

Couple found dead

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confirmed the recovery of the bodies from a flat on Road-5 of the area.

The OC, however, could not say anything about the motive behind the murders.

The couple have three sons and a daughter who were not at home during the incident. Only their maid-servant, Firoza begum, 60, was at home at the time of the killings, family sources said.

Police recovered a pistol and a few rounds of bullet from in front of Rouf's body. Family members claimed it was a licensed weapon.

Referring to the pistol, Inspector Saiful Islam of Cantonment Police Station said, "Based on the evidence I suspect that the husband at first shot his wife in a fit of anger and then shot himself."

The deceased's daughter, Sonali, 15, went to a nearby playground around 4.00pm and came back home about two and a half hours later to find her parents dead.

"When I came back home, the front door was open and I went to my parents' bedroom where I found my mother lying prostrate on bed. My mother did not respond when I called her. Then I found my father sitting in one corner of the room with blood dripping from his head," Police quoted Sonali as saying.

Kamrul Majid, director of security and admin at Banani DOHS, said he rushed to the scene after hearing the news from a neighbour.

The maid servant said she could not hear anything due to the sound of the ceiling fan, said Majid quoting Firoza.

The security guard of the house confirmed that no unknown person went in or came out of the building between 4:00pm and 7:00pm when the murders were committed, said Majid adding that nothing was stolen from the house.

A team of Rab visited the scene while another team of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) were collecting evidence from the spot as of filing this report at 1:30am today.

Relatives of the dead said Rouf incurred considerable business loss and was saddled with bank loans which kept him very frustrated for a long time. He also picked a few fights with his wife now and then, they added.

Police sent the bodies to the Dhaka Medical Morgue.

Dhaka to press

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protocols and agreements signed between the two countries earlier, home ministry sources said.

Bangladesh will urge India to ratify the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement and the Land Boundary Protocol, transfer of enclaves and demarcation of 6.5 km of land boundary as soon as possible, sources added.

India is yet to ratify the agreements though it assured Dhaka it was working on the issue and was expecting to place it for ratification in the next parliament session. The ratification would facilitate the transfer of enclaves

and demarcation of 6.5 km of land boundary between the two neighbours.

Dhaka would strongly protest the firing, killing and torture of Bangladeshi citizens along the border, and smuggling of arms, drugs and other contraband elements from India. It will also urge India to amend the Revised Travel Arrangement (RTA) to ease visa complexity, said the official requesting anonymity.

Besides, the home secretaries would also discuss the Interpol mechanism, new or reopening of immigration points, construction of fencing within

150 yards of international border, and human trafficking, the sources added.

During the talks, both sides will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on bilateral cooperation for prevention of human trafficking and rescue and rehabilitation of the victims.

The last meeting was held in New Delhi on July 19 last year where the two home secretaries reaffirmed their commitment not to allow the territory of either country to be used for any activity inimical to each other's interests.

A meeting of the India-Bangladesh joint working group will also be held today at the same place.

MP's strange justification

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Intermediate and Secondary Education, Rajshahi (BISER) asking the officials concerned to replace Harun who was nominated by the MP himself only four months ago.

"In the demand order, we were asked to appoint Bijoy Kumar Ghosh, deputy director (admin) of Education Engineering Department, Dhaka in place of Harun-ur Rashid," said Anarul Haque, inspector of colleges at BISER, adding that replacing a college governing body president in six months without any valid reason is not lawful.

BISER Chairman Prof MA Rouf Mia said complying with the request would not be lawful.

"We will discuss the matter with the

MP," he said.

However, Anarul Haque said the college governing body has the legal authority to reinstate any sacked staff.

ABOUT MANNAN

Rajshahi district administration in a probe found Mannan guilty of several underhand dealings. According to the probe report, he had appointed his wife as a lecturer at the college with forged documents; he had misappropriated at least Tk 1.77 lakh in the years 1998-2009; he had illegally enjoyed benefits from college lands and took allowances through fake vouchers; he had appointed a teacher and ensured his salaries showing false documents.

The probe also found that he

secured his promotion as the college principal by means of forgery. It says Mannan obtained 3rd division both in HSC exams and BA honours degree and no one can be promoted to college principal with this qualification.

When contacted, Abdul Mannan told this correspondent that all allegations against him are false.

"Some governing body members fabricated charges against me as I did not support them in certain matters," he said.

He, however, could not provide any argument in support of his claims.

Harun-ur Rashid said he [Mannan] was sacked only after the probe report was verified by another committee following his prayer.

Tarique's wife sacked

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Diseases, went to London with her husband and daughter in September 2008.

