



Firemen inspecting the devastated shop after the chemical explosion yesterday afternoon at Tejturi Bazar in the capital. Wrapped in bandages, victims, *right*, of the explosion at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, ANISUR RAHMAN

## KIDNAP, KILLING OF COLLEGE TEACHERS

# Another witness testifies against Azhar, Pak army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A prosecution witness yesterday testified that ATM Azharul Islam along with the Pakistan army had picked up four professors of Carmichael College and one of their wives and killed them during the Liberation War in 1971.

Azharul, former president of Rangpur district Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami, faces six charges of murder, genocide and crimes against humanity committed during the war.

"It may be 15th Baishakh [first month of Bangla calendar]. On that night, after dinner Kalachand babu, his wife Monjusree, Prof Sunil babu and I were

talking about the country's current situation," said Ratan Chandra Das, who had worked at the residence of Kalachand.

Some Pakistani army personnel and four to five Bangalees at about 10:00pm that day entered Kalachand's house. The Pakistani army men blindfolded Sunil and Kalachand and forced them into a car. Monjusree pleaded with the army men to spare her husband but they did not pay any heed to her. Rather they picked her up as well, Ratan told the International Crimes Tribunal-1.

"I could recognise one among the Bengalee people. He was Azhar," the witness added. Ratan stayed at the house with Kalachand's two children.

## ILLEGAL WEALTH

# ACC to probe allegations against 2 MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission will probe graft allegations against two more ruling party parliamentary members.

It yesterday decided to launch an inquiry into the allegations against Abu Sayeed Al Mahmud Swapon, who was elected uncontested from Joypurhat -2 constituency in the 10th parliamentary election, and BM Mozammel Haque, elected from Shariatpur-1, said ACC Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya.

Both of them are also elected organising secretaries in the Awami League's committee formed in 2012.

Quoting newspaper reports, an ACC source said Mozammel during his last term as a lawmaker had

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# One killed, 10 burnt critically

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Sources said the blast occurred at Mahfuz Sewing and Electric, a shop that sells accessories for garment factories in East Tejturi Bazar near Farmgate around 2:45pm.

"We had brought a 200-litre barrel of paint thinner into our shop and opened it and we smelt something very unusual. As soon as I rushed out of the shop, I saw a fire followed by a loud bang," Mahmudul Hasan, owner of the shop, told The Daily Star at a hospital writhing in pain.

At least 35 percent of his body was burnt.

Employees of a nearby garment factory rushed in with their fire-fighting equipment. "We used around 100 extinguishers and water to douse the fire ...," said Monzur Haque, a supervisor at Alauddin and Sons Pvt Ltd.

He said around 20 of his employees fought the blaze before two fire engines reached the scene 20 minutes after the explosion.

Pedestrians and university students Shammi Akther Jhilik, 20, and Rifat

Ara Yasmin, 20, burnt their legs as they were passing the shop on foot.

Junaid, an eyewitness who works at one of the garment factories housed in the building across the shop, said Jhilik and Yasmin tried to run away from the flames but the fire caught up with them. "The flames whooshed along the alley burning pedestrians' feet," he said.

The victims were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's burn unit.

Burn injury expert Samanta Lal Sen termed critical the conditions of Mahmudul, his shop employee Abdul Motalib, 13, with 75 percent burns, Shafiul Azam, 56, with 95 percent burns, Ibrahim Khalil, 35, with 91 percent burns, and Zahirul, 60, with 34 percent burns.

The other injured include Masud, 38, with 25 percent burns, Zakir, 25, with 25 percent burns, and restaurant cook Ujjal, 24, with 15 percent burns.

Director (operations and maintenance) Major Muhammad Mahboob of Fire Service and Civil Defence told The Daily Star that gas from the barrel could have ignited by anything from lit

cigarettes to burning stoves of the restaurant across the alley.

The shop was on the ground floor of a four-storey residential building on a narrow alley close to Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. The building has nine shops on the ground floor and it is across the alley from a large building that houses several garment factories.

On June 3, 2010, a fire fuelled by flammable chemicals stored at a shop on the ground floor of a residential building in Nimtoli of Old Dhaka killed 123 people.

Meanwhile, four workers of a shoe factory suffered burns after their factory caught fire at the capital's Kamrangirchar area yesterday evening.

Fuelled by chemicals stored in the factory, the fire, originating from an electric switch around 6:00pm, engulfed the factory within minutes, said Sub-Inspector Shah Mohammad Shazu of Kamrangirchar Police Station.

Locals doused the fire in the factory, made of corrugated iron sheets, within 30 minutes, he added.

# Saad died a lonely death

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university for years," said a student, asking not to be named.

