

Sand trader feasts on Kuakata beach

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A key area in Kuakata sea beach is now under threat as a local fish trader is allegedly lifting sand from there for the last two days.

The area where sand is being lifted is known as Majhi Bari Point, about two kilometres from Kuakata Zero Point.

During a visit to the Point on Friday, this correspondent saw some labourers lifting sand and loading it to a tractor trolley.

Asked, the labourers -- Alam and Hemayet -- said one Bashir Aratdar, a fish trader of Alipur fish landing station in Kalapara upazila, engaged them in the activity.

Masum, the trolley driver, said Bashir hired him to carry sand from the beach to Khajura area, about 1 km from the Point, to fill up a ditch he owns.

Local Shahjahan Mia said Majhi Bari Point is very risky and lifting sand from there would make it more vulnerable as heavy tidal surge directly hit there.

The authorities concerned should take immediate steps to stop sand lifting from there to save the beach from erosion, he suggested.

Contacted, Bashir refuted the allegation. He claimed that he did not engage any labourers; rather the labourers were intentionally using his name.

Abdul Berek Mollah, mayor of Kuakata municipality, said he was not aware of the matter. However, he said he would take necessary measures.

Contacted, AKM Shamimul Haq Siddique, deputy commissioner of Patuakhali, said steps would be taken against those involved in sand lifting.



Illegally, two men lifting sand and loading it onto a vehicle in Majhibari area of Kuakata sea beach. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

In pain, in praise

FROM PAGE 1

Emory University, and Tarishi Jain, an Indian student of the University of California, Berkeley -- with whom he had gone to the café on the dreadful night.

He decided not to leave behind his friends, who wore Western clothes, paying with his life for his choice.

Today, he is revered posthumously not only at home. His valiance and sacrifice are being recognised all over the world along with a rare few, who have shown such courage at testing times.

Faraaz and four other righteous Arab and Muslim individuals of the past and present times, who struggled against persecution and terrorism and for human rights, have been honoured with the setting up of a "Garden of the Righteous" at the Italian embassy in Tunisian capital Tunis.

He is the only non-Arab Muslim who has been inducted into the Garden for standing up against the current spate of terrorism in the name of jihad that Bangladesh and the world as a whole facing today.

A non-profit Milan-based organisation -- the Garden of the Righteous Worldwide (GARIWO) -- with cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, took the initiative to set up the first Garden of the Righteous in an Arab country on July 15. The garden hosts trees and memorial stones dedicated to five righteous Arab and non-Arab Muslim individuals, including Faraaz.

The tree dedicated to Faraaz bears the inscription: "In Dhaka he chose not to leave his friends and was murdered by the terrorists."

The Committee for the GARIWO started work in Milan in 1999 and was officially formed in 2001. It is chaired by Gabriele Nissim, a historian.

Chairman Gabriele Nissim, Italian Ambassador in Tunis Raimondo De Cardona and President of the Tunisian League of Human Rights and a 2015 Nobel Laureate Abdessatar Ben Moussa inaugurated the Garden of the Righteous on July 15.

The other four who have been honoured are: world famous Syrian archaeologist Khaled al-Asaad, Tunisian tourist guide Mohammed



Full text of the letter from Simeen Hossain

On July 1st, our son Faraaz, was most brutally taken away from us by a few inhuman terrorists. His decision, to stay and protect his friends he held so dear to him transcends all boundaries of race, religion or gender. He acted purely on his unshakable values. He had always felt responsible for those around him taking it as his duty to protect those he loved. These are the values Faraaz had instilled in himself, believing first and foremost that one must be, above all, a good human being.

Filled with spirit, living every moment with a glowing smile, and exemplifying the best of youth, Faraaz was a gem of a human being. He always cared about others, making sure his actions would make those around him happy. He was a superstar student at Emory University's Goizueta Business School and dazzled those he worked with in his internships at Transcom and Pepsico. He touched the hearts of every person he interacted with and proved to be a born leader in anything he took up. Above all he remained a righteous human being till his last breath. Having an extremely clear sense of right and wrong, he stood by what he believed was right with every ounce of strength.

Our son, Faraaz, has set an example for the world with his bravery to stand strong in the face of evil. Our innate admiration for this little boy comes out of the fact that he made us question ourselves, he made us think whether we would have the courage to make the decision he did while being aware of its consequences.

