

AL leader fires shot inside OC's office

OC terms it an accident
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A local ruling party leader allegedly fired a shot inside the office of Nawabganj Upazila Police Station's officer-in-charge Wednesday night.

Seeking anonymity, on-duty police staffs said Ataur Rahman, general secretary of Nawabganj Upazila Awami League, came to the police station around 9:00pm with his licensed shotgun.

Entering the room of OC Ismail Hossain, Ataur was locked in a debate over the profit earned from gambling held in different places of the upazila, said a sentry of the station.

At one stage of their angry exchange, Ataur fired a shot at the ceiling of the room.

"We failed to distinguish the gunshot as crackers were being burst everywhere over Diwali celebration," he said.

Ataur is allegedly involved in organising gambling in many places of the upazila.

However, Ruhul Amin, superintendent of police in Dinaipur, claimed it was an accident.

The OC claimed the incident took place in the station compound, not in his office.

"He came to see if anything was wrong with his firearm. When he had pulled the trigger, the bullet came out," said Ismail.

Visiting the office, The Daily Star correspondent found a hole in the ceiling right above the OC's seat.

Despite several attempts, this correspondent could not reach Ataur over the phone.

Ziaur Rahman Manik, acting secretary general of a faction of Nawabganj upazila AL, said Ataur fired a shot at Nawabganj Jubo League convener Nur Shamim a year ago with his licensed firearm. Later, Shamim filed a case in this connection.

After that incident, one of the Jubo League factions expelled Ataur from the post of general secretary, local AL leaders said.

His sufferings

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Upazila Nirbahi Officer PKM Enamul Karim gave him the assurance after a visit to his house.

Monir will be given khas land, tin sheets and money to build home, Enamul said, adding he would also be given a job so that he could live without doing strenuous work like rickshaw pulling.

He had sold the land he inherited for the treatment of his eyes but to no avail, the rickshaw-puller told Enamul. Monir who lost his eyesight at the age of two now lives with his family on a 10-square-feet shanty on another person's land in Feni sadar upazila.

His daughter Afroza Faria, a second grader in a local primary school at Sundarpur in Feni, guides her father when he pulls rickshaw.

The daily ran a report headlined "A father's eyes" that drew local administration's attention to the plight of Monir.

Facebook says

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laws prohibiting criticism of the state" between July-December 2013. Facebook said it releases the report in an effort to reform government surveillance in countries around the world by providing more transparency. The latest report provides information about the number of government requests the site received for data and pieces of content restricted for violating local laws in countries around the world.

In the first half of this year, amount of content restricted for violating local laws increased by 112 percent over the second half of 2014, to 20,568 pieces of content, up from 9,707.

Government requests for account data increased across all countries by 18 percent over the same period, from 35,051 requests to 41,214.

US ranked first of all the countries with 17,577 requests about 26,579 users or accounts, of which Facebook provided data for 79.85 percent.

India and the UK were second and third in that regard, with requests for data about 6,268 and 4,489 users/accounts respectively.

India tops the list of governments that blocked Facebook content in their countries, with 15,155 posts being restricted. This is more than three times that of second-placed Turkey, which blocked 4,496 posts.

"We respond to valid requests relating to criminal cases. Each and every request we receive is checked for legal sufficiency and we reject or require greater specificity on requests that are overly broad or vague," said Facebook authorities.

HAZARI'S MP STATUS

HC judge feels embarrassed to hear plea

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court judge yesterday felt embarrassed to hear a writ petition that challenged the legality of holding the office of a lawmaker by ruling Awami League leader Nizam Uddin Hazari.

Justice AKM Shahidul Huq, junior judge of an HC bench, expressed embarrassment without mentioning any reason, petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star.

He said the bench of Justice Zinat Ara and Justice AKM Shahidul Huq yesterday afternoon started hearing his arguments on the rule issued over the legality of Nizam holding a parliamentary seat.

At a stage, Justice Zinat Ara said that her colleague felt embarrassed, Manzill said, adding that the bench will now send the petition to the chief justice.

The chief justice will assign another HC bench for hearing and disposing of the petition, he added.