Saad's faculty wore a deserted look when these correspondents went there on the morning of April 7, six days after his death from a savage beating by a group of about 14 BCL activists. Only a single poster was there displaying a photo of Saad and demanding his killers' punishment.

A number of general students declined to talk about Saad, as two of his alleged killers were roaming about freely the campus.

"Students consider the Chhatra League a dreaded criminal organisation that has terrorised general students over the years. Nobody will say a word about Saad's murder, let alone answer the question of why they did not stand by their friend in need," said another student.

It was the BCL attackers themselves who had Saad admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital at 9:30pm on March 31, after beating him in a way that ruptured his liver and caused a brain hemorrhage.

His attackers abandoned him at

11:00pm since when Saad was alone on his deathbed. He succumbed to his injuries around 10:00am the next day.

"Nurse, nurse...", Saad kept crying in pain in his last-ditch efforts to draw the attention of the hospital staff.

"Son, how can I be of any help when no one is with you?" replied on-duty nurse Hosneara as she ran to and fro among patients overcrowding the 24-bed ward.

Talking to The Daily Star, a pensive Hosneara recollected the moments, still haunted by how Saad died from his injuries.

Borrowing the cellphone of a patient, Saad called his brother around 1:30am on April 1.

"We don't have close relatives to seek help from in Mymensingh. I tried my best," said Saad's elder brother Moaz Ibne Momtaz in an agitated tone.

"Saad told me that he was left abandoned at the hospital and was getting no treatment, presumably because of the attackers' political links," Moaz added.

An investigation by The Daily Star reveals that Saad was misdiagnosed at

the MMCH and he did not receive any treatment in the last few hours of his life. Experienced doctors in Mymensingh and Dhaka said his life could have been saved with timely diagnosis and proper treatment.

The university authorities did nothing but provide an ambulance to take him to the MMCH.

University physician Abul Kalam Azad, who first examined Saad at the dormitory around 8:00pm on March 31, said it was not his duty to raise an alarm about political violence.

It was for the authorities to look after the students, he added.

Proctor Shahidur Rahman Khan, whom many consider to be the man behind the BCL's audacious activities, claimed the university authorities were in the dark about the incident until Saad died.

"The university's chain of command did not work; it completely failed," Shahidur told The Daily Star, pinning the blame on the ambulance driver for not informing them of the matter.

Protests against Saad's death brought together students from different departments, who shared torment-

ing memories from the very first day of their university life.

Shuphala (not her real name) on her first day was looking for her department for admission in February this year. The young man she inquired about the location from happened to be a BCL activist, who asked for her cellphone number and clung to her as long as he could.

As another master's student and cultural activist came forward to warn her of the situation on the campus, five BCL activists beat him up. Proctor Shahidur Rahman reached the scene only to leave the matter to be settled by BCL leaders.

The student filed an official complaint with the authorities, but in vain.

"It happens once or twice a week, if not every day. You'll never know the name of the victim unless he dies," said a student, adding, every student must join the BCL to stay in the male dormitories.

Another student was hit in the face by a cellphone hurled at him by a BCL leader at the first meeting traditionally organised at the male dorms to "discipline" the newcomers. His "fault" was

he said he wanted to join the Bangladesh Chhatra Union, a leftist student organisation.

Evening-time showdowns arranged by the BCL are mandatory for all male resident students in the first year. Those who fail are punished at meetings held after dinner every night at dimly-lit guest rooms dubbed as "torture cell" or "kathgora" (dock). There are rooms at every male dormitory for storing hockey sticks, cricket stumps, iron rods and other arms.

"If you walk by a guest room, you will listen to screams with all newcomers standing outside the locked doors," said the master's student, himself a victim of BCL torture.

The female students-dominated protest against Saad's death reveals the fear among the male students of the BCL activists, who staged their own "protest" against the killing.

"The BCL men are protesting to weaken the general students' movement, a trick often played by the teachers patronising these criminal acts," said another master's student.

Students say BCL men stalking and forcing female students to engage in

relations with them are common.

Talking about the motive behind the killing of Saad, a senior student said, "Saad was an active Chhatra League activist of the previous committee on the campus. It was likely that his attackers had personal grudges against him."

BAU is no stranger to fatal BCL encounters. Last year, a child was killed in crossfire when two BCL factions engaged in a shootout. No action was taken; nobody was arrested; only the BCL committee was dissolved.

The culture of campus violence can come to an end only if the teachers give up their political and personal ambitions, a number of students said.

"Teachers must bear responsibility for this situation. A race among them for political dominance to grab important positions is the root of all terror," said one of the students.

Speaking anonymously, a senior teacher said he along with many of his colleagues wondered why Saad, being a university student, had to die with nobody beside him.

