

Gunmen storm house

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State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal while visiting the spot. "He who killed the three is a hit man and accused in several murder cases. We will arrest him at any cost," the minister told reporters.

Abdul Jalil Mondal, acting commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, briefing journalists at the spot around 10:00pm said, "The assailants stormed the tin-built house around 8:00pm and opened fire indiscriminately, leaving the four critically injured."

Of the four victims, three were shot inside and close to the house while Ranu was fired on about 20 yards away from the house, locals said.

Detectives, who were collecting evidence from the crime scene, said "Kailla Babu" and his uncle Rony several years ago had built the tin-roofed house illegally occupying government land. The house had six rooms.

Ranu's uncle Shah Alam told The Daily Star that Kailla Babu kept his share of two rooms while Rony a year ago sold his four rooms to Ranu and his uncle Kala Chan for Tk 3.5 lakh.

The sale triggered a feud between Kailla Babu and Rony with the former demanding he be allowed to buy the rooms. Eventually, Kailla Babu demanded Tk 3 lakh toll from Ranu and Kala Chan in exchange for allowing them to live there.

Ranu and Kala Chan was having

none of that. They, a few months ago, filed a case with Ramna Police Station against Kailla Babu, family sources claimed, but police sources said they were looking into their files to see if a case had indeed been filed in this connection.

Kailla Babu then started mounting pressure on Ranu and Kala Chan to withdraw the case.

A couple of months ago, Kailla Babu sold off his two rooms and had his revenge yesterday killing Ranu and critically injuring Hridoy, victim's family sources said.

Their neighbours Munna and Billal got shot at when they rushed in to help, family sources said.

Inspector Mozammel Haque, camp-in-charge at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said on-duty doctors declared three of them dead on arrival and admitted Hridoy.

Police recovered eight shells of used bullet and three knives from the scene.

Detectives and top police officials including the inspector general of police visited the spot.

The triple murder of last night was barely a day after unidentified assailants slit the throat of Shaikh Nurul Islam Faruqi at his East Rajabazar home. He was the chief imam of the Supreme Court mosque.

Asked whether four people killed in two nights were a reflection of deteriorating law and order, the state minister for home affairs said last night's killings were a stray incident.



The small room in Sonalibagh in the capital where three people were shot dead when they were having dinner last night. Inset, three knives recovered from the scene.

PHOTO:
ANISUR RAHMAN

TECHNICAL GLITCHES Parts of Dhaka city without power for 7hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Power supply in many areas of the capital collapsed yesterday for seven hours as two substations went out of service.

The areas included Rampura, Shantinagar, Segunbagicha, Kakrail, Karwan Bazar and Dhanmondi.

The disruption, which began at 3:00pm, caused immense suffering to residents and businesses in those

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56 charged with Ekram murder

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officer of the case.

This has frustrated the family members and fans of Ekramul, who was also president of Phulgazi upazila Awami League and an archivist of Nizam.

Local BNP leader Mahtab Uddin Minar, the prime accused, was indicted yesterday.

Ekramul was shot and burnt to death in his car in Feni town in broad day light on May 20. The video of the brutal murder was captured on a mobile phone and then uploaded to the internet.

Ekram's wife Tasmin Akhter told journalists, "You all know who were

involved in the murder and that those, including the mastermind, have not been charged. This charge sheet was submitted in haste."

Talking to reporters, Rezaul Haq Jashim, brother of Ekram and plaintiff of the case, expressed frustration over not being informed about the submission of the charge sheet.

"As the plaintiff, I don't know anything about the completion of the investigation. Police did not tell me or any of our family members about the probe process or submission of the charge sheet. I learnt this from the media," Jashim said.

After Ekram's murder, Nizam had blamed local BNP for the

killing.

Two days after the killing, Nizam, the Feni-2 MP, claimed that Jinal Hazari, former Awami League lawmaker of the same constituency, knew about the murder. Nizam had demanded that police take Jinal on remand to find the culprits.

Awami League and Jubo League leaders had demonstrated against Nizam in Feni and Phulgazi then. They had demanded capital punishment for what they said was Nizam's involvement in the murder.

