

Uncle, niece killed over 'affair'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

A man last night strangled his wife and then stabbed her uncle to death over her alleged affair with the relative in Eyakubnagar area of Chittagong, police claimed. Md Hridoy first strangled Asma Begum, 25, in their own home and as he was leaving the scene he came across her uncle Maksudur Rahman, 35, at a nearby tea stall, said Officer-in-Charge Md Jasimuddin of Kotwali Police Station. Hridoy then stabbed Maksud. The two were taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital around 9:45pm but the doctors there declared them dead on arrival, said Nayek Pankaj Barua of CMCH police outpost. Maksud and Asma hail from Firingi Bazar of the city. "Hridoy is on the run and the police were trying to arrest him," said Jasimuddin.

Arrest 1/11

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chairman) too is in the country. "Why are they not being picked up? You should arrest them to prove that you mean it [trying them]," she told a programme at her Gulshan office. The BNP chief also claimed Sheikh Hasina cannot dodge the responsibility for bringing in the military-backed caretaker government. She alleged the incumbent government is oppressing the BNP men brutally and that it is "worse than the 1/11 government".

She was addressing a programme at her Gulshan office. The Chittagong district unit of Ziaur Rahman Foundation organised the programme to provide financial assistance to the family members of party men who were killed during the anti-government movement. The BNP chairperson said, "She [Hasina] mentioned the minus-two formula. If we had been [two leaders] together, none would have dared taking over power and putting us behind bars. It would not have been necessary for the Awami League to collude with them [1/11 government] to assume power."

Khaleda claimed that as she did not cooperate with the then caretaker government, she had to spend a year and eight days in jail. She said Awami League chief Hasina joined the oath-taking ceremony of the 1/11 government and told the media that the government was a result of the AL's movement.

ACC clears

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But as Rajuk chairman Nurul Huda should have known the plot allotment rules and it was unbecoming and misuse of power to have taken land plots both in his name and his wife's name, he said. ACC Public Relations Officer Pronab Kumar Bhattacharya said that there is a subtle difference between resorting to "irregularity" and doing "corruption". In some cases, an accused is relieved of an alleged irregularity if the irregularity is rectified and a corruption case is not lodged unless there is an adequate evidence of wrongdoing. Huda went on retirement as chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha in April 2014. He could not be readily reached for versions, as his mobile phone was found switched-off.

US state dept releases last batch of Clinton emails

AFP, Washington

The US State Department on Monday made public the final batch of emails taken from a private server which former secretary of state Hillary Clinton controversially used during her time in office. The email scandal has been seized upon by Clinton's Republican opponents and is among the adverses she is battling in her otherwise very promising campaign to become the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee. State Department spokesman John Kirby said the final batch of roughly 3,800 pages brings the total released to more than 52,000 vetted and in some cases partially censored pages of official correspondence. Last year, it emerged that Clinton had used a private server and non-official address for all her email while in office for secretary of state. Her rivals cried foul, suggesting she may have been illegally covering something up. Clinton protested that none of the mails had been marked "classified" when she sent them. Over recent months, government lawyers have combed through the stack, retroactively investigating whether any mail contained information that should have been classified, and found several that raised questions.

'It was Ershad who made me acting JP chief'

Claims Anisul Islam Mahmud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party presidium member Anisul Islam Mahmud yesterday claimed that JP Chairman HM Ershad himself appointed him as the acting chairman of the party after the 1/11 political change-over in 2007 in abid to "avoid arrest". "He [Ershad] escaped arrest that time as I took charge of the party on his advice. Ershad, like Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, too would have had to go to jail had it not been done," Mahmud, also the water resources minister, said at a press briefing at his ministry's conference room. "It would become [a] minus-three [formula] then."

Mahmud made the statements after the JP chief on Sunday demanded his trial for his (Mahmud's) alleged role in the 1/11 changeover. The minister called the press conference to respond to the allegation. At a programme in Sherpur that day, Ershad alleged that Mahmud illegally became the party's acting chairman ousting him from the chairman post during the political turmoil. Replying to that, Mahmud said he was a minister in Ershad's cabinet for seven years and enjoyed much freedom then. "...I did not say anything against him [Ershad] openly."

