

KIBRIA MURDER

# Charge framing now Aug 25

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The charge framing in the former finance minister SAMS Kibria murder case has been deferred until August 25.

With this, the charge framing has been delayed for the seventh time.

During yesterday's hearing, Sylhet Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Makbul Ahsan fixed the new date for the charge framing as suspended mayor of Sylhet City Corporation Ariful Haque Chowdhury, one of the accused in the case, was not present at the court for his sickness.

Thirteen accused, including former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babor and suspended mayor of



Habiganj, out of 14 in the case were present in the dock.

Ariful's lawyer Mohammad Ala submitted a time petition to the court, saying his client could not be present before the court for his sickness.

On August 10, the tribunal fixed August 18 for charge framing in the murder case.

On 11 June, Kibria murder case was transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal from Habiganj Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court for its quick disposal.

On 27 January, 2005, five people, including Kibria, were killed and 70 others injured in a grenade attack on a public rally of local Awami League at Baiddar Bazar in Habiganj Sadar upazila.

# Dhaka 2nd least liveable city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has remained the second least liveable city in the world on the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) liveability survey of 140 cities.

The capital scored 38.7 out of 100 in areas of healthcare, education, stability, culture and environment, and infrastructure, according to the Global Liveability Index 2015, published yesterday.

Dhaka came second from the bottom of the index in 2014 and 2013 as well. It was rated as the least liveable city in 2012 and the second worst in 2011.

Dhaka's continuing position at the bottom of the index again highlighted the worsening quality of life and urban governance in the city.

The city has been suffering from perennial traffic gridlock, destruction of wetland and green spaces, and encroachment of pedestrian space.

Moreover, it lacks an efficient waste management system, an effective public transportation system and a functional cultural life, according to experts.

The Syrian capital Damascus saw the biggest fall in liveability scores over

a five-year period. The other least liveable cities on the list are Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea), Lagos (Nigeria) and Tripoli (Libya). Zimbabwe's capital Harare has improved the most from last year in the EIU report.

Of the poorer-scoring cities, 14 continue to occupy the very bottom tier of liveability, where ratings fall below 50 percent and most aspects of living are severely restricted, said the report.

Melbourne in Australia remains the most liveable location surveyed, followed by the Austrian capital Vienna. Vancouver in Canada, which was the most liveable city surveyed until 2011, lies in third place.

Over the past six months, 38 of the cities surveyed have experienced changes in scores. This rises to 53 cities, or 37 percent of the total number surveyed, when looking at changes over the past year. Of these changes the majority have been negative, 38 in the past 12 months, reflecting a deterioration in stability in many cities around the world.

The report said civil unrest and acts of terror had triggered stability declines around the world including in France and Tunisia.

# 'I was mentally tortured'

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news portal u71news.com, was arrested on Sunday evening in Dhaka in a case filed under Information and Communication Technology Act for "tamishing the image" of LGRD Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain.

"Police interrogated me blindfolding and asked me to say in court things that they taught me while I was in their custody," Ali quoted Probir as telling the court.

But Syed Mohisinul Alam, officer-in-charge of Faridpur Sadar Police Station, dismissed the allegations as false. "I don't know what he told the court. If he brought any allegation against the police, he lied."

The magistrate allowed Probir to speak after he raised his hand and sought the court's permission to say something during the remand hearing.

"I had gone to the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station to file a general diary regarding the threats I received but police refused to record it," Probir, who lost his father and several other family members during the 1971 war, told the court.

Three days after the police refusal, he uploaded the draft GD on Facebook where he said, "I place the general diary before the people's court."

In the post, he expressed his fear that his life was in danger and that the LGRD minister, businessman Moosa bin Shamsar and condemned fugitive war criminal Abul Kalam Azad would be responsible if he were killed.

Following the post, local Awami League leader Swapan Kumar Paul, also assistant public prosecutor of the Judge's Court in Faridpur, filed the case, saying the post "tarnished the image" of the minister.

On Sunday evening, detectives detained Probir from his office in Dhaka and later handed him over to the Faridpur police.

He was produced before the court first on Monday with a 10-day remand prayer. But the court sent him to jail and fixed yesterday for hearing. That day, however, there was no lawyer to defend him in the court.