Dainik Hazarika, a daily newspaper owned by Jinal, had published a report two days before Ekram's mur-

der.

The report said Ekram could get killed in the hands of Nizam's supporters and that "Nizam had taken control of everything" in Feni with blessings from Alauddin, an Awami League central leader.

Jinal later told journalists that the administration had become servile to Nizam and that it would do nothing against him.

About the report in his paper, he said the piece was based on solid information.

Yesterday, Inspector Abul Kalam Azad of Feni Model Police Station submitted the charge sheet before the district court.

Magistrate records statement of BNP leader Mujibur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The judicial magistrate's court in Sunamganj yesterday recorded statements of BNP leader Mujibur Rahman, a Bangladeshi expatriate in the UK, and his car driver Rezaul Haque Sohel on their abduction incident.

Judicial Magistrate Shyam Kanto Sinha recorded the statements. However, he did not give details of the recorded statements.

On completion of their recordings, Mujibur and Rezaul were allowed to

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Flood situation to worsen in 14 dists

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Jamalpur districts.

The FFWC finds no immediate possibility of flood in and around Dhaka city although the surrounding rivers are swelling. These rivers are likely to remain below the danger level.

Flood situations in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Bogra, Jamalpur, Tangail, Shariatpur, Madaripur, Munshiganj, Rajbari, Faridpur and Sirajganj may "slightly deteriorate" in the next 48 hours, warned the FFWC.

The Brahmaputra, the Jamuna and the Padma rivers may see further rise in the next 72 hours, worsening the flood situations in these districts, Ripon Karmaker, duty officer of the FFWC, told The Daily Star last night.

However, the situations in Netrakona,

Sunamganj and Sylhet may improve in the meantime, the FFWC forecasted.

KURIGRAM

"We cannot take meal three times a day as we do not have firewood or dry space for cooking," said Amena Begam, 35, of Fanderchar village in Nageshwar upazila.

"We are facing sanitation problems as my house and the nearby areas are under water. Besides, we have to fetch drinking water from the tube-well of a neighbour, whose homestead is on a higher ground," said Hasina Begam, 42, of Pramanikpara village in Kurigram Sadar.

Like Amena and Hasina, more than three lakh people of 353 villages in the district have been going through immense sufferings for the last two weeks.

And they may not get any respite soon as flood situation in the district further deteriorated yesterday. Water levels of all the 16 rivers, including the Brahmaputra, the Dharla, the Dudhkumar and the Teesta, rose inundating dozens of new villages.

GAIBANDHA

With all the rivers in the district swelling, overall flood situation deteriorated further yesterday increasing sufferings of the flood victims in four upazilas.

Thousands of people of Sundarganj, Gaibandha Sadar, Phulchhari and Shaghata upazilas have been marooned for the last 12 days. Classes have been suspended at 178 government and non-government primary schools and nine high schools in these areas.

LALMONIRHAT

Due to the continuing onrush of water from the upstream, at least 20 new villages in Lalmonirhat Sadar and Aditmari upazilas went under water yesterday.

Mobarok Hossain, 68, of Kutibari village bordering with India, said this was the first time in his life he saw flood in his village.

"Our village has been flooded because India constructed a dam at Dariabish of Kuchbihari district, only 400 metres from the border line, between January and March this year," he said.

"As India constructed the dam on the Gidhbari river, we have flood here for the first time," said Mozammel Miah, 70, at Digholtari, another bordering village.

The Gidhbari flows into Bangladesh

territory as the Gidari which then joins the Dharla river.

The swelling Dharla has flooded the shoal areas, although the water level of the Teesta is decreasing, said Al Mamun, sub-divisional engineer of the Water Development Board in Lalmonirhat.

JAMALPUR

Flood situation deteriorated in Jamalpur as the Jamuna was flowing 65 centimetres above the danger mark at Bahadurabad Ghat point.

In Madariganj upazila, a 200-metre stretch of Nadagari-Charnangla embankment has been washed, damaging a large number of homes and inundating 12 new villages.