The HC on June 8 last year issued the rule asking the government and the Election Commission to explain why the ruling Nizam's parliament seat should not be declared vacant.

The rule was issued following a writ

petition filed by Shakhawat Hossain Bhuiyan, a Jubo League leader of Feni, claiming that Nizam, who was elected unopposed from Feni-2 constituency in last year's January 5 elections, had resorted to forgery to get out of jail early and run in the January 5 parliamentary polls.

Quoting a newspaper report, Shakhawat in his petition said a Chittagong court had sentenced Nizam to 10 years' imprisonment in an arms case on August 16, 2000. He surrendered to the court on September 14, 2000, and was sent to Chittagong jail to serve his term.

But he was in jail for only five years and released on December 1, 2005, through fraudulence, Shakhawat said. He said Nizam was sentenced to be in jail until September 13, 2010, and he - according to the law of the country - would not have been eligible to run in any parliamentary polls before September 2015.

The petitioner said Nizam could not legally have been a candidate in the parliamentary election of January 5, adding that Nizam had provided false information about serving his jail term to the EC.

Man killed for protest

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there, he asked Monzil to leave the place. Instead of leaving the place, Monzil was locked in an altercation with my husband," Taposhi said.

At one stage, they roughed up each other. After a few minutes, Monzil along with his men came to the house and beat up Shudhanshu. As the locals resisted the attackers, they went back, she said.

Later, the attackers, equipped with sharp weapons, stormed the house and caught her husband from his room and hacked him inside the house, leaving him critically injured, Taposhi added.

Shudhanshu was taken to Pabna General Hospital where on-duty doctors declared him dead.

Locals brought out a procession in

Radhanagar Rathghar area around 9:00pm, protesting the killing.

"We are feeling insecure as the drinkers and gamblers often gather near the house and disturb our families. We protest against them, but they do not pay any heed to it," said Moushumi Boshak, niece of the victim.

"We want punishment of the killers for our security," said Provash Kumar, leader of the district Puja Udjapan Parishad.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Pabna Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

"Police are trying to nab Monzil and his men," said Abdullah Al Hasan, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Folk music fest begins

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presenting various genres of folk dance originating from different regions of the country.

Farida Parveen, one of the most noted exponents of Lalon songs, came on stage next. With an ensemble dressed in all whites, she sang popular Lalon songs to rapturous applause.

The formal inauguration featured Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Managing Director of Maasranga TV and Square Group Anjan Chowdhury and eminent singer Ferdousi Rahman.

"Square Group, with their title sponsorship of the Bengal Classical Music Festival [due to begin later this month] and now organising this festival, is contributing to the country's cultural arena," Anjan Chowdhury said.

AMA Muhith, before formally inaugurating the festival, said, "Bangladesh can be proud of its love for music,"

and thanked the organisers.

Chandana Majumdar and Kiran Chandra Roy took stage next, presenting songs from Lalon, Shah Abdul Karim, and even a folksy rendition of Rudra Muhammad Shahidullah's "Bhalo Achi Bhalo Theko".

Arko Mukherjee Collective took the festival by storm, performing a blend of folk songs in Bangla and various regions from India, incorporating elements from Middle-Eastern and European gypsy styles. Along with Styaki Banerjee and his band Fiddlers Green, he got the audience to dance and groove.

Eminent Lalon exponents Shafi Mondal and Rob Fakir performed next.

Revered Pakistani Sufi exponent Saieen Zahoor and Indian singer, composer Papon also enthralled the audience with their performances. The packed stadium showed no signs of sleep or fatigue.

Nur Hossain brought back

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filed over the killing of seven people -- Narayanganj City Corporation ward councillor Nazrul Islam, his driver and three associates, and senior lawyer Chandan Sarkar and his driver.

The seven were abducted allegedly by some Rapid Action Battalion men from Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road on April 27 last year.

Nur, who too was a ward councillor of Narayanganj city back then, allegedly bribed the Rab men for murdering Nazrul with whom he reportedly had a longstanding political feud. Lawyer Chandan and his driver were killed as they happened to witness the Rab men abducting Nazrul and his associates.

