



## 5-MINUTE HORROR

## Of the murderers

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While recalling the Sunday's attack inside the clinic at Johnson Road in Old Dhaka, the boy reacted abnormally. He said he could not sleep that night as the sickening scenes of the attack kept coming back before his mind's eyes.

"I was so scared that I hid in another room when they hacked Bishwajit with machetes and other sharp weapons," Saiful, who works at the clinic, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Wailing and grieving parents and relatives of Bishwajit in the meantime cremated him at Naria in Shariatpur on Sunday.

Among the group of 10-12 attackers, The Daily Star has managed to identify five BCL activists who directly took part in the murder. They are all students of Jagannath University (JnU) and are activists of the university's Chhatra League unit, according to their political peers, general students and eyewitnesses who know them.

But the killing of Bishwajit was not the first crime that the five have been involved with. In the past, they committed other crimes as well, including assaulting a female teacher and stalking

## Emdadul

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BCL faction led by the JnU unit President FM Shariful Islam. Emdadul directly took part in campus violence over establishing domination and extortion, sources said.

## Mahfuzur

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iron rods. Ever since his admission to the university in 2008-09 session, he has been involved in many internal clashes on the campus, his friends said.

In 2009, Mahfuz and some of his friends were injured in clashes between two factions of the university's BCL unit over establishing supremacy on the campus.

He was also among the 25 BCL men who were injured in another factional clash the same year.

Campus sources said Mahfuz worked for the Sirajul Islam group.

Earlier, he was involved with another group led by Kamrul Hasan Ripon, former president of the BCL unit.

Mahfuz took part in most of the clashes between Kamrul Hasan group and the group led by Kazi Abu Sayeed, former general secretary of the campus BCL, sources said. He and his peers were also involved in extortion.

female students of the university.

But thanks to their link with the ruling Awami League, police never took any action against them.

Police on Sunday night filed a case against 15-16 unnamed people in connection with the killing, but none was arrested as of last night.

## Noore Alam

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the first floor of the building. "A group of Chhatra League activists chased Bishwajit on the road and started hitting him again when he frantically tried to escape the attack," a witness told this correspondent.

Photographs published in newspapers show that Noore Alam was among the assailants.

Campus sources say he is a cadre of Sirajul Islam group.

Noore Alam was involved in BCL factional clashes at the JnU since the student organisation established its supremacy on the campus in 2009. His offences are evident in newspaper clippings compiled by the university authorities.

## Obhidul

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the unit. Photographs taken by photojournalists on Sunday show that Obhidul hacked Bishwajit in the head, back and hand.

In the last few years, he had been involved in various criminal activities, including extortion, mugging, stalking girls and taking drugs in and around the university, sources said.

## Rafiqul

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taken by the media show Rafiqul, also known as Shakil, hacking the victim in the hand and other parts of the body.

He took part in most of the criminal activities on the campus since the AL came to power in 2009, a number of JnU students and journalists told The Daily Star.

Rafiqul was temporarily expelled from the university for insulting a female teacher in 2009, says a journalist who is the JnU correspondent of a national daily.

In the same year, the BCL expelled him for his involvement in various criminal activities, including stalking girls on the campus.

Newspaper clippings also bear evidence of his involvement in various criminal activities.

"He is known as a notorious and merciless boy on the campus. He leads from the front whenever any clash takes place in our university," a close friend of Rafiqul said, requesting anonymity.

In less than 40 minutes, a young life was cut short. Bishwajit Das, barely 24, was murdered by some Chhatra League brutes that mercilessly beat him, taking him for a blockade supporter. Around 9:00am on Sunday. Johnson Road, Old Dhaka. An explosion was heard. Chased by some unruly activists of BCL, Bishwajit ran for life and scurried onto the second floor of a nearby building. But his murderers hunted him down as he was trying to take shelter in a dental clinic on the floor. For about five minutes, they beat and hacked him indiscriminately as they dragged him down to the streets. Some of them continued pounding him even as he tried to escape. In a desperate attempt, Bishwajit did manage to free himself from his attackers and cross the road, but collapsed around 9:10am. Some pedestrians then put him on a rickshaw that took him to Mitford Hospital in about 10 minutes. He gasped for air in the hospital for 15-17 minutes. Then silence. And as a precious life met an untimely end, hundreds of curious onlookers watched it as silent observers.

PHOTO: STAR

## Protect people

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by a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists, who took him for a pro-blockade activist.

The NHRC chief said "Whatever may be the reason or excuse, taking law into own hands for killing people cannot be supported at all in a civilised society and in the human rights point of view."

He was speaking at a discussion organised by NHRC at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre marking the International Human Rights Day, 2012.

Mizanur said "We have to rethink the politics for which a 24-year old dies and whether it is for people's welfare or not."

"If the politicians love their country, its people, and the independence, we would like to appeal them not to do politics that puts people's life in peril."

