



Anwar, left, and Wasim, two suspects arrested in Mitu murder case, after they gave confessional statements before a Chittagong court yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 7-8 killers

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took part in the Mitu murder. Wasim was one of the three who attacked Mitu. He shot her with a gun, which police have yet to recover. Anwar, at the time of the attack, was in the area as a member of a backup team, added the official.

Replying to a question, Iqbal Bahar said the attackers were the members of crime gang. "We have come to know about others involved and we are trying to arrest them."

Asked about the murder motive, the

CMP commissioner said he would not comment about it before the investigation completes.

Queried if the murder was committed by Islamist militants or if it has anything to do with personal or professional issues, he said they were looking into all possible aspects.

On June 5, three assailants stabbed and shot dead Mitu, 32, who left her OR Nizam Road house on foot around 6:35am to put her son on a school bus at GEC Intersection in Chittagong.

On Saturday, a four-member police team interrogated Babul for 15 hours at the DB office on Minto Road after he was taken away around 1:00am.

According to sources, he was questioned about his "suspected link with the murder" though there was no official version in this regards.

But CMP Commissioner Iqbal Bahar yesterday said, "Babul was not taken away." Cops were deployed at the SP's house and also during his movement between home and the DB office for his security, he added.

On another query, the CMP boss said Babul was not under police surveillance. "Why would the plaintiff be under surveillance when there is scope for direct steps if his involvement is found?"

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Miah yesterday said the SP was quizzed as per the law. There was nothing unusual in interrogating the plaintiff.

The SP was asked to come to the DB office on Minto Road for questioning but he wanted a car to reach there, the DMP commissioner said. "We sent a vehicle accordingly," he said during a programme for distribution of Eid clothes among the poor on Dholaiapur High School ground.

Babul's father-in-law Musharraf Hossain, himself a former police official, said it is a positive development that two suspects have been arrested and made confessional statements. "Now their statements have to be verified," Musharraf told The Daily Star last night.

He also pointed to the fact that criminals used knives, firearms and a motorcycle but not all of those were recovered. Though a motorcycle has been found, it needs to be ascertained if that is the one used by the killers, he added.

Asked about his son-in-law's suspected link with the murder, he said he does not believe any such stories. Babul made some enemies because of his achievement in service, he said. "So any information given against him should be verified even if it takes months."

## Life term

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who had hatched the conspiracy were not punished and said punishment should be meted out to each of those who had masterminded the killings.

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Syed Iftekhar Uddin, Gazipur Deputy Commissioner SM Alam and Superintendent of Police Super Harun Or Rashid were, among others, present at the programme.

Earlier, the chief justice visited different units of the jail and talked to the inmates. He also watched two documentaries on the jail.

## Leaving home in fear

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Commander Lt Col Sazzad Hossain told our Moulvibazar correspondent.

The villagers alleged that they left their homes in the face of torture and harassment by forest officials of the reserve forest.

Manish Chandra Debbarma, headman of Debrapara village, said that around 600 indigenous people live in the five villages only half a kilometre away from the Bangladesh-India border.

"Most of us work as day labourers inside the forest, but we are often harassed by forest officials," he said, adding that the harassment had increased since the discovery of a large cache of arms and ammunition in Satchhari National Park in Habiganj in 2014.

The location where the arms were recovered is about half a kilometre away from the villages.

"Since that incident, forest officials often threaten us with eviction and tell us to go away from the forest land," Manish claimed.

He alleged that forest guards had destroyed some of their homes about four months ago and evicted some of their community members from the forest land in Chunarughat.

Abdul Wadud, beat officer of Sanbari beat under Kalenga forest, refuted the allegation of torture.

He said that on Friday he sacked a number of Tripura community men who were working as forest guard.

"Infuriated, the Tripura men attacked a forest bungalow. As a result, we detained four people," he claimed. They were released later, he added.

RFM Monirul Islam, divisional forest officer (DFO) of the Sylhet Forest Division, claimed that the villagers were rehabilitated there in the early 1970s and were given agricultural land inside the forest area under the condition that they would in return guard the jungle along with forest employees.

"However, the men were not performing their duties for the last 10-15 days. When the beat officer of Sanbari forest met some of them on Friday on his way to Asr prayer, he had an argument with them about the matter," he claimed.