The murder outraged the nation with Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul Islam alleging that the Rab men had taken Tk 6 crore from Nur to kill Nazrul.

Three Rab officials -- Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana -- were sacked for allegedly executing the killings in exchange for money.

Immediately after the murders, Nur fled to India. However, he was arrested in Kolkata in June and charged with trespass and possession of an illegal firearm.

A West Bengal court on October 16 ordered that Nur Hossain be deported to face trial in Bangladesh. Sandipan Chakraborty, additional chief judicial magistrate of Barasat in North Chobbbish Parganas, asked the authorities concerned to comply with its order by December 16.

Meanwhile, nearly a year after the seven-murder incident, police on April 8 this year submitted the charge sheet in the case, naming 35 people, including

Nur Hossain and the three sacked Rab officials.

Of them, 22, including 17 Rab members, are in jail while 13 are on the run, sources said.

Once a truck helper, Nur Hossain amassed huge wealth at home and abroad with the blessings of major political parties since late '80s, according to media reports.

Nur, who was a vice president of Siddhirganj Thana Awami League when the murders took place, reportedly owns businesses and assets in India and Malaysia.

Even though he was accused in 21 cases in Siddhirganj and Fatullah, he managed to stay out of jail and maintain his influence in the city until the seven-murder incident.

Govt offers

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prices of open market sale (OMS) of rice and wheat, food ministry officials said.

The food minister said the price cut in OMS would be announced in a day or two. At present, rice is being sold at Tk 24 a kg and wheat at Tk 22.

As cheaper rice from India got into Bangladesh market in large volumes earlier this year, putting local rice growers in a tight spot, the government imposed a 10 percent duty in May amid widespread criticism that the measure was too little, too late.

Rice millers recommend increasing the rice import duty to 30 percent.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury attended yesterday's meeting.

BNP to resist

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government not to execute such a plan.

The government has reportedly decided to remove all graves from the Sangsad Bhaban area to comply with the original design of Sangsad Bhaban by architect Louis Kahn.

Referring to the apparent reason behind the move, Hafiz Uddin said, "How was it possible to keep space for Ziaur Rahman's grave in the design when he was alive?"

Regarding the handover of Anup Chetia, leader of Indian separatist group United Liberation Front of Asom, to India, he said the opposition party wanted to know which procedure had been followed in handing him over to the neighbouring country.

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum held a rally protesting the reported plan of the government to remove Zia's grave from the Sangsad Bhaban area.

The demonstrators also threatened the government with a tougher movement if it goes ahead with the plan.

Meanwhile, BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon lambasted the government for recent arrests of party members, saying if it wanted to hold credible local government polls, it should release the opposition men immediately. The elections will be questioned otherwise as was the case regarding January 5, 2014 polls.

It has become very tough for BNP men to participate in the upcoming polls since many possible candidates, polling agents and activists have already been arrested, and some have left their localities to avoid police harassment, said Ripon at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan headquarters.

Modi visits UK

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Wembley Stadium.

After talks with Cameron, Modi became the first Indian premier to address Britain's parliament and was feted with a flypast by the Red Arrows aerobatics team, which trailed smoke over London in the colours of India's flag.

While Cameron said he wanted to support Modi in his efforts to transform India with improved infrastructure and education, the Indian leader signalled he wanted Britain to vote to stay in the European Union, saying the country was India's gateway to Europe.

Cameron also said British and Indian companies would announce new "collaborations" worth 9 billion pounds during Modi's visit, but gave few details.

British trade minister Francis Maude outlined some of the new deals.

They included a £1.3 billion investment by Vodafone, a £1.2 billion clean energy contract for technology company Intelligent Energy and a deal for King's College Hospital to open an institution in Chandigarh.

The deals are expected to include India buying more BAE Systems Hawk trainer jets -- the same plane used by the Red Arrows -- for its armed forces.

But when Modi was asked whether Britain should remain in the EU, in a referendum called by Cameron and being held by the end of 2017, Modi said: "As far as India is concerned, if there is an entry point to the European Union, that is the UK".

Modi's visit has also drawn protests.