"But today, I have been compelled to say something... whatever he [Ershad] said about me is not true. He [Ershad] gave me the party's acting chairman post after 1/11 and it was done as per the party decision following consultations with him. The appointment did not aim at removing him [Ershad] from politics," added the minister. The JP leader claimed that Ershad made him, instead of GM Quader, the "legal guardian" of the FDR account of Eric, son of the JP boss. Quader is Ershad's brother. He also alleged that Ershad had asked JP ministers to leave the cabinet on Quader's advice. Criticising the JP leadership for making Quader the party co-chairman, Mahmud said there is no such post in the party constitution. "...A party cannot run this way."

He alleged that Quader on one hand termed the present government, parliament and the last national election "illegal" and wanted to take part in the by-elections in Rangpur and Narayanganj on the other. "His words and actions don't add up," he said. Replying to a query whether JP would split further, he said there was no such possibility of that.

Two Banasree siblings

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bodies and would send those for chemical tests.

"It may take one to one and a half months to get the reports ... Once we have those, we can confirm if the kids were poisoned." Nusrat was a fifth grader at Viqarunnisa Noon School and Alvi a nursery student at Holly Crescent School in Banasree. Amanullah and his wife Mahfuza Malek Jasmine went to their home in Jamalpur Sadar upazila yesterday morning. Describing the day's incident, Amanullah, a garment accessory trader, told our Jamalpur correspondent that he was at his Uttar Badda office at the time of the incident. "A male and a female teachers were supposed to come to tutor Nusrat -- one at 3:00pm and the other at 4:00pm. But on Monday, they incidentally came at 3:00pm together. My wife fell asleep after they arrived. "When she woke up around 5:00pm, she found the teachers had left, the main door of the apartment had been left open and the children were lying on the floor unconscious," Amanullah continued. "My wife first called her sister Afroza Malek Mila, who lives nearby, and she rushed to my house immediately. She then called me around 6:00pm and I instantly took a rickshaw home."

"On the way I called my friend Jahid, who lives in the same area, and asked him to go over to my house to check on my kids." Jahid and Mila then rushed the children to Al Razi Islamia Hospital in Banasree around 6:30pm, he said. As the hospital refused to admit the children, they were rushed to the DMCH where they were declared dead at 7:40pm. Asked if he suspected anyone for the murders, Amanullah said, "As far as I recall, I have no such enemies." Jasmine, the mother of the children, was too distressed to talk to the media. Amanullah and Jasmine, who were cousins before they fell in love and eventually tied the knot, had been living in the apartment with their children since August last year, said building owner Abdul Quadir. Amena Begum, a domestic help who has been working for the family

two hours every day for the last five months, said she never saw the couple quarrelling. After autopsies, the bodies were taken to their Jamalpur home and buried there last night. Though the father had claimed that two tutors had gone to the house, Pintu Mondol, a security guard at the building, told The Daily Star he saw only one entering the flat. "It was the female tutor. She entered the building just before 3:00pm and left around 4:15pm. This is her regular schedule. I found nothing suspicious in her gestures." He said no one else had come to the apartment before he went to say his Maghrib prayers around 6:10pm. "After I returned, two men came in a car and rushed to the apartment. They along with the children's aunt came downstairs hurriedly carrying the kids in their arms and drove off. "I asked them what was wrong. They said the children had fallen ill and they were taking them to a hospital," he added. This correspondent contacted the house tutor who, according to the guard, was the last person to leave the apartment before the children were found unconscious. She said when she left the apartment around 4:15pm, Jasmine was sleeping in a room and Alvi was playing inside the apartment. "And Nusrat opened the door for me and bid me goodbye," she said. The identity of the tutor, aged around 25, is being withheld. Asked why the Al Razi hospital refused to treat the children, a source there told this correspondent, "The moment we looked at the kids, we knew they were dead."

