Shafiqul, however, cleared Ibrahim of the charge of threatening Limon and his family members and asking ransom from them on September 30 last year.

Contradicting the previous report, SI Md A Halim in his report on August 14 this year said he did not find any proof that Limon was shot by Rab personnel.

According to his findings, Limon is a member of criminal Morshed Jomaddar gang and was hit by a bullet fired by the members of the gang during a gunfight with Rab.

He placed this report in connection with the case filed by Limon's mother against six members of the elite force on charges of shooting her 16-year-old son on April 23 last year.

Asked to comment on the contradiction, Jhalakathi police superintendent Mazid Ali said he could not say as he did not have the reports in his hand.

On April 11 last year, Rab Director General Mokhlesur Rahman had told journalists that Limon was not a "notori-

ous criminal" and that he was a "victim of the shooting".

Murder or unnatural death?

In another development, The Daily Star has learnt that Ibrahim and his wife, Lily Begum, filed two cases over the death of Lily's brother Forkan Hawlader.

While Ibrahim in his case alleged that Forkan was beaten to death by Limon and his family members on August 20, Lily filed an unnatural death case.

Her case, filed with Rajapur Police Station, says Forkan was running to Idurbari Bridge area on hearing that Ibrahim had been "attacked" by Limon's family members.

Forkan fell sick on the way and doctors declared him dead after he was taken to a hospital, Lily's case statement adds.

A police investigation found that it was Ibrahim who along with his associates attacked Limon, his mother and brother on the day.

Defending himself, Ibrahim told this correspondent yesterday that his wife had only signed the statement prepared by the police.

It was unclear how Ibrahim died but locals told this paper that he might have died of heart attack.

Citing the port mortem report, police earlier said there was no injury marks on Ibrahim's body.

# 50 involved

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Bank and the audit firm," the ACC official said on condition of anonymity.

Yesterday, a six-member ACC probe body quizzed four more officials, all from the bank's GM office in Dhaka. So far 17 officers of the state-run commercial bank have been interrogated by the team as part of its ongoing investigation into the irregularity.

Of the four, Sabita Siraj is a general manager now on leave preparatory to retirement (LPR). She was a deputy general manager when the loan scam took place.

The rest are assistant general managers Golam Nabi Mallick and Ashraf Ali Patwari and senior executive officer Waheed Uddin Ahmed. In a late night development, the bank suspended the trio along with 14 others for their alleged involvement in the scandal.

ACC sources said like others who have been quizzed by the commission, the four too denied complicity.

During the questioning from 9:30am to 4:45pm at the ACC office in the capital's Segunbagicha, the four hinted that the loan arrangement was like an open secret.

It was also common knowledge that top officials of the institution were aware of the matter while the loan was in process.

They claimed that being lower-tier officials they had nothing to do with the incident when the high authorities did not take any measure.

One or two of the four said it was not possible for them to know whether Prime Minister's Health Adviser Modasser Ali played any role over the issue.

But they knew that the adviser used to visit the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch from where the loan was disbursed to Hallmark and five other business organisations.

The anti-graft body has

information that Modasser Ali allegedly influenced the Sonali Bank authorities to illegally provide the loan to Hallmark, The Daily Star reported on Thursday citing ACC sources.

The adviser denies the allegation.

Previously, a Bangladesh Bank investigation found that the Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch, based on forged documents, had lent Hallmark and five other companies Tk 3,547 crore between 2010 and May this year.

Of the Tk 3,547 crore, Hallmark alone took Tk 2,686.14 crore while T and Brothers received Tk 609.69 crore, Paragon Group Tk 146.60 crore, Nakshi Knit Tk 66.36 crore, DN Sports Tk 33.25 crore and Khanjahan Ali Tk 4.96 crore.

But the ACC official said the commission investigators had come to know some names which were not in the probe reports. Their not discharging duties properly helped these controversial business organisations get this loan.

They will be asked to appear before the ACC probe team.

The ACC sources said the four fictitious spinning mills of Hallmark Group opened accounts with Sonali Bank without due procedure. The group received a portion of the loan using these companies.

The officials linked to the opening of those accounts could be interrogated by the ACC team, the sources said.

