

BNP's Abbas, Goyeshwar, Khoka charged with murder of Shibir leader

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Rampura police yesterday pressed charges against 37 BNP leaders and activists, including Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, and Sadeque Hossain Khoka, in connection with the killing of Islami Chhatra Shibir leader Mansur Pradhania.

According to the case statement, Mansur, 20, of Askona in the capital and a leader of Airport thana unit of Jamaat-e-Islami backed Chhatra Shibir, was killed in a clash between police and activists of the then BNP-led-18 party alliance before Diana Hotel in Malibagh about 11:00am on December 29, 2013. On the day, the clash ensued when the 18-party alliance, including Jamaat, brought out a procession to join "March for Democracy", a showdown, in Palatan demanding cancellation of the schedule for January 5 polls. The other accused include BNP leaders Amanullah Aman and Salauddin Ahmed.

Mohammad Mamunur Rashid, sub-inspector of Rampura Police Station and also investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, showing 32 people as prosecution witnesses.

Of the accused, 35 including Abbas, Goyeshwar and Aman, are now on bail while Khoka and Salauddin were shown as fugitives.

The IO appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants for Khoka and Salauddin.

Following the clash, police filed a murder case against Abbas, Khoka, Goyeshwar, Aman and 33 others with Rampura Police Station.



These small shacks propped up by bamboos dot the sides of Dhaka-Mawa highway. They have grown over the past several years. Hit by grinding poverty, people from the country's north stay there and work as farmworkers in nearby areas from February to May, when potato and boro rice are cultivated and harvested, before going back to their permanent homes. The photo was taken this week. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Make 18 unconditional minimum marriageable age for females

Rights activists demand again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No condition to bring down the minimum marriageable age for females from 18 to 16 should be added to the proposed "Child Marriage Restraint Act 2014", activists from three networks of over 500 local and foreign NGOs and development organisations said yesterday.

They called for retaining the age at 18 as per the current Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929.

The three forums -- Girls Not Brides, Child Rights Advocacy Coalition in Bangladesh, and Bangladesh Girl Power Alliance -- made the call from a news conference at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

"...we came to know that in the

government-proposed new draft of Child Marriage Restraint Act 2014, a new section is being added, which mentions that a 16-year-old can be married off with her parents' and court's consent based on justifiable reasons, and after completion of the marriage, the girl will not be considered a minor," said Shaikh M Jobayed Hossain, manager (advocacy and communications), Plan International Bangladesh.

However, Meher Afroze Chumki, state minister for women and children affairs, told The Daily Star by phone that nothing had been finalised yet.

"This is a very sensitive subject. We are still discussing it," she said, observing that despite the current minimum

age being 18, many girls are getting married before 18 because of various social problems.

"Girls often get pregnant before marriage, and parents cannot accept it and face social problems," she said, adding that the government was thinking how to address these special cases.

"Besides, such provisions exist in many Western countries," she said. The minimum marriageable age is 16 in the UK and many European countries, she added.

Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association (BNWLA), said, "Child marriage is not a problem for the UK or other European country, so it does not matter what their laws say about

the minimum age."

"In addition, out-of-marriage pregnancies mostly occur when girls are raped. Will we be doing justice by legalising marriage with the rapist?" she asked.

According to Unicef's 2013 data, 66.2 percent of Bangladeshi females aged 20-24 got married before 18. This is the highest rate of early marriage in Asia and fourth in the world.

"Girls between ages 11 and 18 are married off even when the current minimum marriage age is 18. If it is decreased to 16, people will marry off their daughters at 8," said cricket coach Mitu Roy, who prevented her own marriage five years ago when she was a student of class-VIII.

NEWS IN brief

RU students donate money for Nepal quake victims

RU CORRESPONDENT

Some students of Rajshahi University donated Tk 15,300 for the earthquake victims in Nepal yesterday. They have collected the money from teachers and students of the university, said one of the organisers Ariful Islam, an MA student of psychology department.

Youth shot dead in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals shot dead a youth in the capital's Jatrabari area yesterday evening. With chest wounds, Billal Hossain, an electrician was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Victim's brother Al Amin told reporters at DMCH that the miscreants also beat him up before shooting him at Mirhazirbagh. Jatrabari police could not ascertain the reason behind the killing immediately.

'Robber' killed in mob beating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An alleged robber was killed in a mob beating in Lotchandrapur village of Banskhali upazila of Chittagong yesterday. Habibur Rahman, 35, of Sadhanpur area was caught by locals when a gang of 10 to 12 robbers were fleeing after looting valuables, including Tk 25,000, from two houses around 2:45am. Later, locals beat him to death. Police sent the body to Chittagong Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