The family was yet to file any case but investigations were on, Officer-in-Charge Rafiqul Islam of Rampura Police Station said last night. "We want to wait for the family to get over the loss and file a case. If they don't, we will lodge one." No arrests were made either, he added. The Rapid Action Battalion, meanwhile, picked up five people for quizzing. They are the female tutor, family relatives Obaidul Islam and Shahin, and security guards Pintu and Ferdous, according to a text message sent to this newspaper by the Rab.

Scientists find

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(equivalent to 1 million tons of TNT, or 66 Hiroshima bombs), would be enough to obliterate the asteroid, reducing it to a cloud of gas and liquid droplets, leaving a few small solid fragments no more than 10 metres in diameter. Importantly, they also found it would be best to destroy the asteroid in a pre-emptive strike, rather than waiting until it was heading straight for Earth. Many potentially dangerous asteroids pass by the Earth multiple times, in long orbits. Blowing up the asteroid when it was heading away from Earth would reduce the possibility of the fragments hitting us. Astrometry expert Tatiana Galushina said: "Previously, as a preventive measure, it was proposed to destroy the asteroid on its approach to our planet, but this could lead to catastrophic consequences - a fall to Earth of the majority of the highly radioactive fragments." If the missile impacted behind the asteroid, "almost all the pieces after

the destruction will fly forward." "For 10 years after the explosion an insignificant number of fragments will fall to Earth. Their radioactivity during this time will be reduced considerably, and after a few years they will not pose a danger," she said. Galushina pointed out that using nuclear weapons in space is against the terms of the Outer Space Treaty. However, she believes that in the case of a "real threat to humankind," an exception to the rule would be made. The Tomsk astronomers are not the only Russian scientists focusing on this area of research - in January, experts from the Russian space agency took part in a pan-European study which looked at the possibilities of using nuclear weapons to save the Earth from a deadly asteroid strike. However, one member of the country's scientific community is not sold on the idea - speaking to the state-owned TASS news agency, Boris Shustov, Director of the Russian Institute of Astronomy, said it was like "using a steam-hammer to crack a nut."

Baby girl poisoned to death by 'father'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-month-old baby girl has been poisoned to death allegedly by her father in Abhaynagar upazila of Jessore. Being disappointed over the birth of his fourth daughter in a row, Shafiar Rahman Mollah, 35, poisoned his daughter Tithila, police speculated. Shafiar, a farmer of Dholirgati village, poured pesticide into his daughter's mouth after the girl's mother went outside their house around 6:00am on Sunday. The baby was sleeping at that time, Sheikh Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Abhaynagar Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday, quoting locals. Shafiar left the house and went into hiding after the incident, the police official said. The girl's mother smelt of the pesticide in her daughter's mouth after returning home. The baby was taken to Abhaynagar Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to Khulna Medical College Hospital. She died there on Monday morning, the OC said. Police recovered the body and sent it to Jessore Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy. The girl was buried yesterday after the autopsy. A case was filed in this connection.

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MURDER OF PRIEST Suspect 'admits to crime' at court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A suspected member of the banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) yesterday confessed to involvement in the killing of a Hindu priest in Dabiganj upazila of Panchagarh on February 21, police said. Cops on the night of February 25 picked up three murder suspects, including Alamgir Hossain, 35, of Kamathpara village in the same upazila. The arrestee made the confession in the Cognisance Court-2 of Panchagarh, said Babul Akhter, officer-in-charge of Debiganj Police Station. Criminals slit the throat of Jogeswar Dasadhikari, 50, a priest of Sri Sri Shonto Gaurio Temple, at Sonapota of Debiganj early on February 21. They fired shots and exploded home-made bombs while fleeing, leaving devotees Gopal Chandra Roy, 35, and Nirmal Chandra Roy, 40, injured. At night that day, Jogeswar's elder brother Rabindranath Roy filed a murder case with Debiganj Police Station, accusing three unidentified people of the murder. Debiganj police also filed a case under the explosives act. Police on February 26 claimed to have "completely cracked" the case and arrested three "key suspects". All three arrestees were "members of JMB", DIG Humayun Kabir told journalists at the police station. On Saturday, Judge Marzia Khatun of the Cognisance Court-2 put the trio on 10-day remand each in the murder case and eight-day remand each in the other case. Court Inspector Robiul Alam said as Alamgir confessed to involvement in the murder, the court yesterday sent him to jail after canceling his remand.

Bangladesh for better regional connectivity

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh yesterday pitched for South Asian regional connectivity and economic integration and proposed expanding regional cooperation in new areas of Blue Economy and water resources management. Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmud Ali also urged South Asian countries to join hands to address security challenges in the region, saying "Our journey towards peace and prosperity is often impeded by security issues." Speaking at the inauguration of the Raisina Dialogue organised by a leading private think-tank in New Delhi, Ali said South Asia "is perhaps the least connected region although we need it the most. "It is a big irony indeed when our geographic contiguity, shared political and cultural history link us so strongly. Moreover, we have common developmental challenges." He said in a "hyper-connected, fast-evolving world, connectivity would contribute more than anything else to realise our common aspirations for peace, stability, and prosperity." With Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, who inaugurated the dialogue, on the dais, Ali said Bangladesh's relationship with India is "at its best now."

Body of missing child found in sack

Youth 'admits' killing stepbrothers in Comilla

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday recovered the body of a nine-year-old boy who went missing from Monohorganj Bazar area in Comilla on Monday night. The body of Mohammad Riyadh, son of restaurant worker Khokon Mia, was found stuffed in a sack behind a workshop around 7:30am. With Riyadh, bodies of four kids have been recovered in Comilla in last four days. On Saturday, police recovered the bodies of Mehedi Hasan Joy and his younger brother Mezbaul Haque Moni, sons of Abul Kalam, from Rasulpur of Dhulipara area in the city. On Sunday, body of another kid, Mohammad Hossain Suhag, was found in a ditch in Chandpur area of Laksam upazila. Riyadh, a class III student at Dishaband Government Primary School in Monohorganj upazila, was the second among three children of Khokon and Nayan Akter. Inspector (investigation) Sadekur Rahman of Monohorganj police said Riyadh went to the bazar on Monday afternoon and went missing around 10:00pm. Some traders of the market saw his body in a sack at an abandoned place behind a workshop and informed the police yesterday, he said, adding, they found several injury marks in his neck, forehead and over the right eye. The police sent the body to Comilla Medical College Hospital for autopsy. The father of the boy filed a murder case with Monohorganj police against some unidentified people. Deputy Commissioner of Comilla Mohammad Hasanzaman paid a visit to the family and handed over Tk 10,000 to them for the burial.

STEPBROTHER CONFESSES MURDER OF JOY, MONI

Al Shafiu Islam alias Chhoton, stepbrother of the two children killed in Comilla on Saturday, confessed that he first tied their hands and choked them with a pillow at their house, said Shah Abid Hossain, superintendent of police in Comilla. "In his confessional statement, he admitted to killing the duo out of resentment accumulated over the years," said the police official at a press conference at his office around 11:00am. Earlier on Saturday, victims' father Abul Kalam and his wife Rekha Akhter returned home from outside and found Joy and Moni lying dead on the ground. Shafiu, student of a private university and the lone accused in the murder case, was arrested on Monday night at Malibagh in the capital as he had gone into hiding after the incident, said Ali Ashraf Bhuiyan, additional superintendent of police in Comilla. In his confessional statement given before the court of a senior judicial magistrate in Comilla yesterday, Shafiu said his father married one of their tenants 10 years ago without the consent of his mother. After the second marriage, his father and stepmother started misbehaving with him and his mother. They even tortured his sister and did not allow his mother to stay at the house, he added. He had heard recently that he would be deprived of family property, which prompted him to murder his brothers, Shafiu was quoted as saying. After the statement, judge Saiful Islam sent him to Comilla Central Jail. Abul Kalam, father of the deceased, demanded exemplary punishment of Shafiu.