We salute you for setting an example for the world to follow. Faraaz, you have always wanted to make me a proud mother; today you have made me the proudest mother in the whole world.

You have filled our hearts with immense pride and strength; you have instilled in us a fearlessness that we never knew existed. You have given us a reason to spend the rest of our lives fighting for what you stood for. You always said you'd show the world. I just want you to know you have done so beyond our wildest imagination.

We ALL love you IMMENSELY Faraaz.

Your proud mother, whom you have deeply humbled by your act of bravery.

Simeen Hossain
(MD and CEO, Heskayef)

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In a recent newspaper column, veteran Indian journalist and columnist Kuldip Nayar said, "I am confident that people would name their sons and statues after him, not only in Bangladesh but also in India and elsewhere."

The Tunis inauguration of the Garden of the Righteous was held within a few hours after the massacre

Terrorist in 10 months

FROM PAGE 1

the members of the militant organisations.

One is Ansar Al Islam, previously known as Ansarullah Bangla Team. It claims to be the Bangladesh branch of al-Qaeda in Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS). The other one is a group leaning towards IS.

The confessional statement of an arrested Ansar Al Islam member gives an idea about the recruitment process of his organisation. In the statement, he also described how he became a militant and how he was trained to be a killer in 10 months.

His name is Suman Hossain Patwari. He is one of those assigned to kill Ahmedur Rashed Chowdhury Tutul, owner of Shuddhoswar Publication.

Tutul along with two others was hacked on October 31 last year at his office in Lalmatia. They eventually survived the attack.

The same day, another cell of Ansar Al Islam hacked to death publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan of Jagriti Prokashani in his Shabbagh office.

Both Shuddhoswar and Jagriti had published books of blogger-writer Avijit Roy, who was brutally murdered in TSC area by suspected Islamist militants on February 26, 2015.

The two cells of Ansar Al Islam didn't know one another.

Suman used various pseudonyms, like Shihab or Saquib or Saiful, in his organisational activities. This was the rule of his organisation. Everyone must use pseudonyms.

Police arrested 19-year-old Suman in Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport area on June 15. Earlier on May 19, police had announced Tk 2 lakh bounty each on some militants, including Suman.

Suman gave his confessional statement to the court under section 164 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) on June 21. This writer has obtained a copy of the statement.

LURED INTO MILITANCY

Suman's home village is in Chandpur. But he lived with parents and siblings in Halishahar of Chittagong. He took Higher Secondary Examination (HSC) last year but couldn't pass. He worked as a salesman at a medical equipment shop in Anderkilla of the port city.

He was first picked for the group by a man named Kawsar, whom he met at a mosque near Halishahar A-Block Bus Stand in early January last year.

In Halishahar A Block, Kawsar ran a shop for stitching rickshaw hoods. Suman used to hang around with Kawsar regularly while going to his college.

Kawsar used to talk about the Holy Quran and the Hadith.

Sometime later, Suman met with a bearded man wearing Punjabi and skull cap at Kawsar's shop. They too discussed the Quran and the Hadith.

One day Kawsar introduced Suman to a grocer named Yusuf. Suman started to visit Yusuf's shop and discuss religion. Once again, he met that bearded man there. His name is Mahbub.

After a few days, Mahbub phoned and asked him to come to A Block Central Jam-e-Mosque. After offering Zohr prayers, Mahbub introduced him to another man named Mehrzad.

Mehzad often discussed jihad with Suman. He opened an ID for Suman on protectedtext.com website. From

that ID, Suman started online chats with Mehrzad about jihad.

Slowly his mind got infested with the thoughts of jihad.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT

At the next stage, Mahbub introduced Suman to one Mahmud at the A Block Jam-e-Mosque.

Mahmud also talked about the Quran and the Hadith. One day, he asked if Suman would like to go someplace for a few days.

Suman accepted the offer.

Mahmud told Suman to forget other acquaintances. He might not get to see even Mahmud.

Meanwhile, Yusuf called up Suman asking him to come to his shop. There, he met another man named Ashraf.

Ashraf took Suman's mobile number and opened another ID named "solo runner". Suman used that ID to chat with Ashraf.

