

RU TEACHER MURDER

Arrestees deny involvement

Rab forced them to make confessional statement, they tell court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The six men arrested by Rapid Action Battalion in connection with Rajshahi University Prof AKM Shafiqul Islam murder have denied their involvement in the killing.

Five of the six accused were produced before three Rajshahi courts for recording their statements yesterday, just two days after they during a press conference in the capital "confessed" to killing the teacher.

Abdus Samad alias Pintu, 34, a former RU Chhatra Dal leader masterminded the killing following a row centring his wife, Rab made the claim at the programme on Sunday.

The woman is also an employee at the university.

The other five Rab arrestees are Ariful Islam alias Manik, 33; Sabuj Sheikh, 18; Sirajul Islam alias Kalu, 22; Al Mamun, 31; and Ibrahim Khalil alias "Tokai" Babu, 21.

"Tokai" Babu has been denying his involvement from the very beginning.

The five accused denied the murder charges before the courts yesterday, saying Rab had forced them to make the confession earlier, court and police sources said.

The five accused were assaulted by Rab for the confession, families have alleged.

Police and Rab have come up with contradictory versions of the motive behind the murder.

Rajshahi police, after arresting three people from Bogra recently, said two of the detainees claimed responsibilities for the murder on social media.

Prof Shafiqul, 48, known as a progressive-minded teacher at RU, was hacked to death by assailants near his house in Rajshahi's Choddopai area on November 15.

Two hours after the murder, a so-called militant outfit Ansar Al Islam Bangladesh-2 reportedly claimed responsibility for the murder on its Facebook page.

WAR CRIMES VERDICT

Dhaka protests resolution in Pakistan's Khyber assembly

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has strongly protested the resolution adopted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Provincial Assembly of Pakistan on the war crimes verdicts, terming it "direct interference" in the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

In a diplomatic note sent to the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka yesterday, the Foreign Ministry deplored the adoption of the said resolution by the KPK Assembly, which it said was a brazen denial of justice for the victims of the heinous crimes committed by the convicted individuals and that the KPK Assembly chose to speak for Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.

The KPK Assembly was advised not to make such sweeping, biased, misinformed and politically motivated remarks about the independent legal system of a foreign country, the note said.

"By so doing the KPK Assembly seriously undermined its standing as a responsible, credible and representative body speaking on behalf of its constituency," the note added.

The diplomatic note further stated that the Resolution adopted by KPK Assembly was tantamount to direct interference in the domestic affairs of Bangladesh.

It was deeply regretted that despite repeated overtures made to the Pakistan side, the misleading, motivated and malicious campaign against the trial of the crimes against humanity and genocide in Bangladesh continued unabated within different quarters in Pakistan.

The government of Pakistan was requested to take due note of these issues.

On November 6, the Foreign Ministry summoned the acting high commissioner of Pakistan Ahmad Hussain Dayo and strongly protested Islamabad's reaction to the recent verdict in the trial of war criminal Motiur Rahman Nizami.

In an aide-memoire, the government deplored the comments made by a senior and important cabinet member of Pakistan government regarding the verdict by the International Crimes Tribunal, Bangladesh without appreciating its true perspective.

Earlier on December 17, 2013, Dhaka summoned the then Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Afrasiab Mehdi Hashmi Qureshi and deplored the resolutions adopted by the Pakistan National Assembly and Punjab Provincial Assembly expressing concern over the execution of war criminal Quader Mollah.

AL submits tax return

UNB, Dhaka

The ruling Awami League yesterday submitted party's income-tax return for 2013-2014 fiscal year to the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

Awami League office secretary Dr Abdus Sobhan Golap and AL leader ABM

Reazul Kabir Kawsar submitted the tax return to the Deputy Commissioner of Taxes at NBR's Topkhana office in the city.

Party sources said the income of the ruling party during the financial year was around Tk 12 crore while the expenditure was Tk 6 crore.

Latif Siddique lands in jail

FROM PAGE 1

State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury gave contradictory statements about the procedures for arresting the lawmaker from Tangail-4.

But things moved fast after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday night asked the home minister to arrest the ex-post and telecommunications minister, according to home ministry sources.

Latif spent the Monday night at a house close to Dhanmondi Police Station and walked to the station to surrender yesterday afternoon, said a close aide to the former Awami League presidium member.

"He [Latif] wanted to take a rickshaw to go to the police station. But the intelligence personnel watching over him prevented him for security reasons. They offered him a ride, but he refused and walked to the police station," said Latif's aide.

Latif made a phone call to The Daily Star at 1:14pm, and told the newspaper about his surrender. "Whatever will be, will be... let's see," he said in reply to a query.

The lawmaker, who seemed nonchalant as usual, said he stood by his stance.

A source close to the ex-minister said he was calm and composed in the last two days and asked them not to worry about him.

On entering the Dhanmondi Model Police Station, Latif asked aloud, "Where's the OC's room?"

He was wearing a white striped shirt, ash-coloured pant and white shoes. He stayed in the OC's room for around 10 minutes and appeared to be in a good mood, said police sources.

Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of the station, then took him to the court by a police vehicle.

Helal Uddin, OC (investigation) of the station, said they took him to the court because they didn't have any warrant for his arrest.

As Latif was produced before the court around 2:10pm, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Atiqur Rahman asked him if he needed a lawyer or wanted bail.

He told the magistrate that he would speak on his own.

Plaintiff Abed Raza said the former minister had hurt religious sentiments

of 200 crore Muslims across the world, and he demanded his exemplary punishment.

Without hearing anything from the accused, the magistrate immediately ordered police to take him to jail. The court fixed December 30 for the next hearing in the case.

During yesterday's hearing, a section of lawyers demonstrated outside the court demanding Latif's punishment.

After the court ruling, some lawyers even showed shoes to him while he was being escorted to a prison van bound for Dhaka Central Jail.

As the van reached the prison, the four-time lawmaker from Tangail refused to enter the jail through a mini gate, saying he was still a sitting MP. He asked the policemen to open the main gate.

Latif waited for around 15 minutes until the authorities opened the main gate.

During that time, reporters repeatedly sought his comments, but he refused. Folding his hands, he requested them not to ask him any questions.

He entered the jail around 3:40pm.

Senior Jail Super Forman Ali told The Daily Star that Latif was given first class division as he is a sitting lawmaker.

The ex-minister faces 22 cases in 18 districts for hurting religious sentiments. Of those, eight were filed in Dhaka. Arrest warrants were issued on him in four cases.

He was sacked from the cabinet on October 12 following his comments against hajj and Tabligh Jamaat at a programme in New York on September 28.

Later, he was expelled from the AL presidium, and also lost primary membership of the ruling party.

His remarks touched off a huge uproar at home and abroad.

Several Islamist parties and organisations announced daylong hartal for Thursday if he was not arrested. They, however, called off the hartal yesterday.

During his stay in Kolkata, he told The Daily Star that he was eager to return home. "It is better to be in jail than to stay abroad. I have experience of staying in prison," he said.

Chaitanya Chandra Halder contributed to this report.

LBA okayed by Indian parliamentary committee

An Indian parliamentary body has okayed the India-Bangladesh land boundary agreement bill.

The decision came at a meeting of the Indian Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs Ministry yesterday, reports BBC Bangla Service.

The committee advised the central government to place the bill at the parliament as soon as possible.

Quoting committee members, BBC Bangla Service reported that the bill might be passed during the current winter session of the Indian parliament.

The bill was sent to the committee for approval after it was placed before the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian parliament, last year.

Committee Chief and Congress lawmaker Shashi Tharoor had convened yesterday's meeting.

Riots erupt

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said St. Louis County police chief Jon Belmar.

Twenty-nine demonstrators were arrested.

The grand jury concluded that officer Darren Wilson, who shot at 18-year-old Michael Brown 12 times, had acted in legitimate self defense after they got into an "altercation" as the officer investigated a robbery at a store, said St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Robert McCulloch.

But a separate federal civil rights investigation into the Wilson incident and Ferguson policing in general will continue, US Attorney General Eric Holder said.

After the violence broke out in Ferguson, protests quickly spread to major US cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, but there were no reports of violence.

In Ferguson, a mainly black town with a mainly white police force, officers were stunned by a spasm of fury right after the hotly awaited verdict. It came after three months of deliberations by the grand jury following Brown's death in August.

Belmar said he had hoped the reaction "might not be too bad."

"But frankly, as soon as Mr McCulloch announced the verdict, the officers started taking rocks and batteries," he told a press conference a few hours after midnight.

"I personally heard about 150 shots fired," he added. A highway patrol officer told him his men felt like "we were in a death funnel," Belmar said.

As the unrest continued into the night, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon called in additional National Guard forces to help restore order.

Brown's death in August had sparked weeks of sometimes violent protests. But Monday's episode was worse, Belmar said.

As McCulloch rounded off his summary of the grand jury's decision, Brown's mother burst into tears and a crowd began to chant: "Hey, hey, ho, ho! These killer cops have got to go."

Riot officers responded to protesters with teargas, batons and flash grenades, and running battles broke out, with armored cars moving slowly through the area.

Looters smashed their way into a mobile phone store opposite the police headquarters and ransacked it. An AFP journalist was hurt when he was hit in the face with a brick.

Pat Bailey, a retiree from St Louis in her 60s, said she had expected the decision. "I've lived long enough to know that African Americans are not considered human beings," she said.

OBAMA APPEALS FOR CALM

Outside the White House in Washington, a crowd waved signs urging the government to "Stop racist police terror."

