

# Cops have 'vital information'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday claimed to have gathered vital information about the two youths who took away Rajshahi Pir Shahidullah hours before his murder. They also gathered their physical description by quizzing locals who saw them.

“We are considering the physical description of the two as a development in the investigation as we are yet to find any eyewitnesses to the killing,” said Rajshahi Superintendent of Police Nisharul Arif.

However, police are yet to ascertain if the two were involved in the killing of the 65-year-old Pir (spiritual guide) on Friday night.

The SP said the youths were aged between 28 and 30, and one of them was wearing a helmet. They took Shahidullah towards Tanore through Duari road keeping him in the middle on a motorcycle.

His body was found in a mango orchard at Tanore with his throat slit, which bears the hallmark of the recent attacks on secular activists, bloggers, writers, publishers, professors and people of different faiths and ideologies by suspected militants.

Though no one has claimed responsibility for Shahidullah's murder yet, the so-called Islamic State took credit for most of the recent murders. The government denies IS presence in the country.

Talking about the two youths, the SP said, “We have some other information about the youths, but we are not disclosing it at this moment. Their arrests will help the investigation.”

About the motive, the district police boss said they were looking into two motives -- land issues and his belief in Sufism.

The family of Shahidullah belongs to the Ahle Hadith group of Muslims. Braking away from the family tradition, Shahidullah started following Nur Muhammad, a Pir in Goaland of Rajbari, decades ago.

“We just practise Ahle Hadith rituals, but we do not belong to any group by the name,” said the victim's brother Shariful Islam.

A senior police official told The Daily Star that his switch over to Sufism is significant as many previously arrested militants were found belonging to Ahle Hadith families. This group has discord with Sufism in the subcontinent.

Victim's son Rasel Ahmed said his father had been dealing with four cases over land disputes.

“He had knowledge about land affairs and he was helping a poor family to get back its land through legal process,” he said.

# RAPE OF DOMESTIC HELP Family of alleged rapist sues others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of a man who allegedly raped their 12-year-old domestic help filed a rape case against unknown people so that the actual ‘culprit’ can get away with the crime in the capital's Mugda area, police said yesterday.

It came five days after the incident. The victim told her mother what actually happened when her mother from Rangpur came to visit her at Dhaka Medical College Hospital's One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC).

Police arrested the alleged rapist Bodiuzzaman, 33, and his brother-in-law Shams Rabby for filing the false case after the victim's father lodged a case in this connection yesterday.

“After the rape, which left the girl critically injured, Bodiuzzaman's in-laws took her to the hospital. Then, Rabby came to the police station and filed a case against unnamed people for raping the girl on the roof of his father's house,” said Enamul Haque, officer-in-charge of Mugda Police Station.

The statement of Rabby seemed strange from the beginning and police kept an eye on the family members and also monitored whoever visited the victim at the OCC, he added.

“Rabby and his family members said the victim's parents live in Rangpur, hiding the fact that he pulls rickshaw in Moghbazar,” he added.

The victim is a domestic help of Shamsuddin Taher in South Manda area. The alleged rapist Bodiuzzaman is his son-in-law. The rape incident happened on Tuesday afternoon.

An uncle of the victim told The Daily Star that her family was completely kept in the dark as of Saturday morning. They went to Mugda Police Station and police told them that their daughter was raped by unknown people.

# Nizami

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killed unarmed civilians, raped women and destroyed properties during the war, the tribunal found.

The review petition was the last legal battle for the war criminal. Now, he will have the chance to seek presidential clemency.

A former minister, Nizami was also sentenced to death in the sensational 10-truck arms haul case.

# Man behind a miracle

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Mofiz was not there in Dushanbe when those young conquerors beat India in the final 4-0, nor did he coach them to their maiden glory in Kathmandu a year ago. He was not in the limelight when the victorious girls returned to a rapturous reception at the Bangladesh Football Federation, where everybody wanted to share in the glory in front of the camera array.