The NHRC has so far received 586 complaints in the current year and solved 356 complaints, he said, adding that the number of complaints has risen by 300 percent in the last two and a half years.

"It probably indicates something. Possibly, we have been able to create a space, a sense of expectation from this commission," he

told his audience.

Cabinet Secretary M Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, who was present at the discussion, said active participation of other stakeholders including lawmakers, civil society members, the media and non-government organisations is needed for raising awareness about human rights.

UNDP Country Director Stefan Priesner said there is much to be done to improve human rights situation in Bangladesh with participation of vulnerable groups.

Danish Ambassador Svend Olling, NHRC full-time member Kazi Reazul Hoque, among others, spoke at the occasion.

At another discussion programme in Chittagong, speakers observed that it would be possible to ensure human rights for everybody if all people including the deprived ones raise their voice collectively.

NHRC in association with the UNDP, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, DANIDA and Sweden, district administration and a local NGO organised the discussion at Chittagong Shilpakala Academy.

The theme of this year's International Human Rights Day is "Inclusion and right to participate in public life".

## Army arrest powers

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Morsi ordered the military to maintain security "up to the announcement of the results from the referendum", AFP news agency reports.

The BBC's Jon Leyne in Cairo says the step will raise fears that Egypt is moving back towards military rule.

Under the new presidential decree, the military is asked to co-ordinate with the police on maintaining security and is also entitled to arrest civilians.

The police have been seen as weakened since the fall of former President Hosni Mubarak and failed to intervene when anti-Muslim Brotherhood protesters ransacked the Islamist movement's Cairo headquarters last week, correspondents say.

An increased military presence was visible yesterday close to the presidential palace, which has been the focus of opposition demonstrations. The army has sealed off the area with concrete blocks.

It is not yet clear whether the opposition will boycott Saturday's referendum. However, a group of senior judges announced on Monday that they would be prepared to oversee the vote,

on certain conditions.

Votes in Egypt are traditionally supervised by the judiciary but the 22 November presidential decree led thousands of judges to go on strike.

Now, with the decree rescinded, the State Council Judges' Club has agreed to oversee the vote as long as pro-Morsi supporters call a halt to a sit-in outside Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court.

The court suspended work on December 2, citing "psychological pressure" from Islamists who had prevented a meeting on a draft of the new constitution. The protesters had wanted to block a ruling on the legality of the document. "Division and sedition"

The opposition argues that the constitution was drafted by an assembly dominated by Mohammed Morsi's Islamist allies.

In a statement after talks on Sunday, the opposition National Salvation Front said it would not recognise the draft constitution "because it does not represent the Egyptian people".

"We reject the referendum which will certainly lead to more division and sedition," spokesman Sameh Ashour said.

## Fakhrul arrested

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by the opposition alliance.

Cases have also been filed in many other districts including Chapainawabganj, Bogra, Madaripur, Jhenidah, Chandpur, Tangail and Narayanganj. More than 3,000 opposition leaders and activists were made accused in the cases.

Due to the hartal, today's all examinations under National University and the ongoing school final examinations across the country have been postponed.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night demanded immediate release of her party's acting secretary general.

In a statement she said, "He [Fakhrul] was arrested just before his meeting with US foreign ministry official Robert Blake. I am strongly protesting and condemning this heinous act of the government."

She urged people to be vocal to realise their rights and protest the government's misdeeds in this month of victory. "The victory of people is inevitable and so close," added Khaleda.

She also urged the government not to push the country towards chaos.

The opposition alliance also postponed its yesterday's scheduled protest rally as it did not get permission from the law enforcement authorities.

After the arrest of Fakhrul, BNP joint secretaries general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi and Aman Ullah Aman in an emergency press briefing warned the government of non-stop hartal if the party's acting secretary general is not released without further delay.

During the present government's tenure, Fakhrul was first sent to jail on May 15 this year in an arson case.

Meanwhile, BNP-Jamaat activists yesterday vandalised two buses and set fire to 15 vehicles, mostly buses, in the capital. Of them three were set ablaze in Mirpur, four in Uttara, two in Agargaon, one each in Farmgate, Old Dhaka, Panthapath, Khilgaon, Sabujbagh and in front of Dhaka City Corporation (south) building in Phulbaria, said officials of the police and fire departments.

Two more buses were set on fire in Shib Bari bus stand and Gazipur while four buses were reported to be set ablaze in Lalmonirhat district.

Police said a group of youths vandalised two buses in Bijoynagar area around 3:15pm. The attackers fled as soon as a police patrol team reached the spot.

Opposition supporters set a microbus on fire at Khilgaon intersection in the capital around 6:15pm while a bus in front of Mirpur Bangla College around 6:25pm. In both the incidents, locals doused the fire.

No one has been reported arrested or injured in the violence.

Two cocktails were also exploded yesterday afternoon in front of the BNP party office in Nayapalton.