Up to 500 people held a demonstration outside Downing Street against the visit before the talks with Cameron, many of them Sikhs.

Modi was elected by a landslide in 2014 but he and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have faced accusations from opponents that they are failing to protect minorities.

He was effectively banned from Britain until three years ago over anti-Muslim riots which killed more than 1,000 people in 2002, when he was chief minister of Gujarat state. He has always denied any responsibility.

Nirmala Rajasingam, one of the protest organisers, said: "We have been protesting against the Modi government for a very long time because the matters of the Gujarat atrocities have not been settled yet."

Meanwhile, roughly 200 literary figures, including Mumbai-born British author Salman Rushdie, signed an open letter warning of a "rising climate of fear" in India.

India is the world's ninth-largest economy and, at 7.4 percent, has the fastest growth rate in the G20.

Former colonial power Britain is the fifth-largest world economy. The government is pushing hard to increase overseas trade as it tries to shrink its large deficit in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

Ahead of the visit, Modi's government this week announced plans to liberalise its foreign direct investment regime in areas including defence, banking and construction. Britain is the third-largest source of FDI in India.

Modi faces accusations that his reform drive is stalling, highlighted by the BJP's bruising defeat Sunday in elections in the state of Bihar.

Military offers olive

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In statements posted on Facebook, Thein Sein and the powerful army chief Min Aung Hlaing congratulated Suu Kyi's party, promised to respect the poll result and work with the new government.

The army chief repeated his position to military top brass, vowing "cooperation with the new government during the post-election period," according to a statement on his Facebook page Thursday.

Many NLD supporters remain deeply suspicious of the army and its proxies, who are notorious for political sleight of hand and crackdowns that have left hundreds dead and thousands jailed.

The NLD won a 1990 election by a landslide only for the junta to ignore the result and tighten its grip on power.

A generation later Suu Kyi has called for "national reconciliation", stressing the need for a peaceful power shift in a nation whose journey towards democracy has been marred by state violence.

In an indication of the political maze ahead, NLD spokesman Nyan Win said the talks are "our first move."

After decades cloistered from the world by the military and driven into penury, Myanmar caught the eye of the world after it creaked open in 2011 under a semi-civilian government.

Most sanctions were rolled back in lock-step with the greater freedoms.

US President Barack Obama yesterday congratulated Suu Kyi on success in "historic" elections.

Obama called the Nobel Peace Prize winner who spent more than a decade under house arrest and praised her "tireless efforts and sacrifice over so many years to promote a more inclusive, peaceful and democratic Burma."

Obama also spoke to Myanmar President Thein Sein to hail an election that many hope could offer the country a peaceful way out of decades of suffocating military rule.

"The two leaders discussed the importance for all parties to respect the

official results once announced and to work together with a spirit of unity to form an inclusive, representative government that reflects the will of the people," the White House said.

The American leader has urged the country to tackle religious intolerance and promote full democracy. He has also highlighted the plight of the ethnic Rohingya Muslims, tens of thousands of whom were excluded from voting.

While its political proxy, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), faces annihilation at the polls, the army has its stake in future already guaranteed.

Under a constitution it wrote, 25 percent of all parliamentary seats are reserved for military appointees.

It also controls Myanmar's security apparatus and key government posts - meaning it will retain immense practical powers.

Suu Kyi's own path to power is also blocked by the 2008 constitution that bars anyone with foreign children -- or a foreign husband -- from the presidency.

Her sons are British as was her late husband -- who died in Britain while she was under house arrest in Myanmar.

'Mother Suu', as she is affectionately known, has said a democratic government would not seek to punish historic abuses by the military.

But ahead of elections she struck a defiant note, saying she would take a position "above the president" in the event of an NLD win.

Now her party is poised for power it is likely she will put forward a proxy for the role, an appointment aided by a large majority.

Shwe Mann, a former general who is also a parliamentary speaker, has been previously tipped as a compromise candidate for the top office.

He was also invited to talks with Suu Kyi despite being sidelined by the USDP and losing his seat in the election.

Manpower export

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become the largest recruiter of female workers this year.

It alone has hired around 21,500 Bangladeshi female workers until October.

