

SP Babul signed resignation letter

FROM PAGE 1
Police said seven to eight persons took part in the murder. Of them, three attacked Mitu and others were backup team members. Police have so far held six people. Of them, three have been shown arrested.

On Tuesday, Babul's father-in-law Musharraf Hossain, a former police inspector, told The Daily Star that he did not think Babul had anything to do with his daughter's murder.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, several police officials said they wanted the truth to be unearthed, and Babul must be tried, if guilty. But he should not be victimised if he was innocent.

Earlier in the day, family members of two suspects in the murder claimed that the duo was picked up days before police say they arrested them.

Ehtesamul Huq alias Bhola, who police said supplied arms for the shooting of Mitu, and his associate Monir Hossain were held in Chittagong's Rajkhalia area on June 27 and the following day, the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) said on Tuesday.

However, their family members and neighbours claimed that they had been picked up on June 21 and 24.

Meanwhile, Assistant

Commissioner Md Kamruzzaman of Detective Branch of the CMP, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said another accused, Kamrul Shikder alias Musa, was still on the run.

Musa had been an informant for several police high officials, including Babul, since 2003, said CMP sources.

Recently, two other accused, Washim and Anwar, in their confessional statement before a magistrate, said Musa hired six others, including the duo, for killing Mitu, said police.

Yesterday, law enforcers at all airports and land ports were asked to stay alert so that Musa and the other accused could not leave the country, said Kamruzzaman.

CMP sources, however, said Musa had already been picked up and he had divulged "some information".

Based on that, SP Babul was picked up for questioning, added the sources.

On Tuesday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said it had not yet come up that the police official was responsible for or involved in the killing of his wife.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a number of police officials, wishing not to be named, said the mystery behind the murder would be solved once Musa was arrested.

Musa and his family members had

been living in Bahaddarhat area of the port city for long. However, they were staying elsewhere for last seven days, said police sources.

PICKED UP EARLIER?
Nargis Akter, wife of arrested accused Bhola, told The Daily Star yesterday that her husband went missing after he had gone to an iftar party on June 21.

She also said they went to the Bakalia Police Station and the local DB office looking for Bhola but did not find him there.

Nargis said they went to the police station again the following day but police refused to file a general diary over the matter.

OC Abul Mansoor denied the allegation.

Bhola stands accused in 16 cases, including for murders, said police.

Nargis said her husband was involved in criminal activities some ten years ago but has now quit all of them.

However, Nurul Huq, councillor of ward-35 in Bakshirhat under Chittagong City Corporation, claimed that Bhola and some of his relatives were criminals. One of his nephews, Nayan, was killed in police "crossfire" several years ago.

Bhola's accomplice Monir was picked up in the early morning of June 24, said several of his neighbours.

21 held

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chief executive officers of six mobile operators yesterday.

Contacted, Airtel's Chief Service Officer Rubaba Dowla said the company would do everything to ensure compliance.

Shamit Shahabuddin, head of public relations of Airtel, told The Daily Star that they would cooperate with the police in their investigation.

The government made mandatory the biometric registration of all SIMs, which started on December 16 last year and ended on May 31 this year. After the deadline expired, some unscrupulous retailers and distributors started to sell pre-activated SIM cards which are biometrically re-registered.

As of May 31, six mobile phone operators re-registered 11.60 crore SIMs out of 13.26 crore active connections at that time. Industry insiders, however, said that as many as 7 crore connections are active in the market.

Police were trying to get the details of the officials of the mobile service provider, said DC Biplab.

He, however, did not disclose the names and details of the three detained Airtel staff. A press release provided to this correspondent by the DC office also does not mention the names of any detainees.

On Tuesday evening, the DC told The Daily Star over the phone that police detained some distributors of Airtel from Adabor and Shyamoli areas.

He also said they found a list of thousands of mobile phone numbers which are biometrically verified but do not belong to the actual owners at present.

As per rules, fingerprints have to be taken only once, but some of the detainees admitted that they did it for three to four times while registering SIMs, Biplab said yesterday.

