

# Key accused, 2 aides held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushia

Police on Wednesday night arrested the main accused in the acid throwing incident on newly wed Kakoli Khatun in Khoksa upazila along with his two accomplices from different places of the upazila here.

Hafizul Islam, 20, son of Habibur Rahman of Nischiyantabaria village of the upazila, is the prime accused behind the attack.

The two other arrestees are Rajib Biswas, 22, son of Jalal Biswas of Shomospur village, and Jewel Hossain, 23, son of Shahjahan Ali of Padmabila village of the same upazila.

Sohel Reza, additional police superintendent of Kushtia, said a police team from Khoksa Police Station nabbed the three from different places of Khoksa on Wednesday night.

Police yesterday produced the trio before Kushtia Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, seeking for each of them a seven-day remand. The court granted a three-day remand for each of the arrestees, to begin immediately.

On the night of September 14, Hafizul threw acid on Kakoli, wife of Panju Mia of Boriochara

village in the same upazila, through a window of their bedroom when Kakoli along with her husband was taking preparations to sleep at her in-laws' house at about 10:30pm.

Kakoli sustained severe burn injuries on the left side of her face and left hand. Panju also received burn injuries on his left hand in the attack.

The housewife is now undergoing treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The following day, Kakoli's father Kamrul Islam, an inhabitant of Nischiyantabaria village, filed a case against the trio with Khoksa Police Station in this connection.

In the case statement, Kamrul said Kakoli was a class seven student of Shomospur High School. Hafiz used to disturb Kakoli on her way to school.

At one stage, Hafiz proposed marriage to Kakoli, but she rejected his proposal. Infuriated, Hafiz threatened to change the girl's face by throwing acid on, the statement added.

Kakoli had narrowly escaped acid attacks by Hafiz three times.

The three had been evading arrest since the incident.

# Two killed, 3 drivers burnt

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Lying on a hospital bed, bus driver Nazrul Islam Bhuiyan, 35, told The Daily Star that he repeatedly begged for mercy from the Jamaat-Shibir men, saying he was the lone breadwinner of his four-member family.

"I begged them not to set fire to the bus. But nothing could pacify the pickets, who got into the vehicle in the guise of passengers. They poured flammable objects on me and set me alight with a match stick when the bus reached Bogra bypass area in Gazipur around 8:15am," he said.

He then desperately tried to get out of the bus. But the pickets prevented him, shouting, "How dare you drive a bus during Jamaat's hartal," said Nazrul, who had suffered burns to 60 percent of his body.

"At one stage, I managed to jump into a roadside water body and douse the flame," he said.

Another victim, Shamsul Islam, 55, a truck driver, was in a very critical condition, as he had suffered burns on 95 percent of his body.

"A group of 15-20 pro-hartal pickets stopped the truck in Sherpur area

of Bogra while it was travelling from Sirajganj to Panchagarh, carrying 700 bags of fertiliser. They suddenly threw a petrol bomb at the truck," said Shamsul's wife Sabina Yasmin, quoting the truck's helper Md Shahin.

Talking to The Daily Star over the phone, Shahin said, "The pickets stopped our truck around 10:00pm on Wednesday. The driver begged them for mercy. But they ignored his appeal, and started vandalising the truck. At one stage, they threw a petrol bomb targeting us."

Shahin is receiving treatment at the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College in Bogra.

Jamaat-Shibir men also set fire to a truck at Choudagram in Comilla around 9:30pm on Wednesday, leaving its driver Sekandar Bepari, 42, critically wounded.

The truck was carrying electrical goods to Chittagong from Dhaka.

"Fifty-two percent of his body, including the face and chest, had been burnt," said a doctor at the DMCH.

Meanwhile, a Jamaat man was killed, as Jamaat-Shibir men clashed with law enforcers at Gourinagar in

Meherpur.

At least 45 people, including five policemen, were injured in the three-hour clash.

Police fired shots, rubber bullets and tear-gas canisters to disperse the unruly Jamaat-Shibir men, who exploded at least 50 crude bombs in retaliation.

Robiul Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mujibnagar Police Station, said activists of the Jamaat and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir tried to block the Meherpur-Mujibnagar road in Gourinagar area with logs around 7:30am.

When law enforcers resisted the pro-hartal pickets, they swooped on police with lethal weapons and sticks, said Robiul.

At one stage, Jamaat men caught Sub-Inspector Abdul Mannan and hacked away at him with sharp weapons. Four more policemen were injured, as they tried to rescue their colleague.

Mannan was whisked off to the capital for better treatment, as his condition deteriorated.

The local administration later called in Border Guard Bangladesh to bring the situation under control.

# Foreign office

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point in Phulbari upazila of Kurigram on January 7, 2011.

Ministry officials said they had no information about the visa applications of the rights activists. Even Foreign Minister Dipu Moni could not provide any information on the issue.

The ministry has sought information regarding the matter, the minister told a press conference yesterday. "Upon receiving any information from the mission concerned, we will share that with you [media]," she added.

Regarding the murder case of Felani, the minister said they have been assured of justice by the Indian authorities and were hopeful as the

case was being reviewed rejecting the verdict by a special court in the Indian state of West Bengal.

About charging former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury in the Padma bridge bribery case by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Dipu Moni said the government has sought information from the Bangladesh mission concerned regarding the issue.

Despite repeated efforts, The Daily Star could not reach Abida Islam, Bangladesh deputy high commissioner in Kolkata, over the phone for her version on the denial of visas to the Indian rights activists.

# Charges against

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days. "No adjournment will be allowed on October 2," he added.

One of the charges reads: On May 12, 1971, the Pakistani army and its local collaborators, under the leadership of Subhan, had killed about 300 to 400 people at several villages in Satbaria union under Pabna's Sujanagar Police Station.

After probing the charges against Subhan for about 17 months, the investigation agency of the tribunal had submitted its final

probe report to the prosecution on September 12.

Two days later, the prosecution submitted the formal charges to the tribunal.

Arrested on September 20 last year, Subhan has been behind bars since then.

Son of Sheikh Naimuddin and Nurani Begum of Tailakundi village in Sujanagar upazila of Pabna, Subhan was the founder ameer of Jamaat in Pabna and a Majlish-e-Sura member of the party's central unit during the undivided Pakistan period.

# CEC denies talks

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During the meeting, Moyeen arranged a telephone conversation between the CEC and Khaleda.

"He (Moyeen) is known to me from my university days. We mainly discussed different social issues, quality of education of students, and their foreign scholarships. There was very little discussion about politics between us," he said.

Urging reporters to present objective news, the CEC said, "I request you all (reporters) not to misguide the people by presenting baseless reports."

Besides, a commission's statement signed by the EC's director (PR) said such kinds of imaginary and false news reports might create confusion among the people when the EC was preparing for holding a free, fair and credible election.

Meanwhile, the CEC informed that the EC would start distributing National Identity (NID) cards in Dhaka on September 25.

He said the distribution of the NID cards at other districts would take place in phases.

Replying to reporters' query, he said the commission had the authority to transfer any officials related to election during poll-time as per the cabinet-approved Representation of the People Order (RPO).

Party council  
The EC will send letters to all 39 registered political parties asking informa-

tion about the status of regular council of the parties, and their central committees formed at the latest.

Letters would be issued within next one or two working days, said an official of the commission.

"We will keep pressure on the parties which do not hold their councils on regular basis," he added.

Meanwhile, BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi came down hard on Election Commissioner (EC) Zabeed Ali at a press briefing at the party's central office in the capital's Nayapaltan yesterday.

Rizvi said the commissioner had made an indecent "gesture" while giving his reaction against the comments of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. Khaleda earlier commented that the current EC was spineless.

Being asked by reporters at the EC Secretariat on Wednesday regarding Khaleda's remarks on them, Zabeed Ali stood up from his chair and said, "See, I am 63-year old. As per medical reports, I have neither any disease nor any pain of the spine. I think the spines of the others (CEC and four ECs) are also straight."

Rizvi said, "Through this gesture, the commissioner, who is holding a constitutional post, has not only breached its neutrality but also set a bad example in the history of the EC."

He also claimed that the voter list prepared by the EC was faulty.

# Weekend traffic

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Bangladesh Truck and Covered Van Drivers' Union, said they had weighed pressure on the government because extortion, looting and hijacking of vehicles took place during nights.

Opposing the idea, experts said considering Friday and Saturday as weekend was wrong, as most academic institutions and private sectors enjoy holiday only on Fridays.

Prof Shamsul Haque, former director of Accident Research Institute (ARI) at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said the capital had only around 8 percent roads, of which only 2.5

percent was accessible to all types of vehicles.

But as per the international standard, a city must have roads occupying 25 percent of its total area and all vehicles should have access to those.