1971 WAR CRIMES

Evidence found against 2 suspects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators have found evidence against two siblings of their "involvement" in crimes against humanity committed in Kishoreganj during the Liberation War in 1971.

The suspects are Nasir Uddin Ahmed, 62, a former army officer, and Shamsuddin Ahmed, 60, a lawyer of a Kishoreganj court. They are sons of late Razzaque Munshi of Karimganj Madhyapara under Karimganj Police Station.

An investigation agency designated to probe the war crimes of 1971 has finalised its report with five war crimes charges against the duo, Abdul Hannan Khan, coordinator of the agency, told at a press briefing at their Dhanmondi office in Dhaka yesterday.

The agency would submit the report to the prosecution as the duo's "involvement" in crimes like mass killing, murder, loot, confinement and torture "has been preliminarily proved" by the evidence collected during investigation, Hannan added.

He said they would hand over the report, statements of witnesses and other documents to the prosecution today [Wednesday]. After that, the prosecution would scrutinise the documents to press formal charges before the tribunal to initiate trial.

Sanaul Huq, a senior member of the prosecution, said they would ask the prosecution to take necessary legal steps to



Nasir Shamsuddin

have the duo arrested.

Nasir, who went into forced retirement in 2002 as army captain, escaped immediately after the investigation had started in June last year, while Shamsuddin was practicing law in the Kishoreganj District Judge's Court, said Sanaul.

On their alleged role in 1971, he said the duo had joined the Razakar Bahini, an auxiliary force of the Pakistani army, and jointly committed crimes in Karimganj.

After the war they had gone into hiding and later pursued their studies changing name and age, he said, adding, after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in August 1975, they were rehabilitated.

The agency had cited 40 people as witnesses in the case, he added.

The agency has meanwhile once again sought amendment to the corresponding section of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 so that it can arrest an accused without a warrant.

Guardians again allege

FROM PAGE 16

Secretariat office.

The minister added they would take necessary action after inspection if the officials concerned filed any report.

He further said his officials had checked the matter as soon as they heard it from the media but found later that those were not the original questions.

In some cases around 30 to 50 percent questions got matched, but it could be the result of suggestions, he observed.

The minister alleged that some people were circulating questions through different media including Facebook with an ill motive. Making money was not their only intention as

they wanted to put the examinations in question, he added.

However, several parents accompanying their children to the exam centres in the capital yesterday expressed disappointment over the alleged question leak.

"Most of the sample questions posted on different Facebook pages match with the real ones. It is utterly frustrating," said Ahmed Hossain, whose son is taking the exam from Mohammadpur Preparatory Higher Secondary School.

"I don't know why the government is failing to check the menace, which is frequently hitting different public exams. It will destroy the education system."

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Convict, govt can seek SC review

FROM PAGE 1

Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain signed it.

The other four judges are -- Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik.

After the International Crimes Tribunal-2 had sentenced him to life imprisonment in February 2013, Mollah appealed to the SC seeking acquittal of war crimes charges while the prosecution sought his death penalty.

The apex court sentenced him to death, overruling the tribunal verdict. The debate over the right to move review petitions arose when Mollah filed the two review petitions against the SC verdict.

Mollah's lawyers claimed that their clients had the right to seek review as per the constitution.

while Attorney General Mahbubey Alam opined that the trials of war crimes cases were being held under a special law, which does not allow any of the party to move a review petition before the SC.

The review petitions were dismissed by the Appellate Division as there was "no merit" in those. The Jamaat leader was executed on December 12 last year.

The same debate surfaced again after the SC on September 17 this year had sentenced another Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee to life imprisonment for his war crimes.

After the SC delivered its verdict in the war crimes case against Kamaruzzaman, it was still not clear whether a war crimes convict has the right to move a review petition.

Yesterday, the Appellate

Division said review petitions filed by individuals convicted under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 are maintainable.

Since there is no scope to file a review petition under the act, the SC has exercised its inherent power to reach the decision.

The court said it has allowed both the defence and the prosecution to file review petitions to examine whether there is any error in the judgement on the appeal.

Sentence of a convict, the SC said, cannot be executed unless the review petition is disposed of, but the review petition should be disposed of on priority basis.

The apex court said the jail code provision of seven days or 21 days will not be applicable in executing the sentence.

"If a warrant of death for execution is communicated to the Jail

authority after it is confirmed or imposed by this Division, the condemned prisoner should be afforded an opportunity to file a mercy petition [presidential mercy] and he should also be afforded an opportunity to meet his near ones before the execution of the sentence," it added.

"If any review or mercy petition is filed or pending, the sentence cannot be executed unless the petitions are disposed of. So, the period of seven days or 21 days mentioned in sub-rules (I) and (VI) of rule 991 of the Jail Code have no force of law under the changed conditions."

Yesterday, the attorney general told reporters at his office that his office would decide whether it would file review petition against the SC verdict on Sayedee after getting the full judgment delivered on the appeal.

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