

# 3 arrested over monk murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Police yesterday arrested three people in connection with their alleged involvement in the killing of a Buddhist monk in Naikkhangchhari upazila of Bandarban.

The arrestees are Abdur Rahim, 25, Mohammad Zia, 26, and Sa Mong Chak, 35.

During drives, police caught Rahim and Zia at Tadangkhal Para and Titar Para and Sa Mong at Upor Chak Para under Baishari union around 3:30am yesterday, said Abul Khair, officer-in-charge of Naikkhangchhari Police Station.

The OC said the trio were nabbed due to their suspicious movement around the Kyang (temple) where the body of 73-year-old monk U Damma Oaing Cha was found early Saturday morning.

Rahim and Zia belong to the Rohingya community, said police.

Meanwhile, the Buddhist community in Bandarban yesterday staged a demonstration in the town, demanding immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the killer(s).

They also criticised Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal for his comments that the killing was a "stray incident".

The monk who dedicated himself to the path of spiritualism a couple of years ago was found dead, with his throat slit, inside Chak Nirvana Bouddha Kyang, about 250 yards from his village Upor Chak Para.

His previous name was Shwe U Chak.

His daughter-in-law, Manu Ching, found him when she went to serve food there around 5:00am.

The victim's son, Aung Sa Thoi Chak, filed a murder case accusing unnamed people with finding out Naikkhangchhari on Saturday evening.

Police were yet to ascertain the motive behind the killing, which resembles recent murders of people of different faiths and ideologies.

Investigators said they were probing the incident keeping in mind possible militant links, among other things.

Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of Bandarban police, yesterday said they would be able to unearth the motive soon.

Locals said the monk had no enmity with anyone and that he used to meditate most of the day.

U Pannya Jota Mahathero of Bandarban Golden Temple during a demonstration in the town yesterday



Mong Mong Chak, a leader of Chak community, addressing a rally in Bandarban town yesterday. The programme was organised demanding a fair investigation into the murder of Buddhist monk U Damma Oaing Cha Bhikkhu and exemplary punishment for the killer(s).

PHOTO: STAR

# PM reaches London en route to Sofia

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached London yesterday afternoon for a three-day private visit on her way to another three-day official trip to Bulgaria.

During her stay in London on May 15-17, she is scheduled to meet her niece Labour MP Tulip Siddiq, highly placed sources said.

Also a granddaughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tulip gave birth to her first child, a girl, on April 9. Tulip and her husband Chris Percy have named the baby Azalea Joy.

The prime minister has no official business in London, diplomatic sources in Dhaka and London have confirmed.

She accompanies a 39-member delegation, which includes 10 officials from the PMO, four officials from the foreign ministry, an 11-member advance security team, eight accompanying security personnel and six official media persons.

Bangladesh High Commissioner in London Abdul Hannan and other high officials received the prime minister upon her arrival by a VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines in Heathrow International Airport. She was then taken to St James Court-Taj Hotel at Buckingham Gate in London where she would stay during her visit.

Hasina is set to leave London for Bulgaria on May 18 to attend the Unesco-sponsored Global Women Leaders' Forum where she would

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

# ZIA TRUST CASE HC clears way to try Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has cleared the way for a lower court to continue trial proceedings against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Zia Charitable Trust corruption case.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Amir Hossain yesterday rejected two separate revision petitions filed by Khaleda seeking a stay on the trial proceedings.

Following yesterday's order, there is now no legal bar for the lower court to continue the trial proceedings against Khaleda, Anti-Corruption Commission Lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

Raghib Rauf Chowdhury, a lawyer for Khaleda, told reports that they would move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC order.

On April 18, the BNP chief filed two separate revision petitions with the HC challenging a lower court order that rejected her two applications in the graft case lodged by the ACC on August 8, 2011.

One of the applications was filed for re-cross examination of the investigation officer of the case while the other for scrutinising the case diary.

The applications were lodged with the court at Bakshibazar in Khaleda's presence the previous day.

On May 10, the HC fixed May 15 (yesterday) for passing an order on the revision petitions.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

# SWIFT is responsible

FROM PAGE 1 Bangladesh. But it's not correct. This doesn't mean that we are rebuking SWIFT."

"But SWIFT must accept responsibility for the incident. They should help Bangladesh Bank."

SWIFT now says its job is to provide solutions and it is the client's responsibility to ensure the safety of the system, Farashuddin said. "I admit that."

But he emphasised that if SWIFT or any individual provides any system, it is the provider's responsibility to supply a secure system and make sure that it doesn't become vulnerable midway.

The SWIFT system has been working in Bangladesh since 1995.

In Bangladesh last year, SWIFT wrote to the BB that the Belgian organisation wants to link the SWIFT platform with RTGS.

"The letter contained nothing but excitement and flattery. It didn't explain how Bangladesh and the BB would benefit if the linking goes ahead," said Farashuddin.