Throughout next week, the ACC investigation team comprising deputy directors Mir Md Zainul Abedin Shebly, Akhter Hamid, assistant directors Nazmus Sadat and Moshirur Rahman and deputy assistant directors Mohammad Mojibur Rahman and Zainal Abedin will quiz other Sonali Bank officials.



Limon breaks down in tears after a team of eminent citizens and rights activists visits him at his home in Satoria, Rajapur in Jhalakathi yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# No confidence

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Police on August 14 submitted the report to the court, saying they had found no evidence and witnesses in the attempted murder case filed by Henoara.

She filed the case against six men of the Rapid Action Battalion with Rajapur Police Station on April 10 last year.

In the case statement, she said the accused, without verifying Limon's identity, shot him in the left leg on March 23 last year when he was bringing cattle back home after grazing them at Chhaturia village under Rajapur upazila of Jhalakathi.

Later, the injured leg had to be amputated to save him from the spread of infections.

The six accused in the case are Deputy Assistant Director of Crime Prevention Company-1 Lutfor Rahman, Corporal Majaharul Islam, Nayek Mokhtadir Hossain, Nayek Prahlad Chandra, soldier Kartik Kumar Biswas and

constable Abdul Aziz of Barisal Rab-8.

Jhalakathi Senior Judicial Magistrate Nusrat Jahan accepted the petition and asked Nazmul Alam, general registrar officer of Rajapur Police Station, to submit all documents related to the case by October 17 before the hearing on the petition.

Meanwhile, eminent citizens and rights activists along with local, political, social and cultural organisations formed a human chain in the morning before the Jhalakathi Press Club to mobilise support for 17-year-old college student Limon.

The victim and his mother Henoara also joined the programme organised by Human Rights Defenders Forum.

The government must ensure that law enforcers are subject to legal limits, the participants at the human chain said.

"When I lost my leg, I thought my wish to continue my studies would never

come true. But thanks to you all who supported me all along to come to this far," Limon said.

The assault on Limon is a symbol of widespread injustice prevailing in the country, said rights activist Khushi Kabir, adding, "Law enforcers' unjust attitude towards civilians must end."

"We demand swift justice for Limon. It should not take this long," Hamida Hossain, president of rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra, said.

Dhaka University Prof MM Akash said, "We don't want to be known as an uncivilised nation to the world with the justice being delayed."

The eminent citizens also went to Idurbari bridge in Satoria village where Limon's family recently came under attack by Rab informant Ibrahim. They called on Jhalakathi district Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Biswas and Superintendent of Police Mazid Ali separately.

# Shahriar Kabir

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On August 26, Shahriar, executive president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, gave his testimony and appealed to the tribunal to try the Jamaat-e-Islami and its associated bodies for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War along with Mojaheed.

Replying to the questions, Shahriar said he joined Dainik Bangla, which was run by a government trust, as an editorial assistant in April 1972 and later joined weekly Bichitra as an assistant editor.

The defence counsel questioned Shahriar whether he knew there was a political party named Islami Oikya Jote under the grand alliance and that Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury was its chairman.

Shahriar replied affirmatively. In response to another question, he said he knew Misbahur had claimed himself as a former member of Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

"When did you first meet Misbahur Rahman?" asked Mizanul.

Shahriar said he first met Misbahur in 2007 in an interview with him for a documentary titled "Juddhparadh '71" [War Crimes '71].

He added he had even interviewed Razakars, whom he never liked, for the sake of his documentary.

The documentary filmmaker said he had used Mojaheed's speech taken from television news footage.

"Did you ever try to contact Mojaheed for preparing the documentary?" asked Mizanul Islam.

"No Jamaat leaders have ever agreed to be interviewed by me since my job with Bichitra," replied Shahriar.

The cross-examination was held amid a jam-packed small courtroom in presence of Mojaheed and a good number of journalists. Most of the journalists had to remain standing due to lack of sitting arrangements.

"We are sorry we cannot offer you seats," said Justice ATM Fazle Kabir.

Meanwhile, the same tribunal yesterday recorded cross-examination of Musharraf Hossain Talukder, fifth prosecution witness in the war crimes case against another Jamaat leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman before adjourning proceedings until September 3.