The additional fingerprints were used to illegally register other SIMs, he said, adding that some unscrupulous distributors sold these pre-activated SIMs through their agents.

Police and the officials of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) were quizzing the detainees. A process of taking legal actions against them was underway, the DC said.

AIRTEL MAY FACE FINE
BTRC Legal and License Commissioner Jahurul Haque said Airtel might face a huge amount of fine if it was found to be involved in the incident.

He said the regulator could fine up to Tk 300 crore for compliance issues.

The BTRC will issue show-cause notice to Airtel, and fining the mobile operator will come after that, the BTRC official added.

State Minister Tarana Halim said that for every fake registered SIM card, Airtel has to pay \$50 as fine. If police find the company's involvement in the incident, it will also have to face regulatory fine.

Brokers active always

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types of services. It seemed to me that these brokers are the real service providers at the passport office," Shah Alam, who went there from Mohammadpur, told The Daily Star on April 20.

In the last two months after the prime minister's visit, this correspondent talked to at least a dozen people who kept complaining about the dominance of brokers. Thanks to the poor service quality of the DIP officials, the brokers get the chance to allure people to have their passports done in the quickest possible time in exchange for extra money.

A share of the money goes to Ansar personnel, who are deployed there for security, and the staff of the passport office, claimed brokers, wishing not to be named. In fact, the Ansar personnel who are supposed to drive the brokers away are patrolling the brokers, alleged many who go there to seek passport-related services.

"It is difficult to get a job done here without the help of the brokers," Afzal Hossain, a resident of Mirpur, told this newspaper last week.

"A broker asked me to pay Tk 9,000 for an urgent passport. He offered me delivery by two or three days with the assistance of some officials," he said.

An applicant needs to pay Tk 3,450 for a general passport while it requires Tk 6,950 for an urgent passport. As per the DIP rules, an express or urgent

passport should be delivered within seven working days and a normal passport in 21 working days.

Interestingly, there are some warning signs placed in the DIP building asking people to stay away from brokers. "Be aware of the syndicate of brokers and frauds! Don't make any deal with them," read a sign.

Unfortunately, the DIP office has become a safe haven for brokers.

People who apply for general passports become the worst sufferers, as most of them do not get the passports delivered in time.

However, brokers can manage to get the job done within a very short time.

"It depends on how much you pay me for a general passport. If you pay a big amount, I'll hurry to get it done," a broker, preferring anonymity, told this correspondent.

Brokers say they can make Tk 500 a day. "I get only Tk 500 to Tk 600 for a passport. The rest of the money goes to the pockets of some influential staff at the passport office," one of them said.

Asked about the brokers' alleged influence at the passport office, DIP Director General Brig Gen Masud Rezwan expressed his helplessness.

He said they catch brokers and hand them over to mobile courts every week.

EU rules out single market for Britain

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states, giving Britain overly favourable divorce terms will spark a domino effect of others leaving the EU.

Cameron, who on Tuesday attended probably his last EU summit in Brussels, is also under pressure to quickly initiate divorce proceedings by formally telling the EU Britain wants to leave.

But Cameron has resisted pressure to immediately activate the Article 50 mechanism to leave the EU, saying he is leaving it to his successor, who will not be named until September 9.

EU leaders say that until this notification is made, no talks can begin - formally or informally - on resetting Britain's ties with the EU, a process meant to last two years.

In an effort to prevent further exits, the leaders yesterday agreed they need to do more to battle "dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs", their joint statement said.

"Europeans expect us to do better when it comes to providing security, jobs and growth, as well as hope for a better future," they said, announcing a "political reflection to give an impulse to further reforms".

Meanwhile in Britain, the political shockwaves from the Brexit bombshell still reverberated, with opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn under intense pressure to follow Cameron and quit.

"It might be in my party's interests for him to sit there, it's not in the national interests and I would say, for heaven's sake man, go," Cameron told Corbyn in a raucous parliamentary session.

Labour MPs voted against Corbyn in a no-confidence motion Tuesday, with the veteran left-winger accused of not campaigning hard enough to convince the party's traditional working class voters to oppose Brexit.

Within the governing Conservatives,

nominations opened yesterday for a successor to Cameron.