The man who threaded the nucleus of this victorious team was actually doing the same thing that he had been doing for the last five years; motivating a group of girls to kick a football in that remote schoolyard. Wearing a navy-blue t-shirt that he got in a FIFA-sponsored short-term coaches' course, the 41-year-old assistant teacher, with a takeaway package barely enough to run his family of four, was preparing the next batch of players when this reporter finally arrived at the now famous Kalsindur school after a 60-kilometre and seven-hour ride from Mymensingh last Wednesday evening.

Many used to call Mofiz a “mad man” when he first started training those girls at the insistence of the school headmistress Minati Rani Shila. But “Mofiz sir” is now a very popular name in that otherwise quiet Dhopdhaur Upazila and his now-famous students see him as their idol.

“It was because of Mofiz sir we first kicked a football. It was because of him we have come this far. I still remember the time he had to sell his paddy crop to support our training and playing expenses. He is not only a teacher to us, he is an extraordinary man and our idol,” this was how Nazma Akhter, a member of the U-14 team, described her mentor.

Nazma's father Abul Kalam, who runs a tea shop at Kalsindur bazaar, recalled how Mofiz persuaded him to allow her daughter to play football.

“He told me ‘give me your daughter and you will see how good she will be.’ It is only because of him the girls of this remote village have earned respect,” said a beaming Kalam. Like Kalam many others of this village also acknowledge that Mofiz's “football story” has had a positive impact on their lives.

“A few years ago not many people visited this place. But after the good performance of our girls, many important people are coming here. We have electricity now, the roads are getting better. We have also heard a lot more improvements will be done here. These are all because of our dear Mofiz

sir. May Allah bless him,” said Idris Ali, one of the villagers.

What makes Mofiz so special? What made him a role model? The answer is very simple. He made us believe that no matter what, if you put your heart into something, you will succeed.

Think of the first day in 2011 when the school headmistress Minati Rani Sheel asked him to form a girls' football team. The school had to send the team to play in the Bangamata Gold Cup, a country-wide tournament run by the Primary Education Board. It is mandatory for all schools to play the tournament.

Mofiz loved to play all sports including football.

“But I was never a good footballer nor did I have any training in coaching. But I took the challenge. It was very tough. Parents were reluctant to allow their daughters to play football. Our first job was to convince the parents. How our headmistress and I had to pursue the parents in those days! You know, people also did not want girls to play football. But the girls were eager to learn and I was very happy to see their enthusiasm. I showed them football games downloaded from YouTube and they were hungry to learn more and more.

“The secret of their success is that they were disciplined. They trained every day, even on Eid holidays. I can still remember that our girls could only wear the proper kit instead of salwar kamiz when we qualified for the district round,” Mofiz said reflecting on the early days of training with his girls, whose poor parents could hardly afford the nutritious diet an athlete needs, let alone a jersey.

Ask Mofiz and he will tell you how the girls used one set of jerseys round the year without losing or destroying a single one.

“I have tried with the boys in the school but they are not as disciplined and attentive as the girls are. The boys have lost three sets of jersey in a year. But since 2011 till today, the girls have not lost a single jersey,” said Mofiz.

The tough days are gone for Mofiz now. He is getting more students in his coaching sessions.

“Now I'm training 50 girls every day and I think they are very talented. Yes, my workload has gone up and I can hardly find a day for myself to meet friends or relatives. But I'm not unhappy about that. I'll be the happiest if the girls of Kalsindur win World Cup one day,” said Mofiz.

It is certainly an ambitious dream. But at least the dreamer is someone who knows how to sow the seed of unprecedented success.

# Govt urged to withdraw

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a pre-budget meeting with the senior officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) at the NBR headquarters.

Matiur cited example of import duty for newsprint for print media in the neighbouring countries and said print media in India does not require any duty to import newsprint.

“Newspapers in India have secured a good position in the world. The biggest English daily in the world is in India now. The country has also big paper mills. Even after that, the print media there gets zero duty import benefit,” he said.

Noab said six to seven local paper mills produce newsprint which can be used in the newspaper industry, but the quality of the newsprint is poor.

Some eight to nine copies of a 24-page newspaper can be printed on a kilogram of imported newsprint whereas only six-seven copies can be printed on a kilogram of locally-produced newsprint, it said.

As a result, the cost of production increases, said Matiur, also editor of the Prothom Alo, the largest circulated Bangla daily.

Noab said the government declared newspaper as an industry so it should get treatment like other industrial sectors.

As an industry, the government should consider newsprint as the raw material for the newspaper industry. So, there should not be any VAT on import of newsprint, said Noab Vice-President AK Azad.

Azad, also the publisher of Bangla daily Shamokal, said the newspaper industry will flourish if government provides zero duty privilege.

# BCL leader jailed

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Rony approached the magistrate and gave him his political identity.

Later, the magistrate ordered his mobile court team members to arrest Rony, the witness added.

However, Mahmudul Karim, one of Rony's followers, claimed that the BCL leader was just distributing leaflets among voters outside the polling centre. The Daily Star contacted Metropolitan Magistrate Harunur Rashid over the phone but he did not comment on the issue.

Rony's father Nurul Absar said, “It is a conspiracy against my son. He went to Hathazari to work for his uncle's brother-in-law who was vying for the Mirzapur union chairman post. My son has a clean image.”

Meanwhile, some 200 BCL activists demonstrated near Chittagong court area from 12:00noon to 3:30pm yesterday,

demanding Rony's release.

They also threatened to launch a movement if the demand was not met.

Chittagong Deputy Commissioner Mesbah Uddin calmed the protesters down and assured them of looking into the matter.

Habibur Rahman Tarek, a former assistant secretary of the BCL central committee, said there was a conflict between Rony's followers and another group over establishing supremacy in Chittagong College and Mohsin College. Rony may have become a victim of that.

There are two factions of ruling Awami League in the port city -- one led by city unit President Mohiuddin and the other by General Secretary and City Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin.

Rony belongs to the group of Mohiuddin, said another BCL leader, wishing not to be named.

# Govt moves

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not be a subject to any judicial review. Without considering this aspect, the HC illegally declared the 16th amendment void and unconstitutional, he said.

Due to the HC judgment a vacuum has been created in the constitution and to avoid the void, the HC judgement requires to be stayed, Sazu added.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the statements made by the lawmakers in the House on May 5 about the HC verdict were expressions of emotions.

There was no reason for the legislature and the judiciary to be at loggerheads due to their statements, he said while talking to reporters after a meeting.

Replying to a question, he said the HC verdict and the discussion in the parliament were not any threat to democracy.

On May 5, a three member-special HC bench by majority view declared the 16th amendment to the constitution “illegal” and “unconstitutional”.

The HC came up with the verdict following a writ petition filed in November 2014 by nine lawyers challenging the amendment.

On May 5, three ministers and several treasury and opposition bench MPs lambasted the HC verdict.

Law Minister Anisul Huq, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed and State Minister for Labour Mujibul Haque Chunnu told the House that the HC verdict was illegal, unconstitutional and beyond the HC's jurisdiction.

Describing the HC verdict as “a conspiracy” against democracy and sovereign parliament, the ministers and lawmakers warned they would not tolerate any such plots.

They added that the 16th amendment could not be illegal or contradictory to the constitution as the same provision was mentioned in the original constitution of 1972.

# Mango growers

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The trade in mangoes is worth Tk 2 crore in the district, said Abdul Wahed, president of Chapainawabganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The prospect of a good yield seems bleak this time, he added.

In Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and other districts of the country, there is a high demand for the varieties grown in Chapainawabganj, including Fazli, Langra, Gopalbhog, Khirshapat, Khirshabhog, Lakhna, Bombai, Mohananda, Mohanbhog and Ashwina.

Traders set up markets in the last week of May at Puration Bazar in Chapainawabganj town, Kansat Bazar in Shibganj upazila and Rohonpur Bazar in Gomostapur upazila to procure and sell mangoes.

# Pak rights

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"Zaki was sitting at a cafe where he was targeted by four armed men arriving on two motorcycles," Muqadas Haider, a senior police official said on Sunday.

Zaki was known for his outspoken stance against the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a Sunni Muslim sectarian militant group, the Pakistani Taliban, and radical cleric Abdul Aziz.

In December 2015, Zaki lead street protests against Aziz, demanding the cleric be arrested and charged with hate speech for allegedly justifying attacks, such as the Peshawar school massacre where 134 schoolchildren were killed in 2014.

