



Illius Biswas, a victim of the arson attack on a truck in Magura Saturday, tries to quench his thirst as a relative helps him. He has to endure excruciating pain just to have a drink. The other victims, right, of the arson attack lying in their beds at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Three of the nine injured in the attack have died.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Carjackers kill driver of SUV

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two carjackers killed the driver of a sport utility vehicle at Diabari in the capital's Mirpur.

The killers, one of whom was known to the driver, invited him to dinner and then knocked him out with sedatives in his drink.

Then they took the unconscious driver to an isolated place and ran the SUV over his tied-up body on Tuesday.

Police revealed the incident of murder after arresting Morsheda Akhtar alias Priya, 32, and her cohort Mehedi Hasan, 36, from Kazifuri area in Mirpur on Saturday.

The victim has been identified as Tipu Sultan. The SUV that law enforcers recovered is allotted to a project director of the planning ministry, police said.

Mehedi and Priya are the members of a carjacker gang, Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam of Dhaka Metropolitan Police told a press briefing at DMP media centre yesterday.

The arrestees, who met each other in prison last year, were paraded before the media.

The murder took place early Tuesday, Monirul said after gleaning information from the arrestees.

The planning ministry officials informed police that Tipu and the SUV went missing on that day.

Tipu's wife Eti Parvin identified the body at Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue the following day.

Police then launched an investigation into the matter and a team of Detective Branch of police arrested Priya and Mehedi at Mirpur on Saturday.

Arson attacks

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around 4:30pm.

Matin's uncle Rawshan Ali, 36, and another day labourer, Shakil Ahmed, 32, also died from burn injuries at the unit. Rawshan died immediately after he was brought to the hospital around 2:30am, while Shakil died around 12:30pm.

The other six were under treatment.

"The six patients are in a critical condition," Partha Shankar Pal, resident surgeon at the burn unit, told The Daily Star.

The condition of truck helper Mohammad Yeadul, who suffered 90 percent burns, was more critical than that of the rest.

Meanwhile, truck owner Khandakar Sharif Uddin from Jessore, who suffered burns in a firebomb attack in Chandpur on March 19, died at the burn unit yesterday.

With these deaths, 92 people have

been killed so far, mostly in arson attacks, in violence since the BNP-led 20-party alliance launched its non-stop blockade on January 6.

At least 181 arson victims were brought to the burn unit. Of them, 20 died and 31 are under treatment. The rest left the hospital, said sources at the DMCH.

Truck owner Sharif, 40, who was going to Khulna from Chittagong by a truck, suffered 88 percent burns, as alleged blockaders hurled a petrol bomb at the vehicle on the way in Chandpur around 3:20pm on March 19.

"While under treatment, he [Sharif] frequently told us to take care of his three children," said Sharif's brother-in-law Badaruddin.

OTHER INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE
In the capital, suspected blockaders set alight a double-decker bus of Dhaka University on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the Farmgate area around 7:30pm.

Pickets torched a bus of the United Paribahan at Mirpur around 10:30pm. Fire fighters extinguished the flames within a few minutes, according to fire service officials.

In another incident, arsonists set fire to a bus of Jahangirnagar University on the campus around 4:30am.

Ansar members doused the flames, said Jeftul Ahmed Sajal, a security official at the JU.

In Shibalaya upazila of Manikganj, a library room of Utholy Gani Sarker High School was torched on Saturday night.

Around a hundred books and some certificates were gutted, said Hosne Ara, head teacher at the school.

In the meantime, police in overnight drives arrested five BNP and Jamaat-Shibir men from different areas of Sitakunda upazila in Chittagong for their alleged links with subversive activities.

DNCC MAYOR RACE

Ershad sacks adviser Bobby

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad has sacked his special adviser Bobby Hajjai.

Ershad took the action yesterday, a day after Bobby declared his mayoral candidacy for the upcoming Dhaka North City Corporation polls, violating party decision.

"Special adviser to the Jatiya Party is not an organisational post. Therefore the party chairman has relieved him [Bobby] of his duties," Ershad said in a statement.

"He will have no relation to the party from now on," said the statement undersigned by Sunil Shuvo Roy, political secretary of the JP chief.

Ershad, also the special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a meeting on March 8 endorsed Bahauddin Ahmed Babul and Hazi Saifuddin Ahmed Milan as mayoral candidates for DNCC and DSCC polls scheduled to be held on April 28.

But despite the party decision, Bobby, son of business tycoon Moosa Bin Shamsar, on Saturday declared his mayoral candidacy for DNCC polls.

In a press conference at his Banani office, Bobby said Ershad is like a father to him, and hoped his [Ershad] blessing is with him and will always be.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Bobby said the JP chief's decision was unfortunate and undesirable.

"City corporation election is a non-partisan one by nature. There is no question of backing any candidate from the party in the local body election. Everyone eligible has the right to contest the city corporation polls," he added.

Bangladesh gets award for women empowerment

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has won the Women in Parliaments Global Forum award, known as WIP award, as a pioneering country in reducing gender discrimination.

The WIP awards are presented to those countries, which are recognised for their political empowerment of women, and to countries that show regional leadership in closing the gender gap in politics.