On Wednesday, Musharraf, brother of a martyr, in his testimony said Kamaruzzaman and his accomplices killed his brother at Serih Bridge in Sherpur on August 23, 1971.

Meanwhile, newly appointed Justice Jahangir Hossain yesterday joined the International Crimes

Tribunal-1.

Chairman of the tribunal Justice Md Nizamul Huq welcomed the new member.

Later the tribunal-1 deferred the cross-examination of the 10th prosecution witness -- Nurul Absar -- in the case against BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury to September 2.

The tribunal deferred the proceeding following a petition by defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Heena. Heena sought time as he was not feeling well and fit for carrying out the cross-examination.

## 'Hitler'

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spent -- the logo, the hoarding, the business cards, the brand," Rajesh Shah told AFP. He put the total costs at about 150,000 rupees (\$2,700).

Shah insisted that until the store opened he did not know who Adolf Hitler was and that Hitler was a nickname given to the grandfather of his store partner because "he was very strict".

"I didn't know how much the name would disturb people," he told AFP by telephone from Ahmedabad. "It was only when the store opened I learnt Hitler had killed six million people."

Members of the tiny Jewish community in Ahmedabad condemned the store's name, while a senior Israeli diplomat said the embassy would raise the matter "in the strongest possible way."

"People use such names mostly out of ignorance," Israel's Mumbai Consul General Orna Sagiv told AFP.

Esther David, a prominent Indian writer in Ahmedabad who is Jewish, said she was "disturbed and distressed" by the shop, but added that some Indians used the word "Hitler" casually to describe autocratic people.

David said Jewish residents had sought to change Shah's mind about the store's name and told him about the Holocaust.

The row evoked memories of a controversy six years ago when a Mumbai restaurant owner called his cafe "Hitler's Cross" and put a swastika on the hoarding, claiming Hitler was a "catchy" name.

## Correction

In a news item headlined "16 Rohingya held at airport" on page 20 of The Daily Star on Thursday, the designation of Atiqur Rahman was inadvertently mentioned as senior assistant sub-inspector of Airport Armed Police Battalion.

In fact, Atiqur Rahman is the senior assistant superintendent of police at Airport Armed Police Battalion. We apologise for the unintentional error.

# 17 Sonali Bank

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Golam Nabi Malik and Ashraf Ali Patwari, senior executive officer Wahed Uddin Ahmed and deputy general manager of inspection and audit department Nessar Ahmed Chowdhury, executive officer Ekramul Mandal and branch inspector Kamrul Hossain Khan.

Earlier, Sonali Bank suspended three of its officials accused in the fraud. They are general manager of Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch AKM Azizur Rahman, assistant general manager Saiful Hasan and executive officer Abdul Matin.

General Manager Mir Mahidur Rahman is now working as an officer on special duty.

The bank also wrote a letter to the finance ministry to take action against deputy managing directors Atiqur Rahman and Mainul Haque and general manager Nanigopal Nath, said a bank official.

Of the accused, seven officials have already retired. They are general managers Sabita Shiraj, Nowsher Ali Khondker, Ali Hossain Khan, Md Musa and Mahbulul Huq, assistant general manager Shamim Akhter and senior executive officer Shahida Khanam.

Humayun Kabir, who was managing director at the time of the scam, has also retired.

The suspension came after Sonali Bank conducted an audit inspection into the embezzlement of Tk 3,547 crore by Hallmark Group and five other groups from the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch.

The audit report blamed 31 officials for the scam.

The Anti-Corruption Commission, which launched an inquiry into the fraud, would interrogate Humayun Kabir on Sunday, a competent source has said. TIB FOR PROBE Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday called for an investigation into the scam and demanded exemplary action against those behind it.

Expressing concern over the alleged fraud, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said such misappropriation of money in a state-owned bank reflected colossal deficiency

in the bank's management and auditing system.

Links of influential quarters to the scam also indicate corruption through exploitation of state power, he said in a statement.

"The conflicting stances of Bangladesh Bank and Finance Minister AMA Muhith are of grave concern. The questionable stance of the government will hinder transparency and accountability in the entire banking and financial sector," Iftekharuzzaman added.