Upon receiving the letter, the bank's executive committee approved it in an irresponsible manner, and the decision was "devoid of common sense", he said.

Before the link was established, 13 steps should have been followed: some by SWIFT, some by the BB and some jointly by the two, he said.

But the SWIFT platform at the BB was connected with the RTGS in November last year without following two or three major procedures, he said.

The connection was supposed to be established after SWIFT provided the BB with a hardware security module. But SWIFT didn't do so.

Later, the module was brought in, but it is yet to be installed, said the former BB governor.

While establishing the link, it was found that the connection couldn't be established due to the anti-virus embedded with the SWIFT platform.

When the link was established, the SWIFT engineers tried to disable the

anti-virus in vain. Later, the anti-virus was uninstalled because the two systems couldn't be connected while it was active, according to Farashuddin.

It appears that the BB officials involved in the matter were not aware of the changes, he said.

An engineer from SWIFT gave an interim connection, and it was agreed that once the regular connection was established, the interim connection would be scrapped.

But it was not discarded even after the regular connection was established, said the former BB governor.

"Even after the establishment of the connection, SWIFT has not yet explained to BB officials how the system operates and what types of problems could surface."

The SWIFT engineers instructed BB officials -- first verbally before their departure and later through telephone correspondences -- to run the server round-the-clock.

"Because of all these reasons, we think the SWIFT system had been compromised."

There was no logic behind establishing the connection between the SWIFT platform at the BB and the RTGS, he said.

The BB carries out international transactions through SWIFT while the RTGS processes local transactions. "There is no logic behind linking local transactions with international transactions."

Farashuddin said 18 messages with payment instructions involving \$500 million were sent to the Fed from the BB back office till 7:15pm on February 4. Of the amount, \$200 million was sent for buying bonds from Basel Bank.

Later that night, the hackers broke into the BB system and sent 70 payment instructions involving \$950 million to the Fed.

"We haven't yet got evidence or proofs that BB officials have made those instructions," he said.

The Fed outright rejected the payment instructions for 35 orders

because intermediary banks were not at the recipients' ends.

Of the remaining 35, the Fed became suspicious and sought explanations from the BB about 12 payment instructions.

"But they should have known that it was already Friday in Bangladesh, and the Bangladesh Bank wouldn't be able to give explanations," said Farashuddin.

The Fed was suspicious about the 12 payment instructions and sought explanation from the BB, but didn't get it. Still, the Fed carried out five payment orders.

"Why did they make payment? Why didn't they issue the 'stop payment' order or recall the fund if they had felt it was suspicious?" The Fed should have smelt a rat as it sent messages to the BB but didn't receive any responses, he said.

Of the five payment orders, the beneficiaries of the four were individuals. Historically, BB's payment instructions involving large amounts are made for institutions. In case of individuals, the amount is small, said Farashuddin.

The hackers had made attempts to steal \$950 million. Of those, advices worth \$101 million were sent, he said.

The BB got back \$20 million because of misspelling of the beneficiary organisation in Sri Lanka. Now, the amount of the missing money stands at \$81.16 million.

He said the malware was created either in Pakistan or North Korea. "We have evidence that this malware was created to hack Bangladesh Bank's system."

About the central bank's responsibility, he said the decision to establish connection between the SWIFT platform and the RTGS was inconsiderate. "It should not have been done."

The BB officials were unskilled, negligent and careless about the issue, he said.

"We have no doubt about it. However, we have not yet got any proof that they were part of the theft. We are

trying to find it out."

The Farashuddin-led probe body tasked three professors from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) with finding out whether anybody from the BB was involved in the scam.

Yesterday, the three submitted an interim report to the probe committee.

The probe body is collecting information about two BB officials, said Farashuddin.

"However, the information we have received so far indicates that they were not a party to the crime."

About the recovery of the stolen funds, he said the government and other departments concerned would work jointly to retrieve the money.

Quoting the Filipino-based Inquirer media outlet, which broke the news, Farashuddin said Philippine's casino junket operator Kim Wong is believed to have been holding \$35 million and remittance company Philrem \$17 million.

"It is possible to recover more than \$50 million."

Diplomatic strategies and legal tools have to be used to recover the stolen money, he said. "We have to take assistance from the Fed. We have learnt that they are ready to help," he added.

Last week, the Fed, the BB and SWIFT vowed to work together to trace the stolen \$81 million, following their first-ever joint meeting in Basel, Switzerland.

Farashuddin said Bangladesh should try to convince the Fed to put pressure on the three US-based intermediary banks that channelled the \$81 to the Philippines.

The Fed could also pressurise Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation as it has a branch in Los Angeles.

"If we file lawsuits and work jointly, we will perhaps be able to recover the majority of the missing money."

The former BB governor said it was not right on the BB's part to have kept the government in the dark about the theft.

# Punished for proposing

## Commerce College expels 2, cancels admission of 9 after video goes viral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Commerce College authorities have taken punitive action against 11 of its higher secondary students.

They expelled two students and cancelled admission of nine others for "breaching discipline," according to an office order issued on Thursday.

It came after a video of the said students went viral on social media. In the video it was seen that some students holding each others' hands create a circle around a boy and a girl. They were wearing their college uniform.

At one point, the boy knelt down to propose to the girl and then put a ring on her finger. In the end, the boy and the girl hugged.

It was not clear when and where the incident happened.

Both the video and the authorities' decision triggered huge reactions among social media users, many in favour of the students. They said these students did nothing wrong.

However, a couple of reactions were critical, saying the authorities were right to take action.

Contacted, College Principal Prof Md Abu Sayeed said they had to take action for the "interest of the institution". He declined to elaborate.

Generally, those expelled from an institution cannot get admission in the same institution. In case of the two expelled by the Commerce College authorities, it is not clear if they can enrol at other institutions this year.

And the nine students whose admission was cancelled would have to take readmission if they want to continue their studies at the Commerce College, or else take admission in other institutions.

# More burden on state coffer

FROM PAGE 1 who were either deprived or denied of promotions in the past several years.

In his instruction, he pointed out that many officials with negative reports from the National Security Intelligence (NSI) got promotion, but many having positive reports did not get it, said a ministry source.

The minister instructed the officials to formulate a policy for giving promotion and continue the process, the

source added.

Ashraf's instruction came after a large number of officials who were denied promotion drew his attention. Some of them even broke down in tears, sources said.

Additional secretaries will draw salaries (Tk 66,000 basic) and other benefits under grade II. A joint secretary gets a Tk 56,000 scale and a deputy secretary Tk 50,000 scale which includes, among other things, house

rent amounting to 50 percent of the basic, to be effective from July.

On average, the promoted officials will draw an additional Tk 10,000 per month.

Sources said many of the promoted officials will get posting in a day or two once Public Administration Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury returns home from Russia. But it is not certain that they will get new responsibilities.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder questioned the straining of the public exchequer if the promoted officials continued to do the same old job. He said it was not right to give such promotions when there was no post.

"Such a decision contradicts the government's own policy to strengthen the civil administration," he said, adding that strict rules should be followed

in giving promotion.

Earlier on Thursday, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiq Alam admitted that most of the promoted officials would not get new responsibilities due to a lack of vacancies in the upper tiers of the bureaucracy.

Against this backdrop, the government has made another move to promote the senior assistant secretaries of the 21st and 22nd BCS batches in the next three to four months.

# Suspect held in Kushtia

FROM PAGE 1 Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit.

Police suspect that he might have been in the backup team deployed nearby, Monirul said at a press briefing at the DMP media centre yesterday.

He also supplied firearms to ABT men in other such operations, police claimed.

"At least three others, including the leader of the killing operation, have been identified. We are trying to arrest them," he added.

Shihab used to maintain communication with the leader, police claimed, not disclosing the name of the leader. USAID staff Xulhaz, who used to work as a protocol officer of former US ambas-

sador Dan Mozena, and his friend Khandoker Mahbub Rabby Tonoy were hacked to death inside Xulhaz' flat in Kalabagan in the capital.

At least five killers were seen running away in the footage of a CCTV camera installed about 300 yards from his home. According to witnesses, the youths were aged between 25 and 28.

Monirul said the ABT members accomplished the killings with directions from their superior leaders for, what he claimed, Xulhaz and Tonoy promoting the rights of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community and "spreading confusion about Islam". Not only Xulhaz, the editor of

"Roopbaan", the country's only known magazine for the LGBT community, Tonoy was also their target as he convened the Rangdhanu Jatra at Shahbagh to celebrate Pehela Baishakh, Monirul claimed.

"They attacked the duo being confirmed of their presence [in the flat]," Monirul said, adding that they succeeded in the mission after two months of preparation.

A top level Detective Branch official, however, said Shihab was in Kushtia on that day. Alongside supplying firearm, he accompanied the killers as they rushed to Kushtia for cover after the gruesome murders. Replying to a query, Monirul said ABT

men were behind the double murder and murder of the Jagannath University student Nazim Uddin but they were yet to be sure of the involvement of the individuals in common.

Monirul, replying to another question about intelligence agencies' failure to prevent the double murder, said it was very difficult to prevent the attacks of sleeper cells of militants.

Monirul said neither Xulhaz nor his friends shared with them about any threats.

"We could not realise that he [Xulhaz] would be targeted for his activities," he added. A Dhaka Court granted three-day

remand for Shihab after police sought a 10-day remand.

During hearing on the remand, Shihab told the court that he was in Kushtia before and after the incident and he was not involved in the murders.

Police said Shihab joined banned Islamic group Harkat-ul Jihad during his stay in Moulvibazar several years ago. As the militant outfit turned inactive, he started working with ABT since 2015.

Kushtia police started a manhunt in the region to arrest Shihab's close aides, sources claimed.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the police's claim.