"Later, these men attacked the Sanbari forest office. They also waited with sticks to beat up the officer but were stopped by other community people..." he alleged, adding that four men, who attacked the office were detained but later released to the headman of a Tripura village.

The villagers told the BSF that around five people went missing from the Tripura villages in the last one week, while their women and children were being harassed every day, reported our Kolkata correspondent.

Following the tension between forest officials and the Tripura community men, members of Tripura and Kharia indigenous communities are now living amid utter insecurity in the hilly jungles, villagers said.

Pushpo Rani Debbarma, 65, wife of headman Chitto Debbarma, said "We feel unsafe as forest officials can evict us anytime. We are passing our days in panic."

Khemtyi Debbarma, 60, mother of two, said that after the men lost their jobs in the forest, cooking at many houses in the villages had stopped, as they could not buy anything.

Shamim Ahmed, chairman of Paikpara Union Parishad, said, "The indigenous Tripura community people are peaceful. They do not engage in any violence. But some forest officials disturb them."

Jonok Debbarma, former general secretary of Bangladesh Tripura Kollyan Sangsad, said, "Indigenous people are peaceful, yet we face harassment regarding our land rights."

Lt Col Sazzad Hossain said when BSF informed them about the attempt by the Bangladeshi indigenous people to cross the border, BGB along with a forest range official and four local UP members went there, held a flag meeting and brought them back.

"Indigenous people had been living in the Kalenga Reserve Forest and sought shelter from the BSF following problems with forest department workers," he added.

Nirmalendu Chakrabarty, officer-in-charge of Chunarughat Police Station, told The Daily Star that 187 indigenous people sought shelter in India.

Forest department people often harass Tripura community men, so they sought shelter there (India) for safety, he said.

Yesterday, law enforcers along with union parishad chairmen and forest officials went to the Tripura villages to discuss the situation with the villagers.

"We assured the villagers that steps will be taken against any forest official or beat officer if the villagers were harassed again," Lt Col Sazzad told The Daily Star after the meeting.

The villagers were also asked to talk to the BGB about their problems, instead of going to BSF for shelter, he said.

Despite the assurance, the villagers were still apprehensive about their future.

Shakti Panda Tripura, organising secretary of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum, termed the incident inhuman.

"Indigenous people have ancestral rights to the land and this right is recognised by the United Nations. The forest department is violating international norms and standards," he said.

"I urge the government to give them shelter immediately," he added.

Shawkat Mahmud, president of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), said, "Bangladesh is making progress in repression... It's unimaginable how many forms repression can take here."

Dr Asif Nazrul, professor of Dhaka University, said, "Bangladesh is now a haven for killers."

Inspector General of Police (IGP) AKM Shohidul Hoque was not available for comments.

Eric Sottas, former secretary general of OMCT; Farida Akhter, executive director of UBINIG; Saiful Huq, general secretary of Biplobi Workers Party; Faizul Hakim Lala, secretary of Jatiya Mukti Council; Md Nur Khan, acting executive director of Ai o Salish Kendra, and Pinaki Bhattacharya, writer and online activist, spoke among others.

## Banks

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time off to relax, just like during holidays in the West.

"In the western world, people enjoy their lives after work. The employees in Bangladesh should relax during the holidays too. They will be able to visit their near and dears ones during the long holidays," Ahmad said.

The businesses will not face any major challenge, as some vital bank branches will remain open on July 2 and 3.

Business transactions will also slow down during the break for a thin presence of people, he said. "We will not face any major problem in business due to the long holidays during Eid-ul-Fitr. We appreciate the decision," said Ahmad.

Siddiqur Rahman, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, also welcomed the decision.

"Our shipments will not be affected during the long break. Our factories will also remain closed at the time." The apparel exporters will not face any challenges because the relevant bank branches will remain open on July 2 and 3, he said.

The decision for a long break is good news for the workers as they will not face any rush for buses and trains this year, he said. They can travel peacefully, he added.

## Khaleda

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2008 exempting the accused from the charges as their offence was not found in the investigation.

Police submitted a charge sheet before a court on October 5, 2008, against Khaleda and 15 others, Mahubub said, adding that under the ACC law, there is no scope for further investigation into a corruption case if a final report is submitted earlier.

