



GRIEF AND OUTRAGE IN NARYANGANJ: After six bodies are found in the river Shitalakkhya, relatives of the dead mourn on the riverbank, while people agitate on Dhaka-Chittagong highway by lighting fires. Some others burn down a petrol pump in the city.



PHOTO: COURTESY/BANGLAR CHOKH

Murdered brutally, dumped into river

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He said they might have been killed 48 to 72 hours earlier.

Locals of Shantinagar in Kalagachhiya union first noticed two bloated bodies floating amid water hyacinth near the river bank around 3:00pm, and informed the police.

The law enforcers then launched a search operation, and found by the evening four more bodies floating in the river.

The bodies were so decomposed that the victims' relatives found it difficult to identify those.

Nazrul's younger brother Abdus Salam identified the councillor's body by his clothes. The other victims were identified by the special marks on their bodies, and clothes.

The relatives of five of the victims pointed fingers at ward-4 councillor Nur Hossain, and Siddhirganj Thana Awami League general secretary Hazi Yasin, who are aides to AL lawmaker Shamim Osman.

Locals and victims' family members alleged that the duo run drugs racket in the area.

Nazrul's wife Selina Islam filed an abduction case against Nur, Yasin

and four others on Monday.

"Oh Allah ... what Shamim Osman has done ... the day before his [Nazrul] abduction, he met Shamim Osman and pleaded to bhai [Shamim] to protect him, saying he would go to the court the next day," Selina told reporters after her husband's body was recovered.

Shamim Osman, however, refuted the allegations of any involvement in the incident.

"She is not in right frame of mind now. My brother died the very day she found her husband's body. I can realise what it feels when people lose their dear ones," he said, referring to the death of his elder brother and JP lawmaker Nasim Osman.

Chandan's son-in-law Ranjit Debnath said his father-in-law had no enmity with anyone.

The news of the murder of the six caused widespread anger among locals in Narayanganj.

Angry locals blocked the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Sanarpar in Siddhirganj and also Dhaka-Narayanganj link road around 4:00pm. Vehicular movement on the highway remained suspended till



3:00am today.

They also damaged and set ablaze vehicles.

Around 7:00pm, locals set fire to Shams Filling Station owned by Hazi Yasin at Mouchak on Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

Blaming the administration for deterioration of law and order in Narayanganj, City Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy told a private TV channel last night, "If it had acted promptly immediately after the abductions three days back, it would have been possible to rescue them alive".

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the law enforcement agencies to arrest the

culprits as soon as possible.

State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal informed reporters about it after a meeting with the PM at the Gono Bhaban.

"The government is trying its best to arrest the culprits," he said.

Nazrul, his three aides and driver were abducted near Adalat Para on Sunday while they were returning by a car from Narayanganj District Judge's Court. Earlier, he had appeared in the court in connection with a case.

Police found Nazrul's car abandoned in Rajendrapur area of Gazipur that night.

At about the same time, lawyer

of the commission, told The Daily Star last night.

He said they will discuss the issue at the next meeting on May 5, and request the government to take effective steps to "dispel fear from people's mind".

Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said, "We are very worried about the current situation ... we want to see it improved."

The government has taken some steps. But it should do to more, or else the problems will deepen, he said.

Narayanganj Superintendent of Police Syed Nurul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday that he had received a withdrawal order.

Nurul, Deputy Commissioner Manoj Kanti Baral, Rab-11 Commanding Officer Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, and the OCs of Fatullah and Siddhirganj police stations Akhtar Hossain and Abdul Matin were withdrawn after the abduction of the seven.

(Our Narayanganj correspondent contributed to this report)

It's bigger than Aids

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also change how we produce, prescribe and use antibiotics, the world will lose more and more of these global public health goods and the implications will be devastating."

The report, Antimicrobial resistance: global report on surveillance, focuses on antibiotic resistance in seven different bacteria responsible for common, serious diseases such as sepsis, diarrhoea, pneumonia, urinary tract infections and gonorrhoea.

It found that antibiotic resistance is present in all areas of the globe and is growing, reports The Telegraph.

The report also says antibiotics are losing their power to fight infections in every country in the world -- a situation that could have "devastating" consequences for public health. It raises the possibility that once-beaten diseases will re-emerge as global killers.

Antibiotic resistance is a major threat to public health, says the WHO. It is no longer something to worry about in the future, but is happening

now and could affect anybody, anywhere, of whatever age.

"Without urgent, co-ordinated action by many stakeholders, the world is headed for a post-antibiotic era, in which common infections and minor injuries which have been treatable for decades can once again kill," said Dr Keiji Fukuda, the WHO's assistant director general for health security.

"Effective antibiotics have been one of the pillars allowing us to live longer, live healthier, and benefit from modern medicine. Unless we take significant actions to improve efforts to prevent infections and also change how we produce, prescribe and use antibiotics, the world will lose more and more of these global public-health goods and the implications will be devastating."

The new report is the first to gather comprehensive data from the WHO on antibiotic resistance and has information from 114 countries. Although the data is more complete in some regions

than in others, it is clear that drug-resistant strains of bacteria and viruses are common and that trying to preserve the efficacy of the antibiotics we have is a losing battle.

Dr Danilo Lo Fo Wong, senior adviser antimicrobial resistance at WHO Europe, told the Telegraph: "A child falling off their bike and developing a fatal infection would be a freak occurrence in the UK but that is where we are heading.

"Antibiotic resistance travels with infectious diseases and infectious diseases travel around the world. Whatever good is being done in the UK and elsewhere it can be made redundant by a lack of action elsewhere in the world."

The report comes after England's Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davis, said the issue "scared" her and called for greater restriction of antibiotics and incentives for pharmaceutical companies to produce new medicines.

Professor Laura Piddock, Director

US praises Dhaka's anti-terror efforts

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Acknowledging Bangladesh's strides against terrorism, the US has said the government's ongoing counterterrorism efforts have made it more difficult for transnational terrorists to operate in or use Bangladeshi territory.

"The Government of Bangladesh has demonstrated political will and firm commitment to combat domestic and transnational terrorist groups, and its counterterrorism efforts made it harder for transnational terrorists to operate or establish safe havens in Bangladesh," said the Country Reports on Terrorism 2013.

In the annual report released in Washington DC last night, the US Department of State said significant improvements have been made in

Bangladesh in regard to legislation, law enforcement, and border security.

On countering the financing of terrorism, the report said significant improvements to its Anti-terrorism Act have allowed Bangladesh to start the path to successfully exiting the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) International Cooperation Review Group process.

However, the presence and large-scale use of informal value transfer systems such as hawalas and the hundi system of remittances provide channels for exploitation by terrorists. In the formal financial sector, law enforcement rarely uses its powers to freeze and confiscate assets, the report said.

On regional and international cooperation, the US report said

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Tk 2,000cr lost for graft in 6 years

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The company failed to keep records of international calls from 2011 to November, 2012 due to such technical faults. Though the duration of international calls was around 8.5 billion minutes in 2011, the BTCL showed only 5.79 billion minutes for lack of call records, mentioned Dipu Roy.

International carriers, said the study, now owe around Tk965 crore to the BTCL, of which Tk500 crore would not be realised due to fake bank guarantees submitted by some carriers.

According to the BTCL policy, international carriers have to provide bank guarantee to the BTCL in US dollar for exchanging international calls. But some companies submitted fake bank guarantees in local currency.

The study also found that the BTCL has been losing its land due to corruption by some of its officials. The

telecom firm is the second largest owner of land among the government organisations. It has 1843.29 acres of land across the country, of which 196.19 acres is in Dhaka. But some quarters are grabbing BTCL land bribing a section of its officials and CBA leaders.

The TIB also identified irregularities in the repair and maintenance, human resource and transport pool of the BTCL. Some 40 per cent of the fund allocated to the repair and maintenance department is spent illegally due to corruption.

In the 2008-09 fiscal year, the BTCL had made a profit of around Tk98 crore, while in the 2011-12 FY the company incurred a loss of around Tk 17 crore, according to statistics of Bangladesh Economic Review, 2013.

Speaking at the press conference, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the BTCL has been in such a bad shape as the gov-

ernment transformed the company into a public limited firm without adopting any proper transition plan.

"The BTCL is so far neither a public limited company nor a government agency," he mentioned, adding that its officials were facing identity crisis.

The state-run BTTB (Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board) was transformed into a public limited company BTCL in July 2008 with a view to provide customers with better service.

The TIB suggested the government take necessary steps within next six months to ensure that the BTCL could be operated like the other public limited companies in the country.

It also urged the government to appoint people who have expertise in telecommunication business as the board members of the BTCL. In the current nine-member BTCL board, there are only three private sector representatives, which enables gov-

ernment officials dominate most of the board decisions.

The graft watchdog recommended merging the Teletalk and Bangladesh Submarine Company Ltd with the BTCL as many BTCL officials have been working in the two other companies.

The government made such division in the BTCL mainly in connivance with the private sector, said Iftekharuzzaman.

The TIB also stressed the need for setting up a separate unit of BTCL for providing vital telecom services to the government such as red phone for the VIPs, as such services are not offered with business motive.

TIB trustee board member M Hafizuddin Khan said the country still has a huge demand for fixed phones as mobile phones cannot be an alternative to that. He urged the BTCL to take necessary steps to minimise customer harassment.

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abductions, looting, forced disappearances and other criminal activities. All people in the country are fed up with the AL's oppression," she said while addressing the 34th founding anniversary of Jatiya Ganotantrik Party, a component of the BNP-led 19-party alliance, at the auditorium of Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh, in the city.

Khaleda said the present government is "India's slave."

"The country cannot be run according to their directives. We will have to wage a fresh movement to get out of the grasp of the present government," she said.

In her 18-minute speech, the former premier said the AL has no control over its leaders, activists, lawmakers and ministers. "The AL even has no power over the so called opposition party [Jatiya Party]."

"That's why abduction, looting, killing and other criminal activities are going on on a regular basis. Looting is

also happening in the administration," she said, adding that only the government which will be elected through a free and fair election under a non-party administration can stop these heinous activities.

No development can be brought about in the country by the present government which, according to Khaleda, is involved in killing and abduction.

Calling upon the Sheikh Hasina-led government, Khaleda said the BNP's door for discussion is still open. "And the government should hold discussions immediately for holding free and fair polls under a neutral administration."

Pointing to the election commissioners, the BNP chairperson said they should resign as free and fair elections are not possible under their arrangement.

Warning the government, Khaleda said the consequences of killings and forced disappearances are never good.

Khaleda called upon all to get prepared for waging a fresh movement

Back home with broken hearts

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already paid them Tk 5 lakh," he told The Daily Star.

Some Bangladeshi brokers and travel agents took the 22 jobseekers to Iran in several groups in January and early February this year, luring them with promises of lucrative jobs in the shipping industry with a minimum monthly salary of Tk 50,000.

The brokers kept the migrants in the dark as they had managed tourist visas for

them instead of work permits. They also took away their passports, all documents and money as soon as the migrants had landed in Iran.

"They took me to a house and confined me there. They told me that I had entered Iran illegally as I had no documents and police would arrest me if I tried to escape," said Sohel Mia, 27, who hails from Narsingdi.

The victims said they were all kept confined in the same house although

they had flown to the country on different dates. They alleged that Hanif Mia, a Bangladeshi living in Iran for 20 years, was the ringleader of the agents.

"Hanif Mia often came to our rooms and put pressure on us to seek money from our families through his mobile phone," said Abdur Razzak, who went to Iran in January.

Razzak's family had eventually sent Tk 1 lakh to a local agent of Hanif Mia

through bKash, he added.

Similarly, the families of the other 21 victims had to pay Tk 50,000 to Tk 2 lakh each to the local agents of Hanif Mia.

Some of the victims' families had reported it to Rights Jessore, an NGO, and Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

When the NGO and the CID informed the Bangladesh mission in Tehran, Iranian police with officials of the embassy raided Hanif's house at

Minab city on February 23 and rescued the victims.

Hanif was arrested, but his Iranian wife arranged his bail and released him from prison, said the victims, quoting embassy officials.

The CID yesterday held a press conference on the rescue mission after the victims had landed and were taken to its office in the capital.

"Some human traffickers are targeting fortune seekers to realise ransom