EC yet to act

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men in Pirojpur, Satkhira, Jhalakathi, Barguna and Khulna when they tried to file nominations at the returning officers' offices on February 22, the last day for submitting nominations, according to media reports. EC statistics shows that the BNP did not field any chairman candidate in 70 UPs out of the 738 that will go to polls in the first phase. Against such a backdrop, chairman and councillor aspirants of another 670 odd UPs are set to file nominations today, the last day for submitting nominations for the second phase of the UP elections (March 31). Elections to the rest of the around 2,800 UPs will be held in four more phases until mid-June. The EC did not probe the allegations saying those were not specific complaints. EC Secretary Sirazul Islam on Sunday said actions could only be taken in relation to specific allegations. The commission in a circular yesterday said candidates of UP polls from now on can file nominations at the deputy commissioners' offices as well. Previously, the nominations could only be submitted to the returning officers concerned. Talking to The Daily Star, Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz said the

new move would minimise irregularities as the candidates would have an alternative office for filing nominations. Although some election experts welcomed the EC's move, they observed that it was not enough to stop the irregularities. Lauding the EC's initiative, Former election commissioner M Sakhawat said the commission should probe all the allegations of electoral irregularities and take actions if those were found to be true. Eminent local government expert Dr Tofiul Ahmed said the new move could be seen as a temporary measure. But removing the fear among the BNP and other independent candidates should be the top priority of the EC and the law enforcement agencies, he added. M Hafizuddin Khan, president of Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan), a civil society platform, viewed that ensuring submission of nominations by all the candidates was a key prerequisite to holding fair polls. The EC should take prompt action if anyone obstructs any candidate from filing his nomination, he noted. Election Working Group Director Abdul Alim said the EC should introduce an online nomination filing system for all elections.

Super Tuesday voting begins

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"We're going to demonstrate, starting tomorrow on Super Tuesday, there's a different path that Americans ought to take." A new CNN/ORC poll found that either Clinton and Sanders would easily defeat Trump if the general elections were held now. If Rubio or Cruz were the Republican candidate, Clinton would face a much closer race. Strikingly, Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, topped all three Republican candidates by wide margins, the poll showed. Trump's incendiary campaign has infuriated Republican rivals, including mainstream favourite Rubio who has intensified his personal attacks and stressed Trump would have trouble in a general election. The Florida senator warned supporters in Tennessee that US media and Democratic groups will jump on Trump "like the hounds of hell" if he wins the nomination. But Trump is clearly in the driver's seat. He is leading in polls in at least eight of the 11 Super Tuesday states. And a new CNN/ORC poll shows the billionaire expanding his lead nationally, earning a stunning 49 percent of support compared to second place Rubio, at 16 percent. Cruz of Texas is third, at 15 percent, followed by retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson at 10 percent and Ohio Governor John Kasich at six percent. Trump punched back against Rubio, calling him "Little Marco," mocking him for sweating on the campaign trail and warning that he could not stand up to strong men like Russian President Vladimir Putin. "PARTY OF LINCOLN" Trump's inflammatory rhetoric, in which he has accused Mexico of sending rapists across the border, mocked women and the disabled and urged a

ban on Muslims entering the country, would have been the undoing of a normal candidate. But the 2016 cycle has been anything but normal, with a furious electorate keen to back an outsider who scorns the political establishment. "I'm representing a lot of anger out there," Trump told CNN. "We're not angry people, but we're angry at the way this country's being run." In the latest controversy, Trump came under withering criticism for not immediately disavowing the support of David Duke, who once led the Ku Klux Klan. Rubio said Trump's failure to promptly repudiate Duke, who has expressed support for Trump, makes him "unelectable." Some conservatives have said they will shun Trump if he is the nominee. "This is the party of Abraham Lincoln," said Senator Ben Sasse, accusing Trump of being a non-conservative plotting a "hostile takeover" of the party. Trump supporters "need to recognize that there are a whole bunch of other people who say, if this becomes the David Duke/Donald Trump party, there are a lot of us who are out," he told MSNBC. If Trump sweeps the South, where many of the Super Tuesday races are taking place, it could be lights out for his Republican challengers. Texas is the largest prize, and Cruz is banking on winning his home state. He trails in nearly all other Super Tuesday states. Almost 600 Republican delegates were up for grabs yesterday, nearly half the 1,237 needed to secure the nomination. Some 865 Democratic delegates are at stake, 36 percent of those needed to win.