The race is expected to be a two-way contest between ex-London mayor and anti-EU campaigner Boris Johnson and interior minister Theresa May, who wanted to stay in the bloc.

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said meanwhile she had been "heartened" by her talks with EU officials to protecting her country's status in the EU after Brexit.

She added though this "of course doesn't translate into an automatic easy path for Scotland through the situation we find ourselves".

While Britain as a whole voted 52-48 percent to leave the EU, Scotland voted 62-38 percent to remain.

Scots rejected independence in 2014 but since the June 23 Brexit vote, there have been calls for another referendum to give Scotland the option to remain in the EU.

Dodgy buses returning

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front end was damaged in an accident. Now, we are repairing it and we hope to have it operational ahead of Eid," said Aminul Islam, a worker of Noor Engineering Workshop.

Owners of reputed bus service providers often sell their old buses to smaller operators. The smaller operators patch those up and put them into service without taking care of their fitness.

"We have bought the bus from a company a few months ago. Now, we are repairing it and will operate it during Eid," said Khandaker Shahin, a driver of a local bus service operator.

A bus must obtain a route permit from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA). But during the Eid rush, some owners operate unfit buses without route permits, said several bus owners.

As there is a huge rush of vehicles on highways, law enforcers are too busy trying to ease congestion and get little to no chance to stop the operation of unfit vehicles.

Unscrupulous bus owners take this advantage.

Currently, around 1 lakh buses and minibuses ply across the country, according to BRTA officials and transport operators.

However, neither the government nor any rights organisation, which work for road safety, have any statistics on how many unfit buses ply.

Bangladesh Passengers' Welfare Association claims that around 29 percent of public transport vehicles, including buses, human hauliers, CNG-run auto-rickshaws, that ply on highways during the Eid rush are unfit.

Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary MAN Siddique said the government has issued strict directives to the deputy commissioners (DCs) and superintendents of police (SPs) of districts to check unfit and rundown vehicles.

Transport owners too talk about taking unfit vehicles off the roads during the Eid rush but nothing really works.

Past records show numerous unfit vehicles ran on the highways of the country during Eid and they often broke down causing long tailbacks and adding to the woes of passengers.

"Usually, unfit vehicles pose life risk to passengers. Moreover, these unfit buses are run by unskilled drivers during the Eid rush. These factors cause road accidents," said noted road traffic expert Prof Shamsul Hoque.

During the Eid holidays in July last year 40 lives were lost on the roads across the country. Several of the vehicles involved in the accidents were unfit.

An estimated 70 lakh people leave the capital to celebrate Eid outside the capital, and a large chunk of them travel on the roads, according to transport operators.

Poor man

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enabled children of some 500 families to study at Paschim Baruya Govt Primary School, the first educational institution in the village.

The 45-year-old had to send his two sons to another village, three and a half kilometres away from theirs, for schooling.

A tin-roofed building was built on the land to accommodate three classrooms. Academic activities began at the school in 2008.

Five years later, it was nationalised after being lobbied by poet Ferdousi Rahman Beauty from Lalmonirhat town. She is now president of the school managing committee.

Although Sanatan is not in the committee, he is happy to see local children get an education.

"There was no school in our village and it pained me a lot. But now that feeling is gone," he told this correspondent.

The school now has 206 students and four teachers, including a headmaster.

"Had Sanatan not donated the land, many of the children would have been deprived of education," said Satyen Chandra Roy, an assistant teacher.

Schoolchildren are also happy that they don't need to go far to get education. Their teachers are very caring.

Sanatan along with his family lives in a two-room tin-roofed house just around 300 metres off the school. The house has been lit by electricity only recently.

The couple grow vegetables in a field next to the house. The family consumes a large portion of the produce and makes about Tk 200 a week selling some. They also have a cow whose milk fetches them around Tk 120 a day.

Sanatan's elder son Susanta Chandra Roy has taken Higher Secondary School Certificate exams this year. The younger one is a student of a secondary school at another village around four kilometres away.

His wife and sons are proud of his generosity.