During the remand hearing, plaintiff Swapan Kumar Paul's counsels argued that through the Facebook post, Probir damaged the image of Khandaker Mosharraf and thus the government and the country.

Therefore, he needs to be interrogated

to know if any other person or group is involved in this.

Two defence counsels -- Ali Ashraf Nannu and Masud Rana -- sought bail for Probir, arguing that the Facebook status was already public and no one else had been made accused in the case.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Hamdul Islam rejected the bail petition and placed Probir on three days' remand.

On the court premises, Probir's wife Anita Sikdar told newsmen that her husband was a disabled person who had to take eight to ten types of medicines for cardiac problems every day.

**'IT'S PAINFUL'**

Suranjit Sengupta, a member of the Awami League Advisory Council, said it was "very much painful" to see photographs of Probir being taken to court handcuffed.

"I don't know why he hasn't got bail. In my little knowledge of law, any crippled person, if he appears before a court, can be allowed bail," said Suranjit, also chief of the parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry.

"It didn't seem normal to us that he needed to be interrogated and taken on remand.

"Have the police and the detectives become so efficient that they came and took him [to Faridpur] on that very night? Is it the most important case?" he told a private TV channel yesterday.

Expressing deep shock over Probir's arrest, the information minister told reporters at his secretariat office that his ministry would keep an eye so that Probir was not deprived of any legal protection.

**PROTEST CONTINUES**

Different journalist forums, socio-cultural and political organisations continued their protest yesterday, both on the streets and also on social media.

Journalists will stage a three-hour token hunger strike in front of the Jatiya Press Club today from 11:00am protesting the arrest.

In 2001, Probir wrote a series of reports titled "Sei Razakar" in Bangla daily Janakantha against some alleged war criminals, including a controversial businessman from Faridpur and now condemned war criminal Abul Kalam Azad, also known as Bacchu Razakar.

He was attacked in April that year following his write-ups. In the attack, he lost a leg and also mobility of one hand.

# Planner a UK citizen of Bangladesh origin

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chief Jasimuddin Rahmani. As instructed, the five operatives -- Sadeque Ali Mithu, Ramjan alias Siam, Nayeem, Julhash Biswas and Jafran Al Hasan -- hacked Avijit to death in Dhaka on February 26 and Ananta in Sylhet on May 12 in a similar way.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) came up with the version following the arrest of Touhid, Sadeque Ali and another suspected Ansarullah member Aminul Mallick in the capital in the last two days.

"The five killers gathered at the playground of Mohsin Hall [of Dhaka University] three hours before the murder of Avijit," Commander Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of Rab Legal and Media Wing, said at a press briefing at the elite force headquarters in the capital yesterday.

On that fateful day, they followed Avijit from Ekushey Boi Mela premises and carried out the killing near TSC, said Mufti.

They hacked Avijit, a Bangladeshi-born US citizen, to death and badly wounded his wife Rafida Ahmed near TSC around 8:45pm after the couple came out of the book fair venue.

Four other killers are on the run, said Rab officials.

Detectives have repeatedly said Ansarullah Bangla Team was behind the murders of four bloggers this year.

They claimed to have identified seven suspects in Avijit killing but failed to make any arrest in the last five months.

In the Ananta murder case, Sylhet police arrested a suspect from the city a few days after the incident.

At the press briefing, Mufti said acting on a tip-off, a Rab-3 team detained Sadeque of Laxmipur at the capital's Nilkhet around 10:30pm on Monday.

Aminul, an IT expert hailing from Shariatpur, around 12:20am yesterday from an alley near the Star Kabab in Dhanmondi.



Three suspected militants are paraded before the media at the Rab's Uttara headquarters in the city yesterday. The three were arrested in the capital in the last two days in connection with the killings of bloggers Avijit Roy and Ananta Bijoy Das. PHOTO: STAR

In the evening, the Rab handed over the three arrestees to Detective Branch (DB) of Police, which is investigating the Avijit murder, said sources in both the agencies.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner Mashrukure Rahman of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said they would see if Rab's claim matches with their findings.

Commander Mufti said Touhidur, 58, who hails from Jessore, has been looking after the financial affairs of Ansarullah Bangla team since the arrest of Jasimuddin Rahmani over the murder of another blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider.

After the killings of Avijit and Ananta, suspects Julhash and Jafran as instructed

by Touhid uploaded online posts claiming responsibility for the murders.

