

Jubo League man arranged it

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Sabuj and his cousin Abu Bakar Siddique Swapan, both tutors at a local coaching centre, were kidnapped from their homes by a gang around 4:00am on Monday.

Islami Bank employee Elias Uddin was kidnapped when he was going home from a mosque after evening prayers on April 21.

And Yusuf Ali Sohagh, a student at Mymensingh Homoeopathic Medical College, was picked up from his home early on April 20 by a group of seven to eight, all wearing police uniform, according to the general diary filed by his family.

Family members of all the four alleged law enforcers were behind the abduction.

The three that went missing on April 19 from Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital are Suhel Rana, his brother Morshed Alam and Basir Uddin. They are all from Bhaluka of Mymensingh. It could not be immediately known why they came to Dhaka.

Family members said they did not file any case but informed the police verbally about their going missing.

On February 23, an armed gang of 10-15, all masked, ambushed a prison van in Trishal and snatched away three convicted JMB militants -- two of them on death rows. A policeman was killed in the ambush.

The attack on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway took place when the van carrying the three was going to Mymensingh to produce them before a court in a sedition case.

About five hours after the incident, police captured Rakib from Shakhipur of Tangail. He was killed in a "shootout" at Mirzapur of Tangail about 14 hours after his arrest.

Rakib and Salehin were sentenced to death and "Boma" Mizan to 37 years in prison in different cases. Salehin and "Boma" Mizan remain traceless since.

PRESSURE?

Asked to comment on Sabuj's claim that a Jubo League leader helped the militants



Eight persons arrested in connection with the February Trishal ambush to free three convicted militants are paraded before the media at Uttara Rab headquarters yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

flee, a top Rab official said they did not buy his claim. "An accused always tries to shift the blame on other people."

At the briefing, Sabuj said he runs a coaching centre named Jagaran Tutorial Home at Panchgao village at Bhaluka.

"One day a senior leader asked me over the phone to do a job. I and three of my friends met him. He told us that we have to pick one of his guests from Bhoradoba and drop him at Fulbaria. Six to seven youths will be needed for this task," he said.

Asked to name the senior leader, he said it was Ataur Rahman Kamal.

On February 23, he said, he was instructed from a microbus, which took part in the ambush, that a person would go to him from a prison van and he would have to take him to Fulbaria.

"Rakib was sent to Fulbaria on a

motorbike through a dirt road," he said, adding that he did not know who took the other two as several groups were working for the job.

Contacted, Kamal, also a lecturer at Sonar Bangla Degree College at Batajorh, rejected Sabuj's claim outright.

"I'm a son of a freedom fighter. Question of my doing such a heinous act does not arise," he told The Daily Star.

His father Mujibur Rahman, vice-president of Bhaluka upazila AL, said, "We were shocked to hear Sabuj's claim that my son was involved in snatching the JMB militants. We have good relations with Sabuj's family."

Sabuj's father Shamsuddin Munshi said Kamal could not do such a thing. "Sabuj might have mentioned his [Kamal's] name because of the pressure on him."

THE BRIEFING

Of the eight arrested, five people on three motorbikes led by Sabuj were trailing the prison van, said Rab's Legal and Media Wing Director ATM Habibur Rahman.

The five were Yousuf Ali Sohagh, 20, Morshed Alam, 22, Suhel Rana, 28, Swapan, 28, and Elias, 34.

The two other arrested are Anwar Hossain, 40, and Basir Uddin, 20.

They are manpower brokers, and they tried to send Suhel and Morshed abroad after the incident, Habibur added.

He would not give the dates of their arrests, saying it would compromise the investigation. But he did not explain how disclosing the dates of arrest would "compromise" the inquiry.

Habib said each of the six were supposed to get Tk 20,000 for the job.

Describing the ambush, he said as

soon as the prison van reached Signboard point of Trishal, a motorbike and other vehicles waylaid it.

The militants who were already at the spot started shooting and exploding crude bombs. As Rakib escaped from the van, he was taken to Fulbaria on a bike belonging to one of the arrestees, Habib said.