Tarique, elder son of BNP chief Khaleda Zia, went there for treatment after he was released from prison on parole during the caretaker government tenure. Since then, the family has been staying there.

Before going to London, Zubaida

had taken leave without pay and then extended it. Later she applied for a further extension on grounds of her husband's illness, but the government did not respond, said Zubaida's assistant Mostafa Aziz Sumon.

Contacted last night, Mostafa, himself a physician, said Zubaida had no intention other than accompanying her ailing husband, but the government sacked her without following

service rules.

Under the rules, if a public official stays abroad during leave, s/he has to be communicated through the Bangladesh mission about his/her being disqualified for the job three months before dismissal, he said.

"The government did not consider the human aspect of sacking Dr Zubaida," he added.

JS to pass bill

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committee on the law ministry, confirmed it to The Daily Star.

Earlier on August 18, the cabinet approved the proposal for restoration of parliament's authority to impeach Supreme Court judges.

According to the draft law, parliament could impeach an SC judge on grounds of misconduct or incapacity by passing a resolution with at least a two-thirds majority. The president will then issue an order to this effect.

At the Business Advisory Committee meeting, it was also decided that the third session of the 10th parliament, which began yesterday, would continue till September 18.

The meeting, chaired by Speaker

Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, was attended among others by Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad.

The JS on its first day in the third session yesterday adopted obituary references on the death of 17 noted personalities, including former law-makers and journalists.

After the question-answer session, Raushan Ershad took the floor and urged the government to form separate commissions to discuss the two bills on the national broadcast policy and the constitutional amendment that would give back parliament the power to impeach Supreme Court judges.

"Only discussions can resolve every-

thing and thus the government should form committees in consultation with all stakeholders and the common people to avert controversy," she said.

The opposition leader expressed her concern over deteriorating law and order situation in the country mentioning recent killing of Islamic Front leader Sheikh Nurul Islam Faruqi and Moghbazar's triple murder.

"Home is the safest place for a person and if he is killed in his own house, then where will he go?" she raised the question and called upon the government to ensure rule of law by bringing the culprits to book.

Raushan also asked the government to distribute adequate relief materials among the flood-affected people.

No deadlines

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Speculation and conspiracy theories are widespread, the most popular of which sees the powerful military as somehow engineering the ongoing crisis.

This view is a consequence of numerous events, the most recent being PTI President Javed Hashmi's allegations that Imran Khan said the current crisis is following a script dictated by the military.

Amid the rallying calls for the PM's resignation and an overthrow of the system, all eyes are on the Supreme Court and the army as the deadlock continues.

In a statement issued yesterday, the ISPR has rejected the assertions that the military and ISI were backing the protesters, reports DawnNews.

The press release states: "ISPR has categorically rejected the assertions that Army and ISI were backing PTI/PAT in anyway in the current political standoff. Army is an apolitical institution and has expressed its unequivocal support for democracy at numerous occasions. It is unfortunate that Army is dragged into such controversies."

Ahead of a joint session of parliament, Pakistan's prime minister and army chief held marathon meetings yesterday over violent anti-government protests that could force the premier of this nuclear-armed country to resign.

Nawaz Sharif again vowed he would not step down under duress, even as

protesters briefly took over the country's state-run television broadcaster and battled security forces in the streets.

The parliamentary session today appears to be an attempt to rally political support to the prime minister's side.

The turmoil comes as part of the mass demonstrations led by cleric Tahir-ul-Qadri and opposition politician Imran Khan. Both demand Sharif step down over their allegations of fraud in last year's election.

The protests, which have been peaceful for weeks, turned ugly this weekend when clashes between protesters and security forces killed three people and wounded some 400 in running street battles in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad.

The last 48 hours saw the anti-government protests morph Islamabad's Red Zone from a concert ground to a bloody battlefield, with at least three people killed and hundreds injured.

Clashes broke out early yesterday and continued sporadically throughout the day. The state PTV channel and its English-language PTV World service were taken off the air after protesters stormed its headquarters.

A PTV source told Reuters the protesters had occupied the main control room and smashed some equipment. Uniformed members of a paramilitary force and soldiers later secured the building and the station later came back on the air.

Defense Minister Khawaja Asif told Reuters the government was preparing to launch a selective crackdown against protesters, possibly later yesterday, and warned demonstrators against storming government buildings.

"The writ of the state must be enforced. We hope to make a decisive move sometimes later today, not in the evening but even before that," he said.

"I personally feel that the next few hours will determine the course of coming events."

The United States, already concerned about regional stability at a time when most of its troops are leaving neighbouring Afghanistan, called for restraint by all sides.

In an interview to a private TV channel, PTI President Javed Hashmi said that he had told his party's chairman not to leave his fate on any third umpire. "Khan Sahib, do not think that the umpire will favour you," Hashmi claimed to have told this to the PTI chairman.

He said Saifullah Niazi, Jahangir Tareen and Sheikh Rasheed were the ones who mended Imran's opinion regarding Army's support. Hashmi claimed that the PTI chief had been assured about support of five Corps Commanders.

There has also been disagreement on how to handle Islamist militants, and on relations with old rival India.

Blue Economy

PM points at potentials of marine resources

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday underscored the marine-based economic activities and management of sea and its resources through "Blue Economy", saying such activities could create new horizon for the development of a coastal country like Bangladesh.

She also emphasised the need for tapping the huge potentials of sea and sea resources through proper management to ensure sustainable development.

The prime minister made the observations while inaugurating a two-day "International Workshop on Blue Economy" at a hotel in the capital.

Hasina said the marine-based economic activities through Blue Economy alongside the existing land-based development activities could further expedite the development of the coastal countries like Bangladesh and the developing coastal states.

"It is time-befitting in the present perspective to continue sustainable trend of Blue Economy using huge natural and mineral resources in and under the sea and the adjoining areas of the ocean."

She also mentioned the unlimited role of sea resources in various economic activities including poverty alleviation, achieving self-sufficiency in food production, maintaining environmental balance and facing the adverse impacts of climate change.

The Prime Minister stressed creating skilled manpower to exploit the marine resources from within the country's huge sea boundary, saying that the nations utilizing the sea and its resources became more prosperous economically than others.

She mentioned that the Bay of Bengal could determine Bangladesh's future development and economic growth through expansion of international trade, use of marine mineral resources for long-term energy security, proper management of marine fish resources, and protection of biodiversity and marine environment.

"The economy of Bangladesh is totally sea borne and with \$130 billion GDP, Bangladesh's economy is the 44th in the world in terms of GDP," she said.

Hasina said Bangladesh has a dearth of skilled manpower and proper technology for exploring marine resources although it has a huge stock of living and non-living resources available under the seabed and water column.

She also mentioned that as a coastal country, the interests of Bangladesh are associated with the sea, and the main obstacle to establishing rights there was unsettled sea boundary with India and Myanmar.

Hasina said it was her government that ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 2001, creating huge opportunity for establishing Bangladesh's rights in the sea on the basis of international laws and regulations.

Schools now flood

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away his books and other essential educational materials recently.

Like the ill-fated boy, many other students in Jamalpur, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Feni and Gaibandha were going through the same situation.

Meanwhile, the waters of all the major rivers except for the Padma were receding yesterday, according to a bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

As the floodwater was receding from the northern districts, the flood situations in the central region, which include such districts as Shariatpur, Madaripur, Munshiganj, Rajbari and Faridpur, may deteriorate in the next two days, added the bulletin.

The water level in the rivers surrounding the capital-- Buriganga, Balu and Turag-- may also rise today, according to the FFWC.

Although floodwaters were receding in the northern districts, people in most flood-hit areas were still reeling under knee-deep water yesterday amid limited efforts of relief distribution, report our correspondents.

In Bogra, floodwaters inundated 62 more villages yesterday as the Jamuna was still flowing above the danger mark.

With this fresh inundation, the number of affected villages in the district reached 262 since the 600-metre embankment collapsed near Shariakandi upazila last Friday.

All the flood victims could not be provided with the necessary relief goods and they are facing a

crisis of food, medicine and pure drinking water, said local sources.

In Chandpur, the embankment protecting the town is under threat as the floodwaters coming from the northern districts are receding through the Meghna.

Bangladesh Water Development Board officials have recently declared the embankment vulnerable and have been dumping sand bags into the river, reports our Chandpur correspondent.

Erosion has taken a serious turn at Mawa Ferry Ghat. Fifty square feet of the area, which had seven shops, were engulfed by the mighty Padma yesterday, disrupting ferry services.

In Munshiganj, the flood situation deteriorated yesterday. At least 100 villages have been inundated in the district since last week.

The number of affected villages went up to 50 in seven upazilas of Sherpur as the old Brahmaputra was still flowing above the danger mark.

KHALEDA ON FLOODS

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday alleged the government was "indifferent" about mitigating the suffering of flood victims.

In a statement, she said "the government is yet to take any effective step to distribute relief materials among the flood-hit people."

"The flood-affected people have been put in a severe crisis due to a shortage of food, drinking water and medicine," Khaleda added.

Lower courts need

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Justice Khairul said the deception of those judges could be stopped if the Supreme Court authorities occasionally monitored their activities.

The commission report said several district and sessions judges leave work during office hours every Thursday and return to work around noon on Sunday, without notifying higher authorities concerned.

The judges subordinate to "the morally weak district judges" leave work the same way without permission from the relevant authorities, resulting in serious damage to the whole judicial functions of the judgeship, the report said.

It recommended issuing show-cause notices on those judges after getting information on their whereabouts over the telephone during certain holidays and around weekends.

The commission said the judges' leaving work like that must be stopped and their staying at work has to be ensured by any means. The district and sessions judges must inform the registrar of the High Court Division about their leaving work early in writing, according to the rules, it said.

The High Court has determined the timeframe for the lower court judges -- from 9:30am to 4:30pm -- for performing judicial activities on a week day.

But, according to multiple probe reports, most judges' courts do not go into session at 9:30am and many judges do not even sit in their courtrooms after lunch.

The lower court judges are supposed to record statements of witnesses in a case every day and only have short adjournments as per the rules.

But most judges do not follow the rules and cases have been piling up over the years, according to the report.

The commission strongly recommended that the government, in consultation with the Supreme Court, appoints honest and sincere retired judges on contract for quick disposal of old pending cases.

According to the commission, around 28 lakh cases were pending with the lower courts across the country and 3.25 lakh cases were with the High Court alone.

There are around 1,700 judges in the lower courts and this number was very insufficient considering the backlog, the report said.

Unlocked

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the secrets that made Harry Houdini the greatest illusionist and stunt performer ever.

It explores the master magician's life and his psyche and reveals how he accomplished some of his greatest tricks.

Among the revelations are that he worked undercover for many years for the American and British governments.

The claim is supported by the 2007 book, The Secret Life of Houdini: The Making of America's First Superhero by William Kalush and Larry Sloman.

In it, the authors suggest Houdini spied on royalty and political leaders of Europe for years and fluency in German, and special abilities like subterfuge and sleight of hand made him an ideal candidate for espionage.

Recruited by the British Secret Service, he passed along vital information he learned while performing for Kaiser Wilhelm and Tsar Nicholas of Russia.

It is claimed he also worked for Scotland Yard, monitored Russian anarchists and chased counterfeiters for the US Secret Service.

Among the tricks explained are how Houdini hid a key to unlock a chain inside a false finger. Houdini employed several other methods of escape from handcuffs, leg irons and jail cells.

It is revealed he hide a key or a lock pick under his foot or in his bushy hair with adhesive to carry out some of his daring escapes.

He also used a hollowed-out compartment of a shoe, or an accomplice who would palm the key in his hand, to be retrieved by Houdini when they shook hands.

If he could inspect a jail cell in advance, Houdini might plant his escape tool in a bar of soap or under a bench.

Houdini similarly smuggled keys and picks into the boxes, milk cans, water tanks and other containers that confined him in his act, manipulating them with his teeth or specially

designed extension rods.

Sometimes he would have the opportunity to use rigged handcuffs. The manacles would lock securely when held upright, but snap open when they were turned upside-down.

He was an accomplished athlete, excelling at gymnastics and was an amateur boxer, all of which gave him the endurance, stamina and strength needed to perform difficult stunts.

Born Ehrich Weiss, the son of a Hungarian rabbi, Houdini came to the US with his family at the age of four, passing through Ellis Island.

Early in his career, he performed as Ehrich the Great before taking his stage name Houdini from magician Robert-Houdin, whose autobiography inspired him.

As an early aficionado of aviation, Houdini learned to pilot his own Voisin biplane and was the third person to fly across Australia in 1910.

In 1913, he introduced his famous Chinese water torture cell, in which he was suspended upside down in a locked glass-and-steel cabinet full of water, holding his breath for more than three minutes, before emerging triumphant.

In December 1914, Houdini was famously summoned to a private meeting at the White House with President Woodrow Wilson, who told him, "I envy your ability of escaping out of tight places. Sometimes I wish I were able to do the same."

Then, during World War I, Houdini entertained troops and held classes for soldiers, demonstrating how to escape from ropes, handcuffs and shipwrecks.

He died in Detroit in 1926 of peritonitis due to a ruptured, infected appendix a week after being punched by a college student challenging the magician's much-boasted-about abdominal strength.

The incident may have contributed to and aggravated his condition.

The show, called Houdini, will air on the History Channel over two nights with Oscar-winning actor Adrien Brody, 41, in the title role.