In 2007, Aziz and his followers were engaged in an armed standoff with government forces at his mosque in the capital Islamabad, culminating in a eight-day military operation that saw Pakistani commandoes raid the mosque.

Aziz has since been exonerated of all criminal charges by Pakistani courts, but still calls for the overthrow of the government and for a strict version of Islamic sharia law to be imposed.

Zaki had confided to friends that he was on several militant "hitlists", Jibran Nasir, a fellow activist who was also involved in protests against Aziz, told Reuters yesterday.

Nasir said that Zaki did not specify which groups specifically had threatened him.

According to a statement released after Zaki's death by a website he helped run, the activist had been "a target of a systematic hate campaign" by an Islamist political leader and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

Targeted killings are common in Karachi, although violence has declined significantly since the launch of a paramilitary operation in the city almost three years ago.

Rights activists are increasingly among those targeted in Karachi. In April last year, prominent activist Saheen Mahmud was shot and killed while travelling in her car.

# Undocumented

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fixator in his right leg that was heavily bandaged.

Like him, around two lakh undocumented Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia are left to the mercy of their employers, as they are neither entitled to legal protection nor covered by insurance.

Miraj first went to Malaysia, home to some six lakh Bangladeshi workers, in 2006 to work for an electronics company, spending around Tk 2 lakh. He worked at the company for six years renewing his visa and sent home money every month.

He came back home in April 2013 and got married.

Four months later, he again went to Malaysia, and joined a firm, Plus Office Sales Solutions Sdn Bhd, as a driver. While working for around one and a half years, his visa expired and he quit the job.

In the meantime back at home, his wife gave birth to a baby girl.

"Then the Malaysian government made an announcement that undocumented foreign workers would be legalised. I submitted documents to the authorities concerned through an agent for legalising my travel documents. I gave the agent Tk 1.50 lakh," he said.

In March this year, he joined Peck Chew Piling (M) Sdn Bhd as an assistant of a piling machine operator for 80 Ringgit a day.

"When I joined this company, I informed my boss about my status," Miraj said.

And everything went well until March 30.

On that day, he was working next to a piling machine at the company's construction site in Klang District. As a crane was putting heavy equipment on the piling machine, a part of the machine suddenly broke off and fell on the operator, a Malaysian of Chinese origin, leaving him dead on the spot.

"Suddenly, a portion of the equipment fell on my leg," said Miraj. He was then taken to a local hospital where he underwent a surgery.

His recruiter Chin Kang Mun, site coordinator of the company, warned him that he wouldn't get any compensation if he tells the truth. The recruiter forced him to give a false deposition to the police, investigators and company's parent organisation.

"My boss [Kang Mun] asked me to say that our machine was not faulty, and that there were problems in the crane that belonged to another company," said Miraj.

Kang Mun had assured him that the company would compensate him, bear all medical expenses and give him some extra money for his journey home.

"I had to obey his orders for obvious reasons," he added.

But things started changing after Miraj gave the false deposition.

# 'Framed' twice

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respect Krishna. Why should I make any insulting comment about the Prophet?"

Recalling the conversation, Salam adds, "He [Nikhil] told me that two bearded young men were gossiping outside his shop. They were making some vulgar comments. So Nikhil protested and said you two have beard. You should have respect for it. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also had beard and he never permitted such remarks."

According to Nikhil's wife Aroti Rani, following this incident, rumours went around that he had made derogatory remarks about the Prophet, subsequently sparking public anger and leading to the ransacking of his shop and house.

Aminul Islam, Alamnagar Madrasa principal who is now detained, had filed a case against Nikhil with Gopalpur Police Station in 2012.

Arrested on May 2 that year, Nikhil was granted bail after two months in jail. He then went into hiding for a few days in fear of retribution.

The first information report (FIR) didn't mention anything about Nikhil's argument with the two unknown persons. In fact, most of the locals have no idea what he had said about the Prophet. The FIR only reads that he made some derogatory remarks about the Prophet.

According to his family members and acquaintances, Nikhil was a simple and an innocent man who would never make such comments. He was a calm and quiet person and would always be there whenever his neighbours needed help.