Trader shot, robbed of Tk 24 lakh

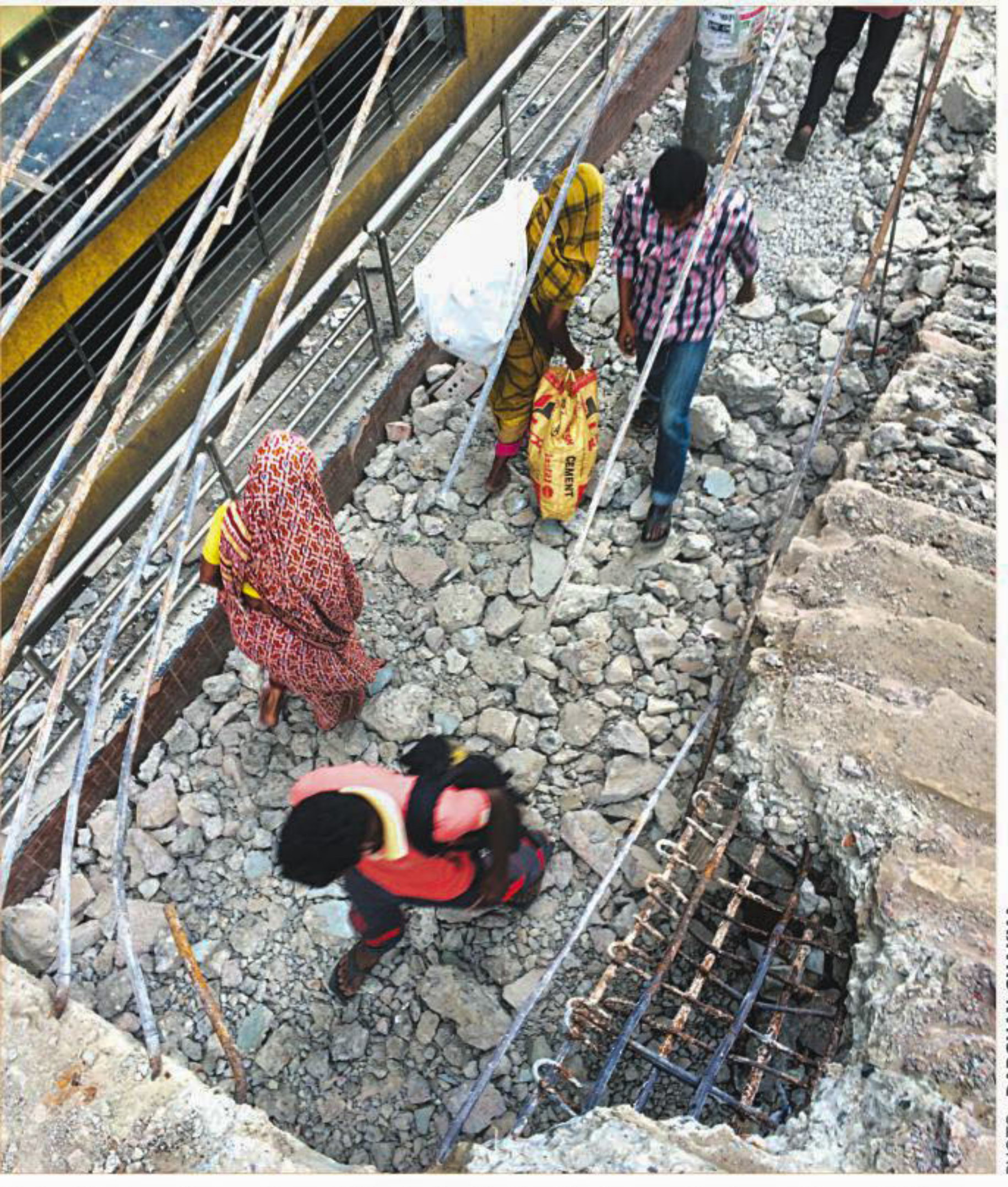
OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Muggers shot a trader and snatched away Tk 24.5 lakh from him in Fatullah of Narayanganj Sadar yesterday. Helal Uddin, 30, of the area, is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital with several bullets injuries in his thigh. Quoting family members, police said around 7 to 8 criminals on motorcycles waylaid Helal in Tushardhara Zero Point area and shot several bullets at him before taking away the money around 9:30am.

Turkish Hope School gets Int'l Arch of Europe Award

CITY DESK

International Turkish Hope School of Bangladesh received the International Arch of Europe Award in the Gold category for strong commitment to quality and excellence, said a press release. Bedrettin SUATA, chairman, received the prize from Jose E Prieto, president of BID Group at the InterContinental Frankfurt Convention hall. International Turkish Hope School makes quality a core focus for continuous improvement of management to maintain leadership in its sector and community.



Pedestrians walk over the rubble of a footbridge that once stood near Ananda Cinema at the capital's Farmgate, yesterday. The widely used structure is being demolished for a replacement but the slow progress of work, that too without proper safety measures, seriously hampers movement of people. The footbridge had been shut to the public for months before the authorities started its demolition recently.

Missing boy's body found as "killer's" wife tells on him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A strange woman has helped a mother to find her missing boy's body, revealing "own husband's involvement in the murder".

The two women with the help of a few policemen and locals recovered the skeleton of 18-year-old rag picker, Yasin Arafat, from inside a hollow pillar of Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover at the capital's Sayedabad on Wednesday night.