## Chocolates

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least likely to have a stroke.

It follows on from other studies that have suggested eating chocolate can improve the health of the heart.

However, researchers and the Stroke Association warned the findings were not an excuse to overeat chocolate.

Everyone taking part in the study was asked about their eating habits and their health was monitored for a decade.

They were split into four groups based on the amount of chocolate, with the bottom group eating, on average, no chocolate each week and the top group having 63g - slightly more than an average bar.

Comparing the top and bottom groups showed those eating the most chocolate were 17pc less likely to have a stroke during the study, published in the journal Neurology.

One of the researchers, Prof Susanna Larsson, from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, said: "The beneficial effect of chocolate consumption on stroke may be related to the flavonoids in chocolate."

"Flavonoids appear to be protective against cardiovascular disease through antioxidant, anti-clotting and anti-inflammatory properties."

"It's also possible that flavonoids in chocolate may decrease blood concentrations of bad cholesterol and reduce blood pressure."

The study also noted that while dark chocolate had been linked to benefits for the heart in the past, milk chocolate was the preferred option in Sweden and in the study.

Dr Clare Walton, from the Stroke Association, said: "Past research has shown that eating dark chocolate might go some way to reducing your stroke risk if it is eaten as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

# Hallmark thrived

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manager of the branch for 2004-08, gave Tanvir, his associates and a cooperative society of Agargaon over Tk 5 crore loans without the required documents. More than half the amount is now shown as irrecoverable in the bank document.

In addition to money came ideas for Tanvir, the Hallmark managing director. Khairul also provided him with a ladder -- AKM Azizur Rahman, head of the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch -- to go up. Azizur and Khairul are friends and studied at Jahangirnagar University, sources close to the duo said.

Using the ladder, Tanvir secured Tk 2,686 crore in loan from the hotel branch between 2010 and May this year.

A Sonali Bank investigation found Khairul's involvement in various irregularities and gave a report recommending action against him early last year. But that could not stop him. He not only escaped punishment but also managed to get promoted to assistant general manager in March the same year. He is now posted in the bank's Munshiganj principal office.

The Hallmark MD paid off nearly Tk 2 crore loans against his name in 2009, but the rest of the amount taken against false documents remains unpaid.

"Loans worth more than Tk 3 crore disbursed by Khairul Alam have become classified [irrecoverable]. We found many addresses of the borrowers fake. They do not exist," said an official of the Agargaon branch.

Tanvir started business in 1996 with a small packaging industry at the capital's Taltola where he is from. After he met Khairul in 2004 in Agargaon branch, getting bank loans seemed simple. There was one problem, though -- the branch could not give a loan bigger than Tk 2 crore.



Tanvir Mahmud

In early 2010, however, Khairul took Tanvir to his friend at the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch.

"Khairul Alam introduced Tanvir Mahmud to Azizur Rahman as the Agargaon branch cannot issue big loans," said a senior official who was involved in investigating the anomalies.

Fortune favoured Tanvir, again. Here, he met a female officer who happened to be a relative of Syed Modasser Ali, adviser to the prime minister. Also, the branch manager and the adviser came from the same district, Gopalganj.

"Tanvir was clever enough to utilise the advantage he got in the branch," said a senior official of the bank.

"Suddenly in 2010 we started hearing that the prime minister's adviser is a relative of Azizur Rahman [manager of the Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch]. But in reality, a female officer is the adviser's relative," the official added, preferring anonymity.

Later, a Bangladesh Bank investigation found that Hallmark and five other companies had embezzled Tk 3,547 crore from the Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch through submitting false documents. Of the amount, Hallmark took Tk 2,686 crore.

Asked about it, Tanvir Mahmud rejected the allegations in the probe report. "I am ready to pay back the loan, but I need time," he said.

According to him, Hallmark Group exported garment items worth \$30 million in 2011-12.

# Khaleda

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organised the programme on the occasion of its 32nd founding anniversary.

The BNP chief said, "No election will be allowed to be held under the present government, and they [govt] will be forced to reinstate the caretaker system."

"We will keep pressing for a non-party neutral government no matter how many times they [govt] speak of holding the election under a political government."

Khaleda termed the present government "weak" and said this was why, the ruling party wanted to hold the election while still in power. "The government has established a one-party rule in the name of democracy."

Explaining the reason for backtracking from declaring tougher anti-government programmes, the former prime minister said they wanted to assume power through a peaceful and credible election instead of creating chaos, what the Awami League had done in 2006.

She censured the government for its absolute failure in running the country and stated that people were now being killed in their houses and disappeared when out.

Khaleda alleged that the ruling party activists had hurled bombs inside the Secretariat and set fire to a bus on the day the opposition observed hartal as part of a conspiracy to throw the opposition leaders in jail and foil the movement.

"But such conspiracy will not bring any good. BNP is now a strong and popular political party. We will counter the government in a befitting manner," she said urging her party leaders and activists to be prepared for the upcoming anti-government movement.

Khaleda further said the government was smearing the Zia family with corruption allegations, while in fact the Awami League chief [Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina] and her family and cabinet members and the ruling party leaders were corrupt.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, LDP president Oki Ahmad, among others, spoke at the discussion. Habib-un-Nabi Sohel, president of the organisation, chaired the programme.

# WB still silent

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arrangement for the bridge project, there would be no scope for the ADB and Jica to stay on the project.

The official said since discussions were going on with the World Bank, the government had asked the ADB and Jica to extend the deadline in the hope that the dispute would be resolved.

The official said the World Bank did not entertain the government's request to allow the Prime Minister's Adviser Mashur Rahman to stay in office until the primary investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) into the graft allegations against him was complete.

The World Bank integrity vice presidency maintains that those who have been accused of corruption must go on leave during investigation.

Official sources said taking into account the opinion of the integrity vice presidency of the World Bank was important for the revival of the Padma bridge financing after its cancellation on June 29 on corruption allegations.

Without Mashur Rahman's resignation or going on leave, the World Bank financing of the Padma bridge project was not possible, said a high official of the finance ministry, requesting anonymity.

There was no development regarding Mashur's resignation or going on leave until yesterday, said an official at the Prime Minister's Office.

However, Juan Miranda, ADB Director General for South Asia, responded very positively about the financing of the project.

Before extending the deadline last night, he said, "The ADB is as of today [Thursday] and as of tomorrow co-financier of this project."

He was speaking to journalists after a meeting with Finance Minister AMA Muhith at the latter's secretariat office yesterday.

Miranda said, "This bridge will be built...that's what I have to tell you...I am confident that this bridge will be built."

The ADB official also said, "The words I want in your headlines is 'This bridge will be built'."

When The Daily Star asked Finance Minister AMA Muhith whether he had received any final message from the World Bank, he said, "I will not comment on this now."

Emerging from the purchase committee meeting, Muhith said the discussion on the Padma bridge was at a delicate stage.

Muhith said he would talk when the time was right.

On the statement made by the ADB director general for South Asia, the finance minister said he was very happy over the second part of his statement (that the bridge would be built).

He said the World Bank, the ADB and Jica were together regarding the financing of the Padma bridge project. The complexity has to be resolved now. Negotiations were going on.

Another source said the World Bank, the ADB and Jica held a meeting at a Gulshan hotel yesterday on the Padma bridge issue. The ADB director general, who is visiting Dhaka, was present at the meeting.

# South Korea

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employment in South Korea, Mohammed Shamsul Alam, chief administrative officer of the Korean HRD in the capital, told The Daily Star.

"Employers often found Bangladeshi workers unable to communicate properly, which prompted Korean authorities to introduce a spoken language test," he added.

A list of successful candidates along with video clips of their language tests will be uploaded to a certain website so that employers can evaluate their competence online, he noted.

Choon-Bok Lee, vice president of the Korean HRD, said Bangladesh had a quota of sending 4,400 workers to South Korea last year, but only 1,768 qualified for jobs.

# Hasina meets

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economic meltdown," she said.

Earlier, the prime minister met Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa at the same venue.

During the meeting, Hasina underscored the need for direct air and shipping links with Sri Lanka to promote trade and business between the two countries.