If trucks share this 2.5 percent roads, traffic movement in the capital would be seriously affected, said Prof Haque, adding, "It would not be right to allow trucks during daytime until the road facility is increased."

He pointed out that the trucks would block roads during loading and unloading of goods while passing through the capital.

Besides, large vehicles like trucks are often driven

recklessly. So, it would be fatal to allow them in the densely populated city, observed Prof Haque.

According to an ARI report on road accidents between 1998 and 2010, 45.1 percent of the accidents were caused by heavy vehicles like trucks.

Asked whether Dhaka Metropolitan Police with its infrastructure and manpower would be able to handle trucks during daytime, DMP Joint Commissioner Mir Rezaul Alam said the DMP commissioner was supposed to hold a meeting with transport leaders soon.

"I will raise every issue in the meeting before any decision is made," he said.

delivered the welcome address, while PM's Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, among others, attended the function.

The 99 Composite Brigade, comprised of two infantry units and one engineering construction battalion, started its journey yesterday to monitor the implementation of the Padma bridge project and maintain its security.

# Govt victim

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Shapla Chattar on May 5. If such a large number of bullets were fired in one place, how did the establishments in the area remain undamaged?" she said.

"The cadres of BNP, Jamaat and Hefajat-e-Islam burnt several hundred copies of holy Quran. I don't know how they will do politics in the name of Islam and how they will protect Islam by

burning the Quran."

Hasina added, "Before the election of 1996, it was said that Azan would not be heard if the Awami League was voted to power. Afterwards, we were in power for five years. It is the Awami League government which carried out massive development of madrasas and mosques in Bangladesh during that span of time."

Army chief General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan

# Khaleda replies

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two top leaders to hold a constructive dialogue without wasting any more time to decide on an election-time government.

"In her letter, the BNP chairperson wrote that people of Bangladesh, like the world leaders, are concerned over holding of the next elec-

tion," BNP leader Shamsher M Chowdhury said.

"She also wrote in the letter that only a meaningful dialogue can resolve the ongoing crisis and holding of the dialogue depends of the goodwill of the government," added Shamsher, also a former foreign secretary.

Kerry's proposal came two

weeks after the UN chief's phone calls urging Hasina and Khaleda to resolve the crisis through talks.

"The US along with the international community is concerned about the political situation in Bangladesh," Kerry said in his letters received by the two leaders on Sunday.

# Mali president inaugurated

AFP, Bamako

Leaders from across Africa and France arrived in Mali yesterday for the inauguration of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in front of thousands of supporters as the nation entered a new era of democracy after months of political chaos.

Idriss Deby of Chad, the Ivory Coast's Alassane Ouattara and Moroccan king Mohammed VI were prominent guests among 26 heads of state invited to welcome Mali's new leader, elected by a landslide on August 11, and enjoy military parades and

cultural displays.

But French President Francois Hollande was expected to take centre stage at the 55,000-seat March 26 Stadium in the capital Bamako, with the ceremony drawing a line under military action launched by Paris in January to oust armed Islamists from northern Mali.

Hollande was due to deliver a speech inviting Malians to "turn a new page after a difficult period that put the country on the edge of the abyss", aides said.

"A new page is opening, it is for the Malians to write

and France will be at their side," he was expected to say.

The ceremony was to start with Hollande and Keita standing before the Malian flag for the national anthem around 11:00 am (1100 GMT) but the programme was running behind schedule.

Keita pledged to unite Mali and end endemic corruption as he was sworn in on September 4 to lead the deeply-divided west African nation's emergence from months of political crisis sparked by a military coup in March last year.

# Hasina-Manmohan

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sideline of the UNGA to make Hasina understand that India's ruling Congress had sincere intention to complete the deals.

But it had failed because of India's internal political compulsions.

Officials at the Indian external affairs ministry and Bangladesh foreign ministry are coordinating with each other to finalise the agenda of the meeting.

Diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi said it would be a customary meeting between the two as both the governments are going to complete their tenure.

So there is no possibility of getting any significant outcome from this bilateral meeting, they added.

Amid opposition from the BJP, Trinamul

Congress and the Asom Gana Parishad, the ruling Congress could not table in parliament the constitutional amendment bill, which was required to ratify the long pending land boundary agreement.

Meanwhile, foreign ministry sources said the premier would lead a huge delegation to the UNGA. Hasina is also expected to deliver her speech at the UNGA on September 27 or in the morning of September 28.

Bangladesh has already sought to hold sideline meetings with the heads of state and government of a number of countries, including Myanmar, officials said.

Hasina also sought an appointment with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to apprise him of her government's position on the next general elections.

# Abul Hasan's

FROM PAGE 1  
The Royal Canadian Mounted Police on Wednesday brought bribery charges under Canada's Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act against ex-state minister Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Canadian Kevin Wallace, former senior vice-president of SNC-Lavalin International Inc (SLI), a division based in Oakville, Ont, which has recently been disbanded.

Also charged is Zulfikar Ali Bhuiyan, a Canadian citizen having business ties with Bangladesh.

"Though we did not mention him [Abul Hasan Chowdhury] as an accused in the Padma bridge graft allegation case, his name was included as a suspect in the case," ACC Chairman Mohammad Badiuzzaman told reporters after addressing a meeting in Rangpur city, reported our Rangpur correspondent.

Two lower-level SNC-Lavalin employees, Mohammad Ismail and Ramesh Shah, have already been facing trial in Toronto on similar allegations that they conspired to pay bribes to help SNC-Lavalin win a supervising contract worth \$50 million in the Padma Bridge mega project.

The ACC chief also said that while filing the graft

allegation case in December last year, the investigation officers did not have sufficient evidence to accuse former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hasan and former communications minister Syed Abul Hossain.

"The case investigation is still going on, and if we find substantial evidence against the duo, they will be accused" he added.

Regarding the accusation by Canadian police, former state minister Abul Hasan told reporters yesterday that he was yet to get the news officially.

He also said a Canadian broadcasting corporation had asked him about the matter and he told it that he was surprised by the Canadian move. He had introduced SNC Lavalin men to the former communications minister but with no bad intention, Abul Hasan said.

Meanwhile, Finance minister AMA Muhiith expressed satisfaction with the probe findings of the Canadian police.

"I am satisfied with the findings since the Canadian company's former senior official Kevin has been charged," the minister told newsmen while visiting the development works of Sylhet divisional stadium yesterday afternoon.

# Criminals stab Gonojagoron

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Gonojagoron Mancha activist of Moulvibazar was hacked by unidentified criminals last night.

Liton Devnath, 28, also former Samajtantrik Chhatra Front president of Moulvibazar Government College, came under attack while waiting on the street for an auto rickshaw to return home.

"Four masked men in two motorbikes came and hacked him indiscriminately with a sharp weapon in the head and the right hand in front of the town's Ahmed Mansion around 9:30pm," said Mohammad Azizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Moulvibazar Police Station.

Liton was rushed to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital by locals. He was shifted to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

In protest, local Gonojagoron Mancha activists staged a procession followed by a rally in the town's Chaumuhani area around 10:00pm.

"If the attackers are not arrested and brought to justice soon, we will call for a tougher agitation," said Nasir Zaman, convener of Moulvibazar Gonojagoron Mancha.

On September 7, another Gonojagoron Mancha activist, Arif Noor, was stabbed in the head by an unidentified gang in the capital's Paribagh.

# Jony arrested

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The branch disclosed the arrest at a press briefing at the DMP media centre where Monirul said Jony had assured Oishee of safe passage to India. That is why she had left the house with valuables after the killings on August 15.

Law enforcers recovered the bodies of the couple from their Chamelibagh house in the capital the following day.

Jony sheltered Oishee at his acquaintance's house at Uttar Mugda, Monirul noted.

Detectives said Oishee, who gave a confessional statement before a court on August 24, had mentioned to them the name of Jony as an instigator.

Oishee surrendered herself to Paltan police a day after the bodies were recovered.

Hours later, law enforcers arrested Khadiz Khatun Sumi, a domestic help who allegedly helped Oishee hide the bodies, and Mizanur Rahman Rony, another friend of Oishee's, who also sheltered her after the incident.

With the arrest of Jony, law enforcers had completed the arrests of all the accused in the killings, Monirul told reporters.

Replying to a query, Monirul said, "We have no specific information that anyone except Oishee had directly taken part in the murder."

# Maiden case

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Jamal's wife, the school authorities carried out an investigation and found evidence of her involvement in corruption in admission of students.

"We even submitted the investigation report to our chairman," she said. "We hoped the education ministry would carry out an independent probe, but that did not happen yet."

She also said the assistant headmistress did misbehave with other teachers.

Another teacher, also an accused and a signatory to the complaint to the education ministry, said the assistant headmistress did not misbehave with all the signatories and that he signed it without reading it.