The lawyer said the apex court would later fix a date for hearing Khaleda's petition.

Earlier on September 17, 2015, the HC rejected a writ petition of the BNP chief filed in 2008 challenging the legality of trial proceedings in the case.

On May 25 this year, the HC released its full judgement directing the trial court to proceed with the case in accordance with the law. The court also vacated its 2008 stay order on the case proceedings.

The ACC accuses the former prime minister and 15 others of causing a loss of Tk 158 crore to the state exchequer by awarding a contract for operation of Barapukuria coalmine to a Chinese company between June 2003 and June 2005, abusing power.

## I was shot

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point-blank range. I could not shout because the policemen gagged me.

After that they put me again in the "Leguna" and took me to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The doctors of the hospital advised to admit me but the policemen did not do so.

They kept me without treatment till the next day. On January 18, 2015, police showed me as an accused in three cases about burning and vandalising vehicles, filed with Paltan and Darus Salam Police Stations.

They kept me in the custody on remand for three days without any treatment. Then I was detained in Dhaka Central Jail and then Kashimpur Jail and released on bail after seven months.

In August 2015, I was sent to jail in a case of attacking a polling centre during the elections on January 5, 2014, and after two months, I was released on bail.

Now, there are four cases pending against me. I need appear at various courts regularly. Thus my academic career is being seriously hampered. My wounded right leg has thinned because I could not take timely treatment. It cannot support my body. I feel severe pain in the wounded area. I could not get proper treatment later due to the economic hardship of my family.

## President goes

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a special session on the occasion of Bangladesh president's visit. Hamid will deliver a speech in the parliament.

He is expected to pay a courtesy call on former king Jigme Singye Wangchuck, father of the current Bhutanese king.

King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck visited Bangladesh in 2011 and 2013. In 2011, he visited Bangladesh as "the guest of honour" in celebration of 40 years of Bangladesh's independence.

Bhutan was the first country to recognise an independent Bangladesh on December 6, 1971.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Bhutan twice. In November 2009, she made a bilateral visit to Bhutan and in April 2010, she went there to attend the 16th Saarc summit.

## Take steps to bring

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Bangladesh (IEB).

The BNP organised the programme to mark the day and put the blame on the members of the law-enforcement agencies for the abduction.

When Ridhi was expressing her feelings about her missing father, a heartbreaking atmosphere was created in the hall room. All of the speakers urged the government high-ups including the prime minister to take an initiative for the return of the missing members of their families.

"The mental situation of the family members is very undesirable. We cannot maintain our regular life properly because of our missing family members. We don't know how we would observe the upcoming Eid," said Afroza Islam Ankhi, elder sister of Sajedul Islam Suman, who was abducted from Bashundhara residential area on December 4, 2013.

Anisur Rahman, former JCD leader who was allegedly abducted for three months, said it is tough to describe how miserable days he passed at that

time. He said it is necessary to stand united to trace other abducted leaders. The former JCD leader vowed to stay in the movement to find out the abducted persons.

BNP Standing Committee member Moudud Ahmed said people have recently become victims to extremism, militancy, murders and enforced disappearances as an "unaccountable" government is running the country.

"If BNP comes to power, people will not fall victim to murders and enforced disappearances," Moudud said, adding, "They will not have to remain in jail without trial."

Moudud also criticised his party for not being able to form a movement against the government even though the recent killings are upsetting the people.

Contacted, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir told The Daily Star that more than 300 party leaders became victims of enforced disappearance between 2013 and 2016.

## Walking with 40kg rock

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It all started three years ago, when Yan says he realised he was in the worst shape of his life.

The 1.63-meters-tall man weighed 115 kilograms, and he started worrying that the obesity was taking a toll on his physical health.

"I didn't want to take diet pills, so I decided to lose weight by doing more exercises," Cong told local reporters. But instead of regular exercises, he placed a 15-kilogram stone on his head and walked as far as he could.

As he got used to the routine, he

replaced the stone with a 30-kilogram one and also increased the daily distance. Today, he says he walks up to 3 kilometres every day, with a 40-kilogram block of concrete on his head.

As it turns out, Cong Yan's exercise routine is as effective as it is bizarre. He has lost 30 kilograms and says he is in much better shape than when he first started out.

Inspired by all the attention he's been getting lately, Yan says he is considering approaching Guinness about getting his "trendy" physical routine featured in their Book of Records.

## Germany imposes ban

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did the same. Both the bans are still in place, even months after a British security company took charge of the cargo screening at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

In the letter to the CAAB, the German civil aviation authority mentioned that all consignments originating from Bangladesh shall be identified as high risk cargoes and shall be screened according to the requirement set out in the commission meeting in Germany.

"The CAAB and Biman are aware of the letter from the LBA [German civil aviation authority]," said a senior official of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, asking not to be named.

The official confirmed that all air

cargoes from Bangladesh will have to be rescreened at a third country before entering Germany.

An exporter said Germany's national airline Lufthansa did not carry any cargo from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday. As a result, exporters had to take their goods back to the factories and warehouses.

"So it is a bad luck for exporters and for Bangladesh, as Germany is the second largest export destination for Bangladesh," he said, asking not to be named.

Bangladesh exports nearly \$5 billion worth of goods to Germany a year. Of the total export, 95 percent are garment items. A significant quantity of goods from Bangladesh is carried to Germany by air.

## New York dedicates Gay Pride to Orlando massacre

AFF, New York

Hundreds of thousands of people were expected to pour onto the streets of New York yesterday to celebrate one of the city's largest Gay Pride marches and honor the 49 people killed in the Orlando nightclub massacre.

Safeguarded by hundreds of police, participants from hundreds of groups are expected to take part in the march down Fifth Avenue from 36th Street and culminating in Greenwich Village.

The parade was to begin at noon (1600 GMT) following a moment's silence to honor 49 people who were killed and the dozens more who were injured in the massacre at a gay night-

club in Orlando on June 12.

New York considers itself the beacon of gay rights around the world and Mayor Bill de Blasio had urged Americans across the country to take part in yesterday's march alongside city officials after the Orlando massacre.

This year's march falls on the first anniversary of the US Supreme Court decision to legalize gay marriage across the country and organizers are hoping to draw a larger crowd than last year.

"I think it's very important that people come out to the parade to show their pride in what we've done in this city," de Blasio said in an interview with local CBS radio station 1010 WINS.

## Pak army chief flies to Karachi after high-profile attacks

REUTERS, Karachi

Pakistan's army chief flew to Karachi yesterday for security meetings following high-profile attacks that have raised fears of a slide back into chaos in the busy metropolis once known as the world's most violent megacity.

General Raheel Sharif ordered commanders to leave "no stone unturned" in finding the attackers who killed a popular singer and gunman who kidnapped the son of the provincial chief judge, a statement from the military's press wing said.

The killing of Amjad Sabri, one of the most popular singers of "qawwali" Sufi devotional music, on Wednesday was the latest in a high-profile series of attacks in Karachi, a megacity of 20 million plagued by political, ethnic and sectarian violence.

A spokesman for a branch of the Pakistani Taliban claimed the killing. Two days earlier, unknown gunmen had kidnapped Awais Ali Shah, the son of Sindh High Court Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, in an upscale shopping area.

Improved security in Karachi has been one of the showcase successes for the army's ongoing security crackdown.

## I was sued

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They started beating me, took me to the room of the officer-in-charge. They asked me to say I was involved with Shibir. They beat every joint in my hands and legs. They wanted to know whether the article was a plan to topple the government. I told them that I did not write the article. A senior student of my university gave it to me to send to the newspaper office.

Later, I was charged with sedition based on the article, but police did not submit the article as evidence to court. I was taken to the Detective Branch (DB) of police office and detained there.

After several interrogations, I was shown arrested and remanded for three days. I was sent to jail. After being detained in jail for 22 months, the court granted me bail on April 6, 2016 and I was released on April 13, 2016.

Due to torture, different parts of my body are not functioning properly. Sometimes I feel severe pain. When I was in prison, I appealed to the DU authority several times, through my relatives, to give me a statement so that I could continue my studies and appear at the exams from jail. But the university authority did not give me any testimonial. That is why I could not appear at any exam in the last two years.