LEAVING CHITTAGONG

After a few days, Ashraf messaged him to go to the passenger shade near the Tongi College Gate and phone him.

Suman followed the instruction, left Chittagong and came to Tongi.

As he sent Ashraf a message, a man named Raihan received him. As per Raihan's instruction, Suman threw away the SIM card and battery of his mobile phone.

Raihan led him to a two-room ground-floor flat of a building walking through an alley named Bornomala in the Tongi College Gate area. Two persons were at the flat. Soon two more joined them. Suman learnt their names as Akash, Taiyab, Alam and Rafi.

TRAINING

Suman stayed at the house for three months. Raihan tutored them on the Holy Quran and the Hadith and also acted as a physical instructor.

At the end of his stay, a man named Raju taught Suman how to use machete. He also oversaw financial supplies.

Asking any question was not allowed.

After a few days, Rafi, Taiyab, Alam and Raihan left the house. Another batch of four persons -- Tahsin, Babar, Yahia and Sabbir -- came to stay. These four and Suman were given training on how to operate pistol and machete.

One day a "Boro Bhai" (elder brother) came to the centre with Saquib and Hadi. He was apparently the team leader. He told all that they would have to devote themselves to jihad for Allah and kill all atheists. He said he was a military officer. But he has left the military for jihad. He used the name Ishaiq.

THE ASSIGNMENT

According to Suman, one day Hadi brought him a picture of someone saying this atheist is an enemy of Islam as he publishes books against Islam. He has to be killed. "You have been brought here and trained to kill him."

Hadi named the target as Tutul and gave him the Lalmatia address of Shuddhoswar. Tahsin was designated as the group leader of this operation.

After getting this assignment, they went on a reconnaissance to the surroundings of Tutul's office.

OCT 31

Tahsin, Babar, Yahia and Suman had machetes in their bags and Sabbir had a pistol and a machete in his.

"We positioned ourselves around Shuddhoswar office from the morn-

ing. Tutul arrived at Shuddhoswar after noon. After a while, Saquib came to me and I informed him that Tutul has entered his office. Then Saquib commanded us to go and he left.

"We entered Tutul's office around 2:45pm. We pointed the gun at the doorman and upon entering the office we started hacking those inside the room. Sabbir fired a bullet at one person. I recognised Tutul and hacked him with my machete. The machete hit his hand. Except for the doorman, we shot at and chopped the three persons, including Tutul, in the room and came out on the street."

"We moved out separately and reunited at that house in Tongi. Then we left for our separate destinations. I returned to Chittagong."

THE MANUAL

An analysis of Suman's confession shows that he was recruited in the manner outlined in al-Qaeda manual. For instance, in the beginning, they only talked about Islam, the Quran and the Hadith.

Then in separate stages, he talked about the Quran and the Hadith with three persons and the fourth person began talking about jihad. Then they motivated him for jihad by using internet.

In the next step, he was given physical training and taught to operate machete and pistol. As per the manual, Suman had to snap all kinds of contacts with friends, colleagues and family.

The four persons who took part in physical training with him in Tongi later just vanished. Four other persons joined in. With them, Suman trained to use pistol and machete before taking part in the killing mission.

After coming to Tongi, his communications with the group in Chittagong got snapped. His contact discontinued also with those who took part in training with him in Tongi.

Those who participated in the killing mission no longer contacted one another.

That means they tried to ensure that one arrest doesn't lead to another.

Suman came in contact with militants in January last year and went to kill someone in October. It took only 10 months to turn this religious minded young man into a militant killer.

His confessional statement gives names of 19 militants. Detectives believe that the person named Ishaiq is the military commander of Ansar Al Islam, Major (terminated) Zia. He was sacked from Bangladesh Army in 2012 for attempting to stage a coup.

WHAT NOW?

Now behind bars, Suman may be found guilty based on his confession. He is charged in an attempted murder case. As per the law, he might get life term as punishment. But will anyone examine exactly why he got attracted to militancy? What were the social and psychological issues involved? Will there be any thorough study?

When Suman will come out of jail after serving his full term, he would be maximum 40. At that age, what would Suman do? He will not receive any counselling at the jail. Will the state take the responsibility of rehabilitating him? We see no such initiative. Or is there any chance that he would become involved in jihad once again?