Sadeque met Rahmani in 2007 and gradually earned Ansarullah chief's trust. He frequently visited the militant leader at Kashimpur jail and received instructions regarding organisational activities, said the Rab official.

As the three arrestees were paraded before media at the Rab headquarters during the press briefing, Sadeque admitted to journalists that he was acquainted with Rahmani and helped him publish books.

Denying his involvement in the killings, he said Abul Bashar often sent directives to ABT members about organisational affairs.

According to Rab, Bashar took the helm of the organisation after the arrest of Rahmani.

Replying to a query, Mufti said they were yet to be sure whether the arrestees were involved in the killing of bloggers Oyasiquir Rahman and Niladri Chattopadhyay Niloy.

The Rab official added that the arrestees had been running small businesses in Dhaka as a cover for their militant activities. One of them, Ramjan, used to sell honeybee and black-cumin (kalijira).

Expressing satisfaction over the arrests, Prof Ajay Roy, father of slain blogger Avijit, told The Daily Star that he wants a speedy trial in the case and immediate arrest of other killers.

# Boast appears hollow

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the apparatus required for ensuring security of an event," he said.

"But ultimately it's the police who are responsible for security on the ground. Monitoring of the CCTV cameras also falls within the police's responsibilities," he added.

It was on the cops' instructions that the cameras were rented, according to Altaf Hossain, secretary of Bangla Academy.

The Academy didn't mind spending Tk 2.24 lakh for that, said Member Secretary Jalal Firoz of the fair organising committee. "I doubt whether the police at all had the intention to ensure proper security."

DMP Spokesperson Monirul Islam cited a dearth of resources as the reason behind hiring the cameras, but said: "A number of our total 50 CCTV cameras were in operation alongside the rented ones this year."

He said the private contractors failed to send the camera feeds to the DMP control room which, according to Academy secretary Altaf, could monitor only around 10 of the 75 cameras.

"Although there was an expert from the DMP to monitor people's movement through the 60 cameras we had installed last year, there was none this year," Harun-Ur-Rashid, owner of Silver Sun Electronics.

Detailing how the digital surveillance worked this year, he said there were two control rooms -- one for Bangla Academy part and the other for the Suhrawardy Udyan -- each with two monitor panels. Each of the panels

showed feeds from 16 cameras.

"Four technicians were deployed there only to look after technical glitches, not to monitor people's movement," Harun said.

He could not recall if any police official ever went to the Academy control room during the month-long fair.

"Officers from Shahbagh Police Station sometimes came to the Suhrawardy control room, but left soon putting in charge a constable, who barely even knew what he was doing there," said Harun.

Ramna Zone AC Shibli Noman, however, claimed that they had deployed sub-inspectors (SIs) and assistant sub-inspectors (ASIs) for the job.

There are doubts whether an officer-in-charge, who runs a police station, has adequate knowledge about electronic surveillance, let alone an SI or ASI or constable, said security expert Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rashid.

"We can undoubtedly agree on our lack of knowledge on matters of technology," he said.

As for the DMP's security layers, he said that according to the traditional standards, the four layers could be digital, physical, mid-line and far-line.

"The digital layer of security includes the CCTV surveillance. From the live CCTV footage, any suspicious movement on the ground can instantly be detected by a trained security official at the control room," Abdur Rashid continued.

He then alerts men on the ground of this at once through walkie-talkie or

mobile phone. Security men deployed in close proximity of the crowd constitute the second layer known as "the physical level".

The third tier or "the mid-line" is deployment of security personnel, in uniform or plainclothes, at a distance covering key strategic points, said Rashid.

However, if the digital surveillance fails, the other layers too may fail in a ripple effect, the security expert said. "Failure in CCTV surveillance means failing prevention of crime."

Publisher Dipon, proprietor of Jagriti Prokashani, questioned the integrity of the law enforcers deployed at the fair.

"I saw cops accepting between Tk 10 and Tk 20 bribes for allowing publishers to take to their shelves books, published late in violation of the fair's policy."

"Then we saw a man being hacked to death and his wounded wife crying for help with armed policemen standing idle only yards away," Dipon added.

On February 26, a group of suspected militants attacked Avijit and his wife Bonya Ahmed with machetes on the pavement of Suhrawardy Udyan as the couple were returning from the book fair.