"Who can give an answer to this intriguing question? Obviously we, the

# Padma issue won't affect dev projects

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2012 over alleged corruption conspiracies involving former communications minister Syed Abul Hossain in hiring a Canadian consultancy firm, SNC-Lavalin.

Following the WB decision, other donors -- Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and Jica -- also pulled out of the project.

But through the new lending, Kim said, the WB was hoping to engage very directly with the government and with all of the other players in Bangladesh in trying to take the country to even lower levels of poverty. "We will continue to work with Bangladesh very closely,"

Replying queries from The Daily Star, he said Bangladesh had had some very impressive results. "The poverty level has gone down dramatically since 1990 and even from 2000 to 2010. There has been significant reduction in levels of extreme poverty in Bangladesh."

Referring to the six percent growth in each of the last five years, he, however, said Bangladesh had a lot of challenges, just like many other developing countries, and the country

needed to improve power generation. "I think that again, Bangladesh is another country that has to make use of this democratic dividend, invest in the education of its young people," he said.

He also said: "We really have to face up to the enormity of the challenge of adaptation to climate change in Bangladesh that so much of the land area will be flooded if the seas continue to rise."

Some of the illustrations available online show that even small changes in the sea level could have a devastating impact on Bangladesh, he said. "So adaptation will be the key. We're also very ready to work with Bangladesh on adaptation to climate change."

## ANTI-POVERTY VOW

As the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF begin in Washington today, Kim vowed to make "huge contributions" towards global efforts to end extreme poverty in a generation.

"We live in a time of great contrasts, when fewer than 100 people control as much of the world's wealth as the poorest 3.5 billion combined. But we

also live in a time when many developing countries have the strongest growth rates in the world, which each year helps millions of people lift themselves out of extreme poverty," he said

Roughly 1 billion people around the world live in extreme poverty today in 2014 -- this is down from an estimated 1.2 billion people in 2010, according to an estimate by the World Bank.

"This difficult-to-grasp number is falling steadily and surely, but reaching our twin goals of ending extreme poverty by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity won't be easy," he said.

Developing countries will have to grow at a pace stronger than any time in the past 20 years, Kim said.

To end extreme poverty by 2030, the vast rolls of the poorest -- those earning less than \$1.25 a day -- will have to decrease by 50 million people each year.

To reach that goal, 1 million people will have to lift themselves out of poverty each week for the next 16 years.

"This will be extraordinarily difficult, but I believe we can do it. This can

be the generation that ends extreme poverty."

"Economic growth has been vital for reducing extreme poverty and improving the lives of many poor people. But this mass migration of people moving from poverty to prosperity is really to gather strength, we need growth that is inclusive, creates jobs and assists the poor directly," he said.

At another media briefing in Washington yesterday, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde said she would expect global growth at 3.6 percent this year and 3.9 percent next year.

"The emerging markets and developing economies continue to be the main source of growth, even if a bit slower than in the past. The advanced economies are finally strengthening a bit."

"Our overall message, the global economy is turning the corner, but the recovery is still too weak and too slow."

So, the bottom line is, it is fairly good, but not good enough and the world can do better, she said.

"For some, despite the fact that growth is strengthening, they are not

# Tarique's remarks

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Earlier on March 25, he made another startling remark, that his father late president Ziaur Rahman was Bangladesh's first president.

Speaking on a thanksgiving motion on the president's speech, the ruling party legislators also said the country will face dire consequences if Tarique goes unpunished.

They demanded enacting a new law, if necessary, to punish Tarique.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said Tarique did not make the comment on the father of the nation out of ignorance or out of mental imbalance.

Pakistan has engaged in conspiracy against Bangladesh, said the veteran AL leader. Under the influence of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Tarique has come up with such comments because they want to distort Bangladesh's history.

Amid a loud thumping of the desk by his fellow lawmakers, the minister went on, "He [Tarique] has raised controversy on a matter which has been settled historically. Everybody knows Bangabandhu returned from Pakistan to independent Bangladesh as its president.

"But the stupid and illiterate boy [Tarique] has made audacious comments on our great leader. He even claimed his father [Ziaur Rahman] declared Bangladesh's independence. How could Zia do that? Was your father [Zia] an elected representative?"

Another senior AL lawmaker, Suranjit Sengupta, said, "Tarique has been delivering as per the prescription of ISI. It's a deep-rooted conspiracy as Taique's statement has been supported by his mother and colleagues."

"Their [Tarique and Khaleda] statements are tantamount to a violation of the constitution and they should be brought to book," he said, adding that their statements were dangerous for the country's sovereignty.

He asked the government to initiate a legal and political fight against the duo.