The awards are based on the rankings of the World Economic Forum's "Global Gender Gap Report", which are compiled in collaboration with the Harvard University and University of California, Berkeley.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam will receive the prestigious award on behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today at the annual summit 2015 of WIP to be held in Ethiopia, said a ministry press release yesterday.

Shahriar left Dhaka for Ethiopia on Saturday night for a three-day official visit to attend the event. He is leading a three-member delegation.

"New Leadership for Global Challenges" is the theme of the WIP summit 2015, co-hosted by the African Union and co-financed by the European Commission.

It focuses on new leadership for change; on the need for variety of different leaders, men and women, that are willing to work together, and share insights and innovations on how best to deal with the global challenges of today and navigate the future.

Female parliamentarians from around the world are attending the WIP annual summit at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa.



Hasina Ahmed, wife of the missing BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed, speaks at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'Return' Salahuddin or face dire consequence

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"Law enforcers had talks with local youths, security guards and the caretaker of the building before they whisked away Salahuddin Ahmed. There are many eyewitnesses of the operation. Therefore, there is no way to avoid responsibility by denying the arrest," said the statement, signed by Khaleda's Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Sohel.

Meanwhile, Salahuddin's wife Hasina Ahmed yesterday renewed her call on the prime minister to order law

enforcers to return her husband.

"I have proof that law enforcement agencies have picked up my husband. And I believe I will get him back if the prime minister orders the law enforcers to return him," she told a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

"Eyewitnesses of the incident like security guards and domestic helps of the house have disappeared [after the incident]. I cannot trace them either," Hasina claimed.

Family members allege plainclothes law enforcers flashing identity

cards of detectives picked up Salahuddin from a house in Uttara on March 10.

Following a petition by his wife with the High Court, five law enforcement agencies submitted five reports to the attorney general's office on March 15, saying they did not arrest the BNP leader.

On Thursday, Hasina Ahmed submitted a memorandum to the PM, seeking her intervention to trace her husband.

She also sought an appointment

Seize property

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had already directed the intelligence agency to identify the culprits behind such incidents.

Hasina, also chief of the ruling Awami League, urged the Aleem-Ulema to put up a strong resistance against the anti-Islamic activities of the BNP-Jamaat as their misdeeds were damaging the religion's image globally.

Islam is the religion of peace and there is no place for subversive acts, terrorism and militancy in it, she said.

The PM also urged the Islamic scholars to come forward to create awareness among religious-minded people against militancy, and thus establish a safe Bangladesh for future generation.

When the government is working for Islam's welfare, the BNP-Jamaat alliance is creating anarchy in the name of religion using very simple pious people, Hasina said.

They have been calling hartal and blockade programmes without any

reason and burning people, including children and expectant mothers, to death.

People are now not responding to BNP-Jamaat's call as they realised the politics of fraud and falsehood in the name of Islam, she told her audience.

Referring to her stance against terrorism and militancy, Hasina mentioned that she was highly vocal at a meeting with world leaders in Milan last year, saying there was no relation between Islam and terrorism.

The PM further said her government had been working to set up at least one modern and model mosque in every upazila and district.

There will be an Islamic Foundation Bhaban in the mosque complex alongside, separate space for women to offer their prayers.

The government will appoint at least one teacher of religious subject in every school to groom students, Hasina told the function at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Woman, her two kids found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A woman and her two children were found dead at Bhakoir village under Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj district yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Rumena Khatun, 30, wife of Farid Uddin, and their daughter Muslima Khatun, 7, and son Musa Mian, 5.

Rumena's husband Farid said the three went out of their house in the morning when he was asleep. "As I started searching for them at around 8:00am, I found the bodies of Muslima and Musa floating on the

pond and my wife hanging from a nearby tree."

Being informed by locals, police went to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them to Habiganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Rumena's father Mashuk Mian said they might have been killed by Farid over a family feud.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Liakat Ali of Nabiganj Police Station said the woman might have committed suicide after killing her two children.

"We have already started investigation into the incident," the OC added.

Tigers home

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plenty of sweets.

"The best thing about the team was that we believed in ourselves. We actually believed that we could go through to the semifinals despite the defeat. Our players played very well. If I have to select the player-of-the-tournament for us it would be a tie between Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad," captain Mashrafe said in a crowded press briefing at the airport.

The players left the airport under tight security. The fans waiting outside cheered every vehicle carrying the players passing by them.

The Tigers' next assignment is a full series against fellow World Cup quarterfinalists Pakistan at home from mid-April.

Artillery rocks Ukraine despite truce

AFP, Donetsk

Artillery fire rocked the outskirts of the rebel-held east Ukraine city of Donetsk yesterday in the latest clashes to rattle an internationally-brokered ceasefire between pro-Russian separatists and Kiev.

The sound of intensive explosions erupted at 9:00 am (0600 GMT) and appeared to come from the area around Donetsk airport, one of several flashpoints where shelling has rumbled on despite the February truce deal that has eased fighting around much of eastern Ukraine.

The Ukrainian army said rebels

located near the airport had used small arms, 82mm mortar shells and rocket-propelled grenades against government troops overnight.

It said there had been three injuries in its ranks but no deaths.

In the separatist stronghold of Lugansk, the army also came under fire from small arms and heavier 120mm mortar shells, according to an official statement.

The overall rate of fighting has declined sharply since the peace deal, which obliges both sides to stop shooting and withdraw heavy weapons, was hammered out by the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine.