

FARUK MURDER CASE IN TANGAIL

Fugitive MP's assets seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police yesterday confiscated moveable assets of 10 fugitive accused, including Awami League lawmaker Amanur Rahman Khan Rana and his three brothers, in a case filed for killing Tangail AL leader and freedom fighter Faruk Ahmed.

Tangail model police confiscated assets of the AL lawmaker from Tangail-3 (Ghatail) and his three brothers -- Shahidur Rahman Khan Mukti, former mayor of Tangail municipality; Jahidur Rahman Khan Kakon, former president of Tangail Chamber of Commerce; and Saniyat Khan Bappa, former Chhatra League leader -- from their College Para houses in the town.

Police also seized assets of five other fugitives -- Amanur's aide Kabir Hossain; former Jubo League leaders Alamgir Hossain Chan, Nasir Uddin Nuru, Sanwar Hossain; and former commissioner of Tangail municipality Masudur Rahman -- from their houses in Sadar upazila.

However, almost no valuable assets were found in the houses of the nine fugitives as those were already taken elsewhere after a Tangail court ordered the confiscation, said Nazmul Haque Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Tangail Model Police Station.

Only a fridge, some pieces of furniture and clothes were seized at Mukti's house, he added.

On the other hand, no moveable items were found at the house of another fugitive Babu, security guard of the MP's office, in Kalihati upazila, said Saiful Islam Farajee, officer-in-charge of Kalihati Police Station.

On May 16, Senior Judicial Magistrate in Tangail Golam Kibria ordered confiscation of assets of the fugitives.

The magistrate passed the order as the accused did not appear before the court. They were also summoned to appear before the court by June 16, court sources said.

On April 6, the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in Tangail issued arrest warrants for the 10 fugitives. Judge Aminul Islam passed the order after accepting a charge sheet against 14 accused.

Faruk was shot dead on the night of January 18, 2013. Police submitted the charge sheet on February 3 this year.

According to the charge sheet, Faruk, the then publicity secretary of Tangail district AL unit, decided to contest for the post of Tangail AL general secretary in 2012.

But Amanur and his family were against it as the MP's brother Shahidur was preparing to vie for the same post.

Amanur tried to persuade Faruk into quitting the race but failed. The MP and his brothers then ordered their accomplices to kill him, police said in the charge sheet.



Following a court order in a case filed for the murder of a freedom fighter, police confiscates moveable properties from former Tangail municipality mayor Shahidur Rahman Khan's home yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

ESCAP adopts BD resolution on oceans economy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Heads of government and other high officials from around Asia and the Pacific region unanimously adopted a Bangladesh resolution on oceans economy at a UN meeting in Bangkok yesterday.

The resolution titled "Regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" was adopted by a consensus at the 72nd session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Representatives and delegates from 53 countries took part in the five-day debates which concluded yesterday. The debates reviewed key challenges to achieving inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the Asia Pacific region.

Australia, India and Sri Lanka co-sponsored the resolution and made statements of support to the resolution which was adopted with support of all 53 ESCAP member states.

"In keeping with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership role in promoting the Blue Economy concept, we took the initiative to table for the first time in UNESCAP, a resolution linked to Sustainable Development Goal 14 and our national aspirations to conserve and use marine resources at the Bay of Bengal sustainably," said Saida Muna Tasneem, Bangladesh ambassador to Thailand and permanent

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Machete attack kills 1

FROM PAGE 1

The assailants forced them to get down from the vehicle and hacked them repeatedly. The attack lasted less than a minute and the assailants left the scene on a motorbike on which they came, police said, quoting witnesses.

Police recovered a machete from the spot.

Locals said Sanaur was an ardent lover and promoter of Baul philosophy. Known to the villagers as Sana Daktar (doctor), he gave free treatment and homeopathy medicine to the poor for free.

Among colleagues, Saifuzzaman is also known as a secular and progressive-minded person. Only in January, he returned home after completing his PhD on Baul philosophy from Kalyani University in India.

This is not the first time that a university teacher or a Baul devotee came under attack.

On April 23, suspected militants hacked to death a Rajshahi University professor, AFM Rezaul Karim Siddiquee, near the campus.

Earlier on January 8, homeopath Jamiruddin Khaza was similarly killed in his dispensary in Jhenidah. He was known to be a devotee of the great mystic Lalon Shah.

Islamic State took credit for his murder, according to US-based SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors

global terror activities.

Another follower of Baul philosophy, Prof AKM Shafiul Islam of Rajshahi University, was hacked to death near the campus in November 2014.

Including yesterday's victim, at least 12 people have been hacked to death in similar fashion so far this year. The IS took credit for several of these attacks, but the government insists the terror group has no presence in the country.

About yesterday's attack, Kushtia police Superintendent Proloy Chisim said it resembled those carried out in recent months. "We are investigating if any militant group is involved."

But police would also look into other motives such as property or treatment-related issues, he added.

'DOCTOR FOR THE POOR' Every morning, poor people from near and far would gather at Sanaur's home at Mazampur for free treatment and medicine, which Sanaur would happily give.

He also gave financial help to many ultra poor people, according to locals and family members.

To them, his was a progressive mind enlightened by Baul philosophy.

He kept himself busy with social development work and for the wellbeing of the poor so much so that he sold much of his ancestral property for the cause, said Obaidur Rahman, a

relative.

He would treat patients from morning till afternoon, and in the evening he would arrange Baul songs, accompanied by friends and admirers.

People from nearby areas would also come.

"We see nothing wrong in his love for Baul music. He used to give us free treatment," said an elderly man of Shishirmath village.

Pavel Raihan, Sanaur's only son, said, "My father was a man who loved to help the poor. He was an outspoken and progressive man."

Pavel studies at a private university in the capital and his mother died three years ago.

Friends and locals said they were not aware of any threat on Sanaur's life, but religious fanatics in the area often criticised him for his love for Baul philosophy.

Saifuzzaman, father of a five-year-old daughter, joined the university upon his master's in 2006. Later he went to India to do his PhD on Baul philosophy and their beliefs.

Sources said he was involved with Shapla Forum, a pro-Awami League teachers' organisation, and Bangabandhu Parishad.

Prof Saidur Rahman, a colleague at the department, said Saifuzzaman was a quiet person and would always speak about peace.

Boro farmers

FROM PAGE 1

He has been selling his harvested Boro at Tk 12 a kg, which he considers lower than the production cost.

Abdul Gafur, another farmer from the same district, told The Daily Star that they got elated at government's announcement of buying paddy at Tk 23 a kg but said they are still in the dark about when they would be able to sell rice at government silos.

Angered by low prices of rice, several hundred farmers took to the street on Tuesday halting traffic on Thakurgaon-Dhaka highway for half an hour. The farmers of Jagannathpur and Nargoon unions who blocked the highway at Khochabari Haat in Thakurgaon demanded fair price of their produce.

Abdul Wadud Dara, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the food ministry, said, "In previous years, the middlemen used to get the price benefits out of the government food procurement scheme. But this time, field officers of the agriculture department are making sure that lists of genuine farmers are prepared."

"...we'll send the money [price of their produce] directly to their [farmers] bank accounts."

The ruling party lawmaker said he had asked the director general of the food directorate to expedite the

procurement process.

Ilahi Dad Khan said though 70 to 80 percent of farmers had their bank accounts opened, many accounts might have become dormant in absence of regular transactions.

"We've asked all our field officials to make sure that banks cooperate in keeping the farmers' accounts active and we'll also make sure that money is transferred to the accounts of the farmers," said Khan.

He hoped that by early next week the procurement drive would gather momentum with all lists of Boro farmers ready at every district.

Though Boro was cultivated on 48 lakh hectares of land last year, the acreage has shrunk to 46.85 lakh hectares this year, mainly due to low prices of the produce last year. Besides, there have been some flash flood related crop losses early in the harvesting season in the northeastern haors.

Agriculture officials, nonetheless, are optimistic about achieving a bumper Boro output of 1.9 crore tonnes. If that happens, the total rice production this fiscal year would go a little over 3.47 crore tonnes, equaling the previous year's output.

Of the three rice seasons in Bangladesh, Boro is the biggest contributor to the staple production. The other seasons are Aus and Aman.

Earlier on April 24, in a major policy shift, the government decided to procure seven lakh tonnes of Boro paddy directly from farmers, in addition to six lakh tonnes of rice, from May 5 through August 31.

The prices have been fixed at Tk 23 for a kilogram of paddy and Tk 32 for a kg of rice.

According to government estimates, farmers' average production costs for each kg of paddy and rice are Tk 20.70 and Tk 29.

In the previous years, the government used to buy mostly rice (9/10 lakh tonnes) and barely one lakh tonne of paddy, which would benefit mainly the rice millers and middlemen with the price incentives.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, an official of the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit of the food ministry said the government officials concerned have to deliver this time and try to implement the "direct-purchase-from-farmers policy".

Otherwise, the farmers will lose interest in farming the economically less lucrative rice, they noted.

(The Daily Star's Thakurgaon correspondent Md. Quamrul Islam Rubaiyat, Lalmonirhat correspondent S Dilip Roy and Tangail correspondent Mirza Shakil have contributed to this report.)



Sanaur Rahman's body lies next to his motorbike in Shishirpara Maath of Kushtia while police try to control the onlookers. Criminals attacked Sanaur and his pillion rider Saifuzzaman, a teacher of Islamic University Kushtia, leaving Sanaur dead on the spot yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Kushtia Shibir man killed in blast

FROM PAGE 1

said Zoynal Abedin, additional superintendent of police (ASP) in the district.

Severely injured Hafizur was taken to Kushtia General Hospital, he said.

Locals and Botoil Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Momin Mondol said both Naimul and Hafizul were class-IX

student at Koburhat High School and were involved in Chhatra Shibir politics.

Hafizur's father Abdul Khaleq said he was not aware of his son's involvement with Shibir.

No one from Naimul's family could be reached immediately.

ASP Zoynal said Naimul was killed

after the bomb he was carrying went off. "Police recovered a circuit used in making bombs from his pocket."

He said they were investigating to find out whether the duo was going to carry out any subversive activity.

"We are also trying to confirm whether they had any political affiliation," he added.

Now Hefajat enters scene

FROM PAGE 1

around a week ago over the allegation of making disparaging remarks on religion.

The Hefajat men have threatened to paralyse the country with hartal and blockade if their demand is not met.

The leaders of the group brought the class-X student, who has raised the allegation of demeaning religion against his school's headmaster, to the podium at the protest rally held under the banner of Sarbastorer Musalman O Touhidi Janata in the DIT commercial area.

But in the written complaint to the school committee on May 12, the student didn't bring any such allegation against the headmaster. He just said the teacher had beaten him in class.

Criticising the education and law ministers, the Hefajat leaders demanded cancellation of the education ministry's decision to reinstate Shyamal as the headmaster of Piyar Sattar Latif High School in the Bandar area.

"If Shyamal is not brought under trial within 72 hours, a massive movement will be launched in Narayanganj. There will be shutdowns and blockades. The Dhaka-Chittagong highway will be blocked," said Maulana Abdul Awal, president of Hefajat-e Islam in Narayanganj district.

"We will paralyse the entire country," he said.

Earlier, the Hefajat men had brought out a procession.

Only a couple of days back, several hundred activists of Islamist group Tehrik-e-Khatme Nabuwat demonstrated in Narayanganj city, demanding capital punishment to the teacher for what they said was making an anti-

religion comment.

In support for JP lawmaker Salim, the group demanded trial and punishment of those who are "hatching a conspiracy" against him.

Meanwhile, Shyamal expressed fears that he may come under attack any time.

"Narayanganj is synonymous with Osman family. There is always a feeling of apprehension..." he told this correspondent at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

The teacher said he didn't know whether he would get justice.

With pain all over the body, he is now receiving treatment at the DMCH under police protection. Around 10 policemen of Shahbagh Police Station were on guard at the entrance to the ward.

He was shifted to the DMCH from a Narayanganj hospital around 12:45pm for better treatment.

On May 13, Shyamal was beaten up by a mob over the allegation that he demeaned religion. He was then made to do squats holding his ears in public on Salim's instructions.

The headmaster has refuted the allegation against him all along.

A video clip of the incident went viral on social media, triggering a huge public outcry and a firestorm of protest on Facebook and Twitter.

On Thursday, the education ministry dissolved the school managing committee of Piyar Sattar Latif High School, which had suspended Shyamal. It also reinstated him following recommendations from its probe body.

Asked about it, Shyamal said he was yet to receive any formal notification in this regard.

He, however, thanked the government

and others for helping him get back his job.

Earlier, the school committee had sent him a letter, which said he was suspended because "he physically tortured students, took money in the name of appointing teachers, made derogatory comments about Islam, remained absent without leave and used to be late at work".

JPMENIRATE JP Co-chairman GM Quader said the party men are irate over the public humiliation of the Narayanganj headmaster by its lawmaker Salim.

It is unacceptable and the party will not take responsibility for what the MP has done, he said.

"Like all the people across the country, our party men are irate and unhappy over the incident," Quader told private TV channel ATN Bangla yesterday.

"Every person has his own identity... A party cannot take responsibility for all the activities of any of its member," said Quader.

He said they are observing the entire situation closely and will take necessary steps once the government makes clear what had actually happened.

However, the JP leader told The Daily Star on Wednesday that the party would take necessary measures in this regard once the government probe committee submits its report.

But the JP didn't make any move against its lawmaker even after the three-member body submitted its report to the education ministry on Wednesday night.

The committee said the teacher was a victim of injustice. It also termed illegal the school managing committee's decision to suspend him.