On April 30, two to three assailants on a bike took part in the killing on the roadside near his shop around 12:30pm, leaving the fifty-year-old dead on the spot, said police and locals.

The motive is not yet clear, but the attack resembles the targeted killings of secular bloggers, writers and people of different faiths and ideologies over the last few years.

"#ISIS claimed credit for murder of Nikhil Joarder, a Hindu, in Tangail #Bangladesh, saying he blasphemed Muhammad," SITE Intel Group, which monitors and tracks terror activities, wrote on twitter after the killing.

Five days after Miraj's admission into a hospital in Klang District, Kang Mun asked Miraj to move to his friend's house and not to communicate with anyone.

Since then, the recruiter had been avoiding Miraj.

"Whenever I called him, he said he was busy or asked me to call him later. Then he stopped picking up my phone calls," said Miraj.

"There was no one to take care of me when my friend was at work. I suffered intolerable pain, and the situation continued for 10 days."

Unable to bear the pain, Miraj with his friend's help went to the Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia.

"The embassy officials gave me travel pass and I returned home on April 15," he said.

As he was almost broke, his family sent him money for his journey home by selling a plot of land.

"Now I don't have the money to get better treatment," said Miraj, who is concerned about his family's future.

"I don't know how I will look after my elderly parents, wife and daughter," he added.

Dr Qazi Shahidul Alam, an orthopaedic doctor at the hospital where Miraj is receiving treatment, said Miraj needs to undergo operations, including a plastic surgery.

His treatment would cost around Tk 3 lakh, and it would take five to six months for him to recover from the injuries, said the physician.

Miraj would be able to return to a normal life after treatment, added Shahidul.

Early this month, Miraj's employer contacted him through a Bangladeshi migrant, and offered him a good amount of money if he puts his signature on a blank paper and sends it to the company in Malaysia, said Miraj.

The Daily Star emailed Chin Kang Mun on April 25, but he didn't reply.

According to Malaysia's Foreign Workers' Compensation Act, if a migrant worker covered by insurance dies in an accident at workplace, his family would get a maximum compensation of 23,000 Ringgit (around Tk 4.5 lakh).

For injuries at workplaces, the insurance company would decide on the compensation based on the extent of damage, Mohammad Harun Al Rashid, coordinator of rights organisation CARAM Asia told The Daily Star over the phone.

But if the worker is undocumented, he is not entitled to any compensation. Even the worker cannot do anything if the employer denies recruiting him, he said.

This reflects the vulnerability of undocumented foreign workers in Malaysia as most of them do dirty, dangerous and demeaning jobs, added Harun.

The Daily Star could not verify the claim while the government maintains there is no organisational existence of the global terror outfit in Bangladesh.

Three days before his killing, Nikhil came home with a wound around his eyes. His wife suspected that somebody attacked him but he didn't say anything about it.

"He was scared and took a daylong rest. He also stopped visiting the local bazaar, fearing attack," she said.

Aroti always used to keep an eye on him, spending time with him at his shop for as long as she could. On April 30, just before his murder, she took a break at noon and returned home to finish cooking. The killers chose this time to attack him, she said.

Nikhil was the only earning member of his joint family. Two of his brothers died long ago and the younger one is mentally challenged. After losing the sole breadwinner, the whole family is now devastated. They are now selling things from his shop to survive.

**RUMOUR**

There is a rumour in the village that "before the killing, someone wrote on the wall of his shop, threatening that he would not be able to dodge death though he had received bail from the court".

Aroti said that's a lie.

"These stories are making our life hell. This sort of rumour killed my husband and now we want an end to this. Some people say that I was there when three assailants came to our shop. These lies are making our lives even more difficult."

Aroti filed a murder case against three unidentified persons.

Following the murder, police arrested three locals -- Alamnagar Madrasa principal Aminul Islam, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Rafiqul Islam and BNP activist Jhantu Miah.

"We are quite sure that Jhantu Miah was involved in this killing mission. Our informers told us that he had done a recce of the area before the murder," says Saleh Mohammed Tanvir, superintendent of police in Tangail.

"And the two others were arrested because both of them were involved in filing the case against Nikhil in 2012."