Jordan and Oman are second and third on the list.

The ministry officials said there has been a boost in sending the country's female migrant workers abroad, which actually started increasing in 2010.

In 2009, the government sent only 22,224 female migrant workers to different countries while the number stood at 56,400 in 2013.

Experts have hailed the uptrend in the number of migrant workers -- both males and females. However, they said the government, in a bid to boost the manpower export sector further, must take some immediate steps to check the "difficulties" Bangladeshi workers face during their migration.

Quite often, recruiting agencies cheat them with false promises of

lucrative salaries. Sometimes, they are exposed to forced labour abroad; sometimes they are beaten up for protesting. In many cases, the workers are verbally abused by their brokers as well as the foreign employers, said the experts.

"Cheating and human trafficking in the guise of migration are still prevalent in our country. These are the big issues that must be addressed to ensure safe migration for Bangladeshis," said Syed Saiful Haque, chairman of WARBE Development Foundation, which works with migration.

Bangladeshi females are mostly working as domestic helps abroad while Indian, Sri Lankan and Nepalese women are working as maids and nurses, according to Bangladesh Ovhibashi Mahila Sramik Association (BOMSA).

"Our government must increase its vigilance to prevent abuses by those who hinder safe female migration abroad," Sumaiya Islam, director of BOMSA, told The Daily Star.

Tale of urban monkeys

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the last two years."

Doniya never had monkeys. Pintu guessed that they must have moved out from the concrete jungle of Old Dhaka where they have been living for many decades now.

Pintu keeps on persuading his mother to be kind to these animals. After all, Pintu is aware that we humans have taken away their livelihood by chopping down the trees and building structures. The least we can do is offer them some food occasionally.

"You want to know what they do?" his mom said.

"They use the rooftop water tank as their swimming pool," she says, with a bit of smile beneath her annoyance. "We now have to lock the cover of the water tank. Can you imagine that we keep our water tank under lock and key?"

"And when we are away, the group invades our kitchen," Pintu's working sister adds. "They slip the smallest one in the group through the window into the kitchen. The little one then opens the door from the inside. Can you believe that? Then they loot every edible thing they find there."

"One day when I came from work and opened the door to see everything vandalised, I looked around and found nobody. Then I noticed that there were many small silhouettes behind the curtains. I pulled the curtains and these monkeys came out, jumping and screaming and making their way out the door. They were all hiding behind the curtains. Just imagine!" Pintu's sister points out.

The urban monkeys have indeed learnt a few tricks to survive in the city. They must steal human food to survive where there are no trees. They would socialise on the rooftops and have fun in a way not possible in forests. Pintu says he saw the monkeys pulling down the clothes kept on the

rooftop wires for drying and sitting on those and "partying".

The Dhaka city, which used to have all kinds of animals a century ago, still has less than 1,000 monkeys, according to the forest department.

"There were a lot of monkeys in Old Dhaka around Shadhana Owshadhalay factory. The factory owner had been feeding the monkeys for decades," said Tapan Kumar Dey, in-charge of wild life conservation of the forest department.

After the factory owner stopped feeding the monkeys, the then Dhaka City Corporation started a feeding programme eight years ago. Consequently, the number of monkeys increased to 500 in the old town, he said.

"Unfortunately, the city corporation stopped the feeding programme two years ago due to a lack of funds. This has made monkeys' lives miserable. They have started to spread everywhere in the city to forage for food," Tapan pointed out. "It's so sad."

He added that the monkey feeding programme needed around Tk 60 lakh a year. "They [the authorities] must resume the programme to provide these poor creatures minimum food."

"The condition of the old town monkeys is pathetic. We often have to rush there with doctors to save some injured or ill monkeys," he said.

Besides, there are about a 100 monkeys in the Bangabhaban, around 70 in the Bangladesh Navy Headquarters, a few dozen in the Dhaka Cantonment area, and also a few in Gulshan and airport areas.

The monkeys in the cantonment and navy headquarters are better off as these areas have their ecosystem. In addition, the defence force is kind enough to provide them with food.

In Uttara, some monkeys may have migrated to pockets of parks and greeneries from the airport area.