12 killed in boat capsized

FROM PAGE 16

hired the boats for the devotees, he added saying that one of the boats capsized around 11:30am with over 100 passengers on board.

"The engine boat most likely sank due to a hole in its hull," the OC observed.

Nearly half of its passengers managed to swim ashore, said locals.

Locals and fire service divers recov-

ered the bodies of the dead before concluding the rescue operation in the evening, said Mohsin Proddhan, an official of Narsingdi Fire Service.

The 10 victims are Yasin, 7, son of Abdul Quddus of Dewaner Char in Belabo upazila; Quddus' mother Majedar Nessa, 50; Zerin, 6, daughter of Sunder Ali of Baroicha village under Raipura upazila; Marzia, 40, daughter of Milon Mia of the same village; her

mother Maleka Khatun, 50, Raqibul, 8, son of Rafiq Mia; Samrat, 8, son of Akhter; Rabbi, 6, son of Rafiq Mia of Baroicha village under Belabo; Jhinuk, 6, son of Sunder Ali; and Sumaiya, 7, daughter of Robiullah.

The identities of two others could not be known.

Police are trying to arrest the owner of the capsized boat and the UP member who hired the boats, said the OC.

THE FOUR OTHERS INDUCTED INTO THE GARDEN



Adesslem Hamadi

Mohamed Bouazizi

Khaled Abdul Wahab

Khaled al-Assad

Nasseur ben Adesslem Hamadi, Tunisian street vendor Tarek el-Tayeb Mohamed Bouazizi and Tunisian entrepreneur Khaled Abdul Wahab.

Khaled al-Asaad was slaughtered by IS in 2015 for defending in Syria the archaeological heritage of Palmyra, memory of the human civilisation.

With his bravery, Hamadi rescued Italian tourists during the terror attack against the Bardo Museum on 18 March 2015.

In the face of police abuse, Bouazizi immolated himself in 2010 to defend human dignity, giving birth of the Jasmine Revolution and the "Spring" in the Arab world.

Wahab saved in Mahdia the Jews persecuted in Tunisia during Nazi occupation in 1942.

On behalf of the Mayor of Milan and people of the town, President of the City Council Lamberto Bertolè paid tribute to the memory of Faraaz Hossain.

The sacrifice of Faraaz, "setting an example for the entire world", was remembered by Bertolè through the moving words sent by Simeen Hossain, the mother of the young Bangladeshi student.

In a letter, she wrote, "On July 1st,

believing first and foremost that one must be, above all, a good human being."

Filled with spirit, living every moment with a glowing smile, and exemplifying the best of youth, Faraaz was a gem of a human being, said the bereaved mother.

"He always cared about others, making sure his actions would make those around him happy."

"Our son, Faraaz, has set an example for the world with his bravery to stand strong in the face of evil. Our innate admiration for this little boy comes out of the fact that he made us question ourselves, he made us think whether we would have the courage to make the decision he did while being aware of its consequences. We salute you for setting an example for the world to follow. Faraaz, you have always wanted to make me a proud mother; today you have made me the proudest mother in the whole world."

Faraaz was the grandson of Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Group, and Shahnaz Rahman. He was the son of Simeen Hossain and Muhammad Waqer Bin Hossain. He was a student at Emory University's Goizueta Business School and dazzled those he worked with during his

in Nice, France.

The ceremony was opened on the notes of the French national anthem Marseillaise and one minute's silence was observed in memory of the victims hit by an attacker from Sousse, the Tunisian seaside village, which was the scene of a savage terror attack in June 2015.

"After the massacre in Nice, in the face of those who sow terror and pitilessly murder hundreds people, we celebrate the Arab and Muslim Righteous who love the human plurality, peace, dialogue among the peoples and cultures," said Gabriele Nissim.

"The creation of this Garden retains a particular meaning, as it occurs for the first time on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, in a Muslim country that has embraced the challenge of democracy and in which the rule of law affirmed itself in the defence of the individuals," pointed out Ambassador Raimondo De Cardona.

Abdessatar Ben Moussa expressed his gratitude to GARIWO and Nissim for the creation of a Garden dedicated to the Righteous and Muslims and described it as "a beautiful idea in a difficult moment marked by terrorism".