He added Rakib knew beforehand the arrangement for his safe passage.

"Several groups took part in the operation but three groups were assigned particularly for ensuring safe passages for the three JMB leaders," he said, adding that the groups did not know each other's mission.

Asked about the whereabouts of Salehin and "Boma" Mizan, Habib said they are working to catch them.

BRUTALITY AT RU

Cops point finger at Shibir men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tuesday's brutal attack on two Chhatra League leaders at Rajshahi University was carried out allegedly by Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres.

"The modus operandi of the attack suggests it was an act of Shibir," said Proloy Chichim, deputy commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP).

The way Abdullah Al Masud and Togor Mohammad Saleh were attacked matches other assaults that Shibir carried out on the campus in the past, said the police official.

Police also claimed that some of the attackers were identified Shibir cadres of the RU.

"Their motive was to take revenge and to regain supremacy on the campus," he added.

On Tuesday, a group of miscreants, allegedly Shibir cadres, ambushed Masud, assistant secretary of the RU unit BCL and Togor, scholarship affairs secretary of the university unit student front of the ruling Awami League, in front of Ziaur Rahman Hall around 8:15am. They cut tendons of both hands and legs of Togor and severed Masud's right ankle and cut the tendons of his left leg.

Police said a special kind of cutter was used for severing the tendons and a number of Shibir people were arrested earlier with such contraptions.

The victims are currently undergoing treatment at the National Institute of Traumatology and Rehabilitation (Nitor) in the capital.

"Masud is now at the ICU (Intensive

Care Unit). His right leg has been amputated already. And it is uncertain whether his left leg could be saved," Atikur Rahman, vice president of the RU BCL, told The Daily Star from the Nitor over the phone.

Earlier on Sunday, Masud and Togor had beaten up Madar Bux Hall unit Shibir president Waliullah Mahmud and handed him over to police.

"Shibir men threatened Masud and other leaders over the phone and vowed revenge after the incident", said Atikur.

The BCL leader said the attack was an act of retaliation and Masud could identify some of the attackers to be from the History department of the university.

Meanwhile, RU teachers and students and different political organisations demanded exemplary punishment of the attackers.

Over two hundred teachers and students of folklore and history departments, which Togor and Masud were students of, formed a human chain on the campus.

The BCL brought out a procession on the campus and vowed to resist Shibir activities on the RU premises.

PROTEST RALLY AT DU

The BCL staged a rally on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, protesting the Shibir attack on two BCL leaders at RU.

At the rally, acting president of the organisation Joydeb Nandi demanded immediate arrest of the attackers.

"Otherwise, we will launch a wave of movements at all universities across the country simultaneously," he added.

Nasim Osman

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The four-time elected lawmaker left behind his wife, one son and two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death. Nasim was elected lawmaker from the Jatiya Party in 1986, 1988, 2008 and 2014.

He was the elder son of two-time lawmaker Samshuzzoha and brother of Shamim Osman, an Awami League lawmaker from Narayanganj-4.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed their deep shock at the death of Nasim and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family, reports news agency BSS.

Political and business identities apart, Nasim's name has always been discussed along with his brother's (Shamim Osman) in Narayanganj because of their clout in certain circles allegedly controlling the industrially and commercially rich township. Many people in Narayanganj point a finger at Osman brothers for their alleged blessings to gangs involved in extortion, controlling jhut and transport businesses and land grabbing in the district.

Nasim's son Azmeri Osman is the main suspect of the sensational murder of Tanvir Mohammad Toki, an A-level student and son of Rafiur Rabbi, former president of Narayanganj Sangskritik Jote.

On August 7 last year, the Rapid Action Battalion busted the city office of Azmeri as part of their investigation in the murder case and found some evidence of torture there.

US praises

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Bangladesh's foreign and domestic policies are heavily influenced by the region's major powers, particularly India.

In past years, the India-Bangladesh relationship provided openings for transnational threats, but the current government has demonstrated its interest in regional cooperation on counterterrorism.

Regarding countering radicalisation and violent extremism, the report lauded various steps taken by the government, especially the education ministry's move to oversee the madrasas and develop a standard national curriculum that includes language, math, and science modules, as well as minimum standards of secular subjects for all primary schools up to the eighth grade.

The government of Bangladesh is also actively expanding economic opportunities for women as a stabilising force against violent religious extremism, it added.

Killed for kidneys

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accomplice, Delwar Hossain, who along with Chand Ali doped and kidnapped the kid near his home on April 22.

Khalil, Chand, Delwar and Matin are from Tafabari village.

Early next day, they took the child under the Udhunia bridge where they met three others -- including a "physician" -- who came in a motorbike from Savar in Dhaka.

It was the "physician" who conducted the "operation". He and his two accomplices left the scene with the



Khalil, arrested on Monday

kidneys preserved in a saline solution.

According to Khalil, the deal for this job involved Tk 1 million. He was supposed to get Tk 2,00,000. But after it was done, he was offered Tk 20,000 which he claimed to have refused.

Contacted, Sub-Inspector Abdul Jalil of Ullahpara Police Station said two four-inch-deep cuts were seen on both sides of the child's abdomen during inquest. He doubts whether it was really done by a doctor.

The rest of the culprits are yet to be arrested.

Try lawmen involved

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have been behind forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and unlawful destruction of private property.

In the report titled "Democracy in the Crossfire: Opposition Violence and Government Abuses in the 2014 Pre-and Post-Election Period in Bangladesh," the HRW also blamed both the government and the rival political parties for the violence centring on the January 5 elections.

After the elections, security forces unlawfully arrested opposition leaders, naming them as suspects in violent attacks, according to the report.

The report says researchers documented the killing or unlawful arrests of 19 opposition leaders and activists surrounding the polls. In nine of the killings, authorities claimed that the victims were killed in "crossfire" during gunfights between the security forces and armed criminals.

In all nine cases, there is strong reason to question the official account, the HRW said.

In several of the alleged crossfire cases,

witnesses said the killed person had been detained hours or days earlier, contradicting government claims, the report mentioned.

Security forces have little credibility when they simply claim that suspects die in crossfire, as they have regularly invoked the "killed in crossfire" explanation to justify what the evidence later showed to be cold-blooded executions of detainees or suspects.

"In particular, the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has committed systematic human rights violations with impunity since its founding in 2004, which contributes directly to the culture of ongoing abuses," the report states.

The rights watchdog urged to government to disband the Rab and replace it with a fully accountable civilian law enforcement agency dedicated to fighting crime and terrorism.

"The Bangladesh government needs to stop protecting its security forces, and make good on public pronouncements of zero tolerance for impunity," said Brad Adams, Asia director of the HRW.

To this end, the HRW urged the government to establish an independent, external body to conduct prompt, impartial, and independent investigations into all allegations of violations by law enforcement agencies including the police, Rab, and Border Guards Bangladesh.

OPPOSITION BLAMED FOR POLLS

VIOLENCE

Quoting Bangladeshi human rights organisations, the HRW said hundreds were killed and injured in violent attacks surrounding the controversial elections.

The 64-page report says opposition party members and activists on numerous occasions carried out petrol bomb attacks and sometimes forced children to carry out the attacks.

For the report, the HRW interviewed more than 120 people, including victims, their family members, and eyewitnesses and they blamed the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami activists for some of the attacks.

The rights body called upon the government to investigate all attacks on religious minorities and prosecute the

UN vows to prevent 'another Rwanda' in South Sudan

AFP, Juba

Top United Nations rights officials vowed Wednesday to do everything in their power to prevent conflict-wracked South Sudan from sliding into genocide, and warned the warring factions they would be held responsible if famine breaks out.

Firing off a damning attack against South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and rebel leader Riek Machar, the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said she was "appalled by the apparent lack of concern about the risk of famine displayed by both leaders."

The comments came after Pillay, accompanied by a special genocide envoy, held talks with the rival leaders, and a day after the UN made a desperate appeal for a one-month truce to avert a famine and humanitarian disaster.