"I've a wonderful feeling of peace when I think of my husband's selfless nature," said his wife Arati Rani.

Susanta said there were many well-off people in the village, but none of them came forward to set up a school. "We're lucky that our father could do something for the noble cause."

The family only hopes all the children in the village would have a bright future.

Trapped by Facebook

FROM PAGE 16
Clad in a Maple-leaf tank top, boxing gloves and shorts, he is surrounded by members of a Canadian superhero group. In the story, he appears to advise the superhero team.

Toronto-based cartoonist Ramon Perez told the BBC he chose to depict Trudeau in boxing gear to showcase his unique personality.

"Rather than do a stuffy suit and tie rendition of our [prime minister], I wanted to bring forth more of his personality," Perez said.

"He has a very youthful demographic and is present in social media. As well, he has a boxing history, and boxing itself being a part of the short story he appears in, it was the perfect fit."

Trudeau is approached by Alpha Flight, Canada's premiere superhero team, in the story. The group, representatives of Canada globally in the comic book, asks for his advice on a political situation happening in the Marvel universe.

Writer Chip Zdarsky of Edmonton told the Canadian Press he included Trudeau in the story because he "seems to be the popular culture association with Canada right now".

The Prime Minister's Office told Zdarsky that they could not endorse the comic but were okay with Trudeau being featured.

"It's a little tricky just because once you start to put words in the prime minister's mouth, we acknowledge that this is basically Trudeau fan fiction," Zdarsky said.

"I had to kind of think about where he would stand on something like that and how he would handle it. Hopefully, I did a good job. Maybe I'll get a call from him saying: 'How could you have me saying that to... Iron Man?'"

Trudeau's all-action role has not been confined to the pages of fiction - he was photographed on Tuesday jogging in Ottawa with Mexican President Pena Nieto.

Four get

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five zinc biofortified rice varieties - four inbred varieties by the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) and one hybrid variety by the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University.

Of the 64 districts in Bangladesh, HarvestPlus in 2015 covered 58 districts, reaching 50,000 farm households in 350 upazilas, and in 2016, it expanded its operation in 64 districts covering around 5,00,000 farm households.

Currently, HarvestPlus is working with six government organisations, 25 NGOs, and two seed multiplier associations (300 companies).

Countries where crops have been released include: Bangladesh (zinc rice); the Democratic Republic of Congo (iron beans and Vitamin A cassava); India (iron pearl millet, zinc rice and zinc wheat); Nigeria (Vitamin A cassava and maize); Rwanda (iron beans); Uganda (Vitamin A OFSP and iron beans); Mozambique (Vitamin A OFSP); Zambia (Vitamin A maize), and Pakistan (zinc wheat).

HarvestPlus is part of a Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health run by the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future.

PM blames BNP-Jamaat

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Khaleda recently alleged that Fahim and some other militant suspects were not killed in crossfire; rather the law enforcement agencies killed them in the name of crossfire.

The BNP chief further complained that the police on instructions from the PM were killing suspected militants to cover up the truth that government's men were behind the secret killings.

Hasina congratulated the local people of Madaripur for their courageous role in capturing Fahim.

The PM came down hard on Khaleda for "resorting to falsehood in the name of taking part in iftar mahfils".

"We go to iftar mahfils to take the name of Allah and Rasul [SM], but that lady goes to iftar mahfils only to speak bad about others. This is her character."

Hasina said when her government came to power, it took a strong stance on not allowing any terrorist and militant

activities in the country. "We also won't allow anyone to use our soil to carry out terrorist and militant activities abroad."

The government takes immediate actions whenever some incidents occur. The law enforcement agencies are very much aware of it, she added.

The PM said there was a plan to commit some big incidents in the country. But the intelligence agencies gave information to the government in due time and the government managed to tackle those.

In a scripted answer to a question from a lawmaker, she said her government was firm on establishing rule of law and upholding people's basic human rights through curbing militancy and terrorism.

On the construction progress of the Padma bridge, Hasina said it would be possible to open the bridge to traffic by 2018 as the construction work was progressing satisfactorily.

German expert audits security

FROM PAGE 16
The Daily Star over the phone.

Sources said the German expert would hold further meetings with Caab high-ups and other officials concerned.

Mann's visit comes after Germany on Sunday imposed a ban on direct cargo flights from Bangladesh to any of its airport due to security reasons.

Lufthansa operates only one direct cargo flight from Bangladesh a week. No other airlines have direct flights to Germany from Bangladesh.

Exporters fear that the ban would have serious consequences as Bangladesh exports goods worth nearly \$5 billion to Germany a year with 95 percent of those being garment items.

They said Lufthansa carries around 80 tonnes of goods in its weekly direct cargo flight from Bangladesh to Germany, the second largest export destination for Bangladesh.

According to a Biman source, the German expert would conduct the audit or validation in line with the regulations of the European Union.

The EU standard validation is known as ACC3 regulations. Under the ACC3,

introduced in February 2012, all air carriers carrying cargo or mail from non-EU countries to the EU must be registered as an "Air Cargo or Mail Carrier" operating into the EU from a Third Country Airport (ACC3) by an EU-member state under a valid security programme.

ACC3s must ensure that all cargoes and mails carried to the EU are physically screened or have come from a secured supply chain.

The latest cargo ban comes barely three months after the UK slapped a similar ban on direct cargo flights from Bangladesh on security grounds. Earlier in December last year, Australia had imposed the same restriction.

In a notice on Sunday, the Federal Aviation Authority of Germany said that "because of information provided by our law enforcement authority and intelligence services" all cargoes and mail consignments originating from Bangladesh "pose a risk to aviation security".

This means all cargo flights bound for Germany from Bangladesh must be re-screened at a third-country airport.

Russia to counter Nato build-up

AFP, Moscow
Russia's defence minister yesterday rebuked Nato for bolstering its military presence in eastern Europe and vowed Moscow will take countermeasures.

"The US and other Nato members continue to build their military potential, first and foremost in countries neighbouring Russia," defence minister Sergei Shoigu was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

Six major projects

FROM PAGE 1
The statement said Jica would continue to support Bangladesh's effort for further economic growth and overcoming its social vulnerability.

The total cost of the Jamuna railway project is Tk 11,156 crore, of which Japan will provide Tk 8,836 crore in phases.

The project will build a railway bridge as part of the Trans-Asian Railway which connects India to respond to the expected increased demand for container transportation.

Yesterday's loan has been provided for the engineering services.

The Cross-Border Road Network Improvement Project entails a cost of Tk 2,473 crore, of which Tk 1,851 will come from Jica in phases. Under the project, 17 bridges and seven culverts will be built.

The project will develop economic corridors to interconnect major cities in the Asian region by replacing severely damaged existing bridges, providing national border facilities and constructing the Kalna bridge which currently is the only point where overland traffic between Dhaka and Kolkata is barred, said Jica.

Once completed, the 680-metre long four-lane Kalna bridge on the Madhumoti river in Narail will connect India's West Bengal with Meghalaya through the Bangladesh territory, thus helping both countries establish link

with the Asian Highway.

The Dhaka MRT project involves a cost of Tk 21,985 crore with Tk 16,594 crore coming from Japan in phases. Under the project, the first urban railroad system in Bangladesh will be built which will provide an additional means of urban transportation for the people of Dhaka.

"This will reduce the demand of automobile and bus transportation and, in consequence, mitigate the chronic traffic congestion and air pollution in Dhaka," said Jica, which has already provided Tk 800 crore to Bangladesh for the project for consultation services.

The Matarbari project will cost Tk 35,984 crore, of which Tk 28,939 crore will come from Tokyo in phases.

Under the project, a 1,200-megawatt coal-fired power plant will be built. The Japanese government has already provided Tk 3,172 crore.

The project will develop a highly efficient electric power source with low coal consumption to meet the rapidly increasing power demand while controlling the emission of greenhouse gases.

The total cost of the disaster risk management project is Tk 1,529 crore. Of the amount, Jica will provide Tk 1,256 crore in phases. The project aims to enhance comprehensive disaster risk management by recovering and rehabilitating infrastructures and providing equipment.

Trudeau now comic book character

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