Though a large number of law enforcers were deployed on and around the spot, none did anything as the militants escaped, leaving behind Avijit's lifeless body in a pool of blood.

It was Jibon Ahmed, a photojournalist, who took the body and Bonya,

who had lost a finger trying to save her husband, to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

A photo taken by Jibon showed an armed policeman standing idle beside Avijit's body lying face down on the pavement and a blood-drenched Bonya.

"Security failed, completely. The so-called multi-layer security came to nought," said publisher Mesbahuddin Ahmed, proprietor of Ankur Prakashani.

"Even after the murder, we did not see any police car approaching the victims for help. Rather, police joined the crowd of onlookers as the killers wielding machetes fled," said Mesbah.

It could not be confirmed if the murder scene was caught on any camera.

The fourth security tier or "the far-line" included walk through metal detectors.

"The police brought only two of the devices. We had to hire two more for Tk 1.9 lakh," said Jalal Firoz of the fair organising committee.

None has yet been arrested in connection with Avijit killing. All that the police did in all these months was repeatedly claiming to have identified seven killers, without releasing any further details, while three more secular bloggers have been hacked dead in the meantime.

"If the electronic surveillance worked properly, it could be useful both for gathering intelligence and for the investigation of the murder," said former inspector general of police Nurul Huda.

# 2 Chhatra League activists killed

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up her mother Joytoon Nesa and herself from their house around 1:00am.

"When we were taken to the police station, we saw Arzu's motorcycle on the premises. Police said they didn't know where he was.

"They kept us at the police station for several hours and then dropped us home at the break of day," Rehana said.

Around half an hour after they reached home, Rehana's brother-in-law Tara Mia received a phone call. The caller told him that Arzu might have been killed in a gunfight and asked him to go to the DMCH to identify the body, she said.

"I believe Arzu was killed over an intra-party feud. Raja's death was used as a pretext," added Rehana.

Arzu's brother Masud Mia said, "My brother might have tortured a boy who died, but he should have been tried in a court of law."

Police arrested three BCL activists -- Monir, 35, Sagor, 25, and Sujon, 28, -- in connection with Raja's murder. A Dhaka court yesterday placed Monir and Sujon on a three-day remand, while Sagor, who admitted his role in torturing Raja, was sent to jail.

On Monday morning, Arzu picked

up her mother Joytoon Nesa and herself from their house around 1:00am.

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On Monday morning, Arzu picked

up Raja from in front of his house, suspecting that the boy stole his mobile phones and a laptop.

Raja's aunt Ratna Begum claimed Arzu and his friends left an unconscious Raja in front of his house around 3:30pm on Monday. His family members took him to the DMCH where doctors declared him dead at 4:45pm.

MAGURA "GUNFIGHT"  
Magura Superintendent of Police AKM Ehsan Ullah said a joint team of detectives and police conducted a raid in Doarpar orphanage area around 1:00am on information that a group of criminals had gathered there.

Sudarshan Kumar Roy, assistant superintendent of police, said, "Sensing the police presence, the criminals opened fire on the law enforcers triggering a gunfight."

The law enforcers later found Ajibor's body lying on the spot, he said.

Police said they recovered two firearms, two bullets and two bottles of phensedyl from the spot.

Ajibor, 34, the third accused in the case over shooting a man dead and injuring a pregnant woman in Magura, was a former executive member of Magura municipality BCL.

He went into hiding, as the incident caused public outrage.

Prior to yesterday's "gunfight", rumours ran high that police arrested Ajibor, son of Abdul Malek at Doharpar, from Simakhali Bazar in Magura on Monday evening.

Police, however, denied arresting him.

During a factional clash on July 23, bullets fired by ruling party men left Nazma Khatun and her baby in the womb wounded and her husband's uncle Momin Bhuiyan, 65, dead.

Nazma was shot in the abdomen during the attack. Her unborn baby suffered injuries in the shoulder, neck, right hand and right eye.

Though they both survived after a two-hour surgery, doctors in Magura doubted whether the newborn would be able to cling to life.

The newborn was then brought to the DMCH where doctors saved her. They handed over the baby, whose condition is now stable, to her mother on Sunday.

A total of 16 people were accused in the case over the July 23 incident. Police have arrested nine people, including vice president of BCL Magura district unit Sen Suman.