Around 6,000 people of the area have been left marooned and large tracts of croplands damaged.

Reports of the spreading of waterborne diseases are coming from different flood-hit areas of the district. However, Civil Surgeon Dr Hafizur Rahman of Jamalpur said, "Spreading of diseases is not a matter of concern yet. Nevertheless, a medical team has been kept ready to deal with any unwanted situation."

MUNSHIGANJ

Although the flood situation in the district remained almost unchanged, erosion by the mighty Padma has turned devastating as it devoured houses of at least 49 families in Louhajang and Tangibari upazilas in the last few days.

Classes at Kamarkhara Barail Government Primary School have remained suspended since Wednesday as it was found vulnerable to erosion.

SQ Chy's wife, son, 5 others



Condemned war criminal Salauddin Quader Chowdhury's wife Farhat showing the media a copy of allegedly the draft verdict. The photo was taken in front of the international crimes tribunal on October 1 last year, right after the verdict was delivered.

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On October 4, detectives filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station against Nayan, Faruk, Fakhrul, Mehedi and several unnamed people under the Information Communication and Technology Act, 2006.

Giving a confessional statement on October 10, Nayan said he began delivering bits of the draft copy in a flash drive to Fakhrul's office at Kakrail on September 15 last year.

He got Tk 500-1,000 every day for the work. Family members of Salauddin took the bits of the draft

every day, added Nayan.

He, however, claimed that he was initially unaware of what he was giving away and realised that it was the draft of the judgement on September 25.

The following day when he declined to deliver, Fakhrul and Mehedi threatened him with life if he had told anyone about the matter or tried to back out from his daily deliveries.

Investigation officer Shahjahan, also an inspector of Detective Branch of police, told The Daily Star yesterday that Salauddin's wife and son were charged with "hatching a conspiracy

and instigating" the leak while Fakhrul was charged with "facilitating" it.

Mehedi, Mahbubul, Faruk and Nayan were "directly involved" in the crime, he said, adding that he cited 25 people as prosecution witnesses.

As the case was filed under Information Communication and Technology Act, the trial of the case will be held at the Cyber Tribunal in Dhaka and the tribunal will decide on accepting the charge sheet, once it receives the documents after September 23.

"Most of the land has been lost to the Jamuna that has widened over the years. The river is five to 12 kilometres wide," said Maminul.

Croplands, houses, mosques, temples, roads, schools and offices have been lost to the Jamuna that flows through Kurigram, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Bogra, Sirajganj, Tangail, Pabna and Manikganj.

Nishat said the Jamuna is a young river, and its erosion and accretion will continue. This means the river needs training, as there are communities and arable land on both its sides.

On resettlement of the victims, Nishat suggested establishing well-organised townships on river banks and protecting those.

The Ganges ate into 29,842 hectares of land in Nawabganj, Rajshahi, Natore, Kushtia, Pabna and Rajbari and returned 25,009 hectares.

Shamsul Huda, executive director of the Association for Land Reforms and Development, said two to three lakh people become victims of river

erosion every year, and one third of them become destitute, losing all savings and properties.

"The government should have a long-term plan to resettle and rehabilitate the people," he said.

Some 80 percent of the 50 lakh acres of khas land is illegally occupied mostly by political and social elites. And the government is not interested in implementing its policy of distributing khas land among landless people, he added.

Selim Bhuiyan, director general of the Water Resources Planning Organisation, said the Water Development Board sometimes has to work on political consideration and the work proves ineffective.

There are problems in getting funds released in time for building or repairing embankments, he added.

Three rivers too hungry

FROM PAGE 1
Ainun Nishat.

Neither the government nor the development partners are eager to address the issue, he said.

If the erosion of banks of all rivers is taken into account, the figure would cross two lakh hectares, experts said.

In his presentation, CEGIS Deputy Executive Director Maminul Haque Sarker said among the three rivers, the Jamuna devoured 90,367 hectares of land along both its banks but returned only 16,444 hectares.

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5 WORST AFFECTED DISTRICTS

(Jamuna is most destructive; it took away nine times more land than it returned)