BNP men brought out protest processions in the capital and in many districts, including Kushtia, Barisal and Mymensingh, soon after the news of Fakhrul's arrest had spread.

A few hours before his arrest, Mirza Fakhrul told reporters that since assuming the office, the government had been filing cases against the opposition men to subdue the movement. "But it [govt] will fail and have to abide by the demand of restoring the caretaker government system," he added.

Fakhrul said they would bring out processions in every area of the capital instead of rallies. He also urged people to make today's hartal successful.

Party leaders said Fakhrul had visited injured BNP leaders in different hospitals yesterday morning and then had gone to the party office.

Witnesses said at around 6:00pm when Fakhrul had come down to the ground floor to leave for the party chairperson's Gulshan office, law enforcers cordoned him. Plainclothes police and detectives took him on a microbus, the witnesses added.

Later, he was taken to the Detective Branch office on Mintoo Road.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has admitted to arresting the BNP acting secretary general. The Public Relation Department of DMP informed the media about it through mobile SMS (short message service).

Asked about the arrestees, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Motijheel zone Mehedi Hasan said they had picked up some people as they were trying to hold a rally without permission. "Besides, cocktails were exploded which was one of the reasons for the arrests," he told reporters in front of the BNP office.

On Sunday night, a city corporation employee, Aynal, filed a case with Paltan Police Station against Mirza Fakhrul, BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi and 200 to 250 unnamed BNP men in connection with vandalising a vehicle of the city corporation during the road blockade.

ade.

The countrywide road blockade left two persons dead and witnessed fierce clashes, arson and vandalism.

The main opposition BNP on Sunday, after the blockade had ended, declared the hartal for today and the protest programme for yesterday.

According to the announcement, BNP started preparing for holding the protest rally since yesterday morning but was obstructed by police. The law enforcers seized their loud speakers and took position in front of the BNP office.

Our Munshiganj correspondent reports, the district will remain out of the purview of today's hartal, as on this day in 1971 the region was liberated from the then Pakistani occupation army. BNP district unit president made the announcement last night.

**BLAKE CONCERNED** US foreign ministry official Robert Blake yesterday expressed concern over the arrest of Mirza Fakhrul at a meeting with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in her house last night.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena, Khaleda's advisers Riaz Rahman and Sabihuddin Ahmed, and BNP Vice-Chairman Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury were also present in the meeting.

Shamsheer Chowdhury said Blake wanted to know about the reason behind Fakhrul's arrest and that BNP had given its version of the answer.

"The US believes that the next general election can be held through dialogues among all the political parties," he said quoting Blake assaying.

In response, Khaleda said the government lacked the sincerity.

## Rejoinder

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Minister only twice, not 'regularly' as has been reported. The Hon'ble Former Minister in his written statement also states twice," he said in the rejoinder.

"Beyond these there were no other intervention and I totally reject any suggestion of wrongdoing of material or metaphysical nature. Lobbying or anything remotely close to it is inaccurate and misleading.

"I have no clue whatsoever beyond reading in the paper about my name appearing in a certain diary," he said.

**OUR REPLY**

Our news item was based on the ACC's enquiry report. We stand by our report.

## Journos

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The announcement was made at a gathering of journalists yesterday at the press club. Sobhan said their next programme will be declared on that day.

Sagar, news editor at the private TV station Maasranga and his wife Runi, senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11 at their apartment in the capital's West Rajabazar.

On October 9, the home minister named seven suspects in the brutal murder of the journalist couple.

"As four of the arrestees are professional killers, we want to know who hired them and what their motive was," Iqbal Sobhan said.

Ruhul Amin Gazi, president of another faction of BFUJ, said no journalist will be safe if the killers of Sagar-Runi are not punished.

"You cannot escape by trying another Joj Miah ploy," Gazi said, indirectly referring to the home minister.

Members from journalists' organisations including BFUJ, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), Jatiya Press Club and Dhaka Reporters Unity participated in the rally.

## Fog disrupts

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fog, said sources in the port's radio control room.

A total of 40 launches usually report at Sadarghat launch terminal in Dhaka by 8:30am daily. But only six reported till 12:30pm yesterday, Arif Uddin, deputy secretary of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), told The Daily Star.

The thick fog halted ferry services on the Mawa-Kawrakandi route for 11 hours and on the Paturia-Daulatdia route for 12 hours, leaving around 900 vehicles and thousands of commuters stranded on the river banks.

The ferry services resumed around 10:00am as the fog gradually cleared with the morning sunshine, said Sirajul Islam, manager of the BIWTA Mawa office in Munshiganj.

Ferry services on the southern routes like Barisal-Bhola, Barisal-Kuakata also remained suspended for about 12 hours till yesterday morning.

Sources at the Chittagong railway station said all the trains left the station on time. But they reached the destinations much later than scheduled as they had to run slowly due to the fog.

(Our correspondents from Chittagong, Barisal and Munshiganj contributed to this report.)