The mother, Swapna, identified his son by the red T-shirt and bracelet on the skeleton.

"A woman came to my house on Wednesday evening and said her husband with five others killed my son about one and a half months back," she said.

After the recovery the woman testified before a magistrate against his husband. Meanwhile, Swapna also mentioned a neighbour's name Billal, who she suspected was also involved in the murder, as Billal owed Tk 2,500 to Yasin. Jatrabari police arrested Billal. Billal confessed that he and five others, including the woman's husband, killed Yasin, said the investigation officer.

90pc vote cast in six Dhaka polling centres

FROM PAGE 3

Chittagong held on April 28 witnessed numerous irregularities including ballot box stuffing and harassment of journalists. BNP boycotted the elections halfway though voting hours.

The AL-backed mayoral candidate of DNCC Annisul Huq got 2,122 votes in the Uttara High School and College centre while BNP-backed candidate Tabith Awal got 307 votes there.

In Maniknagar Model High School centre, AL-backed mayoral candidate of DSCC Sayeed Khokon bagged 1,611 votes while BNP-backed candidate Tabith Awal got 381 votes there.

In BHBFC Adarsha Ucca Biddaloy at Uttara sector 8, Annisul Huq got 1,359 votes and Tabith got 243 votes at

the same polling centre where 84.30 percent votes were cast.

In Paris International School at north Goran, Khokon bagged 1,409 votes and Abbas got 198 votes. Around 93.08 votes were cast there.

In Kamalapur School and College centre, Khokon bagged 1,337 votes and Abbas got 318 votes. Around 94.53 percent votes were cast there.

About this, former election commissioner M Sakhawat Hussain said, "On the basis of my experience, I can say it is impossible to cast 80 or 90 percent of votes in local government elections in Bangladesh."

"Each voter has to vote in three ballot papers in local government elections and it takes around 4 to 5 minutes on an average. If we calculate the time limit and number of voters,

we can see that a maximum of 50 percent of votes can be cast in a polling centre," he told The Daily Star.

"So, it seems huge vote rigging took place in these polling centres," viewed Sakhawat.

Eminent local government expert Dr Tofail Ahmed said such "abnormally" high rates of votes being cast raise questions on whether vote rigging or ballot box stuffing occurred at these polling stations. The EC should look into the matter, he said.

EC Secretary Sirazul Islam told The Daily Star, "As the poll result has been published in official gazette, we have no option to bring any change in polling result. But we will look into the matter for our administrative purpose that how such high rate of vote casting took place at these centres."

Trafficking

FROM PAGE 4

Mujibur Rahman, one of the two arrested on Wednesday, said he had been in the syndicate since 1996, said Rab. The other arrestee is Faisal-ur-Rashid.

Lt Commander Masud Rana, commanding officer of Rab-2, yesterday said the victims were from around the country, making Rab suspect that the traffickers might have agents country-wide.

Meanwhile, Dhanmondi police said the two arrestees were remanded yesterday for two days each in the trafficking case filed by Abul Kalam Azad.

New Dhaka

FROM PAGE 3

Administrator Md Shawkat Mostafa and DNCC Administrator Rakhal Chandra Barman, an official of Local Government and Engineering Department confirmed it.

Hearing on Khaleda's challenges adjourned

FROM PAGE 4

company Niko during BNP-led government's tenure.

The Gato graft case was filed the same year against the BNP chief and 12 others on charges of corruption in awarding Global Agro Trade (Pvt) Co Ltd (Gatco) a contract for container management at inland container depots in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The ACC on February 26, 2008 filed the case accusing Khaleda and several others of causing a loss of Tk 159 crore to the state exchequer by awarding a contract for operating Barapukuria coalmine to a Chinese company through abuse of power.

Following the writ petitions in 2008, the HC stayed the case proceedings and issued rules on the government and ACC to explain why the cases against her should not be scrapped.

Recruiting primary school teachers

FROM PAGE 4

review of yesterday's order.

According to a circular of primary and mass education ministry in 2010, recruitment of assistant teachers to the then registered non-government primary schools was supposed to be made from upazila-based panels of selected candidates.

But as per the primary and mass education board's decision of 2012, around 14,000 candidates were appointed from union-based panels of selected candidates at different times.

Ten candidates, who were deprived of jobs due to decision, from Naogaon filed a writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the decision and seeking its order for appointing them.

The SC yesterday dismissed the government's appeal against the HC order of June 18.



US Coast Guard handed over a cutter, "Rush", to Bangladesh Navy as "BNS Somudra Avijan" in Alameda, California on Wednesday. At 378 feet, the ship will arrive in Bangladesh later this year. Two years ago, the US transferred another cutter, which joined the navy's fleet as BNS Somudra Joy, to help Bangladesh enhance its maritime capability. PHOTO: COLLECTED

PRAYER TIMING
MAY 8

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4:50	12:30	5:00	6:34	8:00
JAZAN	4:50	1:15	5:15	6:38
JAMAAT	4:50	1:15	5:15	6:38

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION