

# 2 bauls assaulted in Chuadanga

**Criminals tie them up, cut their hair, burn down their abode; district sees second such attack on bauls in 2 weeks**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushia*

Unidentified criminals assaulted two bauls and set fire to their Akhra at a remote village in Chuadanga yesterday, less than two weeks after four bauls had been attacked and injured in the district.

The incident took place when three bauls -- Julmat Shah, 55, his wife Momena Begum, 46, and their mentor Rinupada Halder, 63, -- were meditating at the akhra in Gobindapur village of Damurhuda upazila.

Some 20 to 25 men stormed the akhra around 1:00am, said Julmat, a senior baul who leads the sect. The criminals pressed him against the wall and blindfolded him.

They tied up Rinupada and Momena to separate trees and set the tin-roofed akhra ablaze.

The bauls repeatedly pleaded with them not to burn the akhra as it is a sacred place, but they didn't pay any heed.

"The youths cut Rinupada's and my hair with a sharp knife," Julmat said.

The attackers stayed there for about one and a half hours but no one came to rescue the bauls, said Julmat, adding that the fire also burnt two adjacent houses.

Julmat's grandson eight-year-old Rakib, who was with him at the time of the attack, was unharmed.

The baul, a follower of Fakir Lalon, said he built the akhra in 2010 on his own piece of land. About a hundred bauls visit the place and hold Sadhu Sanga regularly.

Abu Jihad Fakhru Alam, officer-in-charge of Damurhuda Police Station, confirmed the incident.

Earlier on July 17, unidentified assailants attacked a baul akhra at Ekarpur in Jibannagar upazila of the district, leaving four bauls, including two women, injured. The akhra was vandalised.

Mukul Hossain, who leads a community of about hundred bauls and established the akhra, said back then that six of their bauls had been beaten up by a group of people in 2014.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Family members and followers of bauls gather near the ashes of the akhra burned down in a remote Chuadanga village yesterday.

PHOTO: AMANUR AMAN

## Of spices, for spices

FROM PAGE 1

to 1,830 farmers, 320 officers of DAE, BADC and NGOs, said Kalim Uddin.

The centre has also preserved 257 varieties of Germplasm -- seed or plant tissue -- for research to improve standard of the spices varieties.

So far success has been achieved in the research of a number of spices, including garlic, onion, cumin, cardamom, clove, scented grass (Vaduri Pata), lemon grass and curry leaf.

Kalim Uddin said the centre's innovation in Vaduri Pata can produce the scent of Pulao in normal cooked rice, when the crushed leaf is sprinkled over the rice.

The success in onion research has been notable as the centre invented three summer varieties which can meet the demand for onions during off season.

The CSO said each year 13.5 lakh metric tonnes of onions are produced but the country's demand is 22 lakh metric tonnes, met partially through imports from India, Myanmar and some other neighbouring countries.

"Summer-seasonal, high yielding onions -- BARI Onion-2, 3, 5, which can be produced during the Bangla month of Ashwin-Kartik, can be a boon for the economy of the country," said Kalim Uddin.

"The prices of onion would also go down and become more affordable for people once the high-yielding varieties are cultivated," he said, adding that they had not yet released the seeds of these varieties to farmers.

These hybrid varieties have almost three times more production capability than local varieties, Kalim Uddin said.

Similar to the high-yielding onions, the research centre came up with BARI Garlic 3 and 4, which is expected to meet the demand of garlic of the country and reduce import expenditure.

"The research centre has been prioritising research in introducing climate changed-based salty and tolerant varieties of spices," said the CSO.

The centre is also trying to come up with innovation wherein two or more spice crops can be grown alongside simultaneously, he added.

Regarding spice export, sources in the centre said some companies like Pran, BD Foods and Hortex Foundation have recently been exporting different spices, including fresh green chilli and green chilli powder to Asian countries where the demands are high.

The centre has its limitations too which include scarcity of land, lack of quality seeds and disease-free plants, lack of opportunity to collect Germplasm from exotic sources and link with the international spices research organisations and lack of storage facilities at root level.

The CSO also noted the decreasing interest among farmers in cultivating spices instead of vegetables and cereal crops and the impact on spice cultivation due to climate change and humidity increase have posed additional challenge to the research centre.

Kalim Uddin urged that the media and organisations, including DAE and BADC, should encourage farmers to cultivate spices, which in turn would inspire the centre in their research activities.

## Bhola supplied arms to Musa

FROM PAGE 1

walking her son to the school bus stop near their home.

Later, Babul lodged a murder case with the police station accusing three unidentified people.

According to the charge sheet, one of the arrested suspected killers Motaleb Mia alias Wasim confessed to police that their associate Musa had collected the arms from Bhola on the night before the murder. The arms were returned to Bhola following the killing.

Police arrested Bhola from Rajakhali area in the port city. After gleaning information from him, law enforcers picked up Monir from the same area and recovered a pistol, a revolver and six bullets.

IO Mahim Uddin said the arms were used in the killing.

"Monir said Bhola gave him a bag to keep it in his house. Accordingly, he had kept the bag, which contained the arms, in his house," added the IO.

Talking to The Daily Star, Officer-in-

Charge Muhammad Abul Mansur of Bakalia Police Station said Bhola was accused in several murder and arms cases.

"During interrogation, Bhola confessed that Musa had taken the arms from him. As both of them were sand traders, they had business relations," said the OC.

On June 26, two suspected killers Wasim and Anwar gave confessional statements to a Chittagong court. According to the statements, Musa hired six people including Wasim and Anwar for committing the murder. The four others are Rashed, Kalu, Shajahan and Nurunnabi. The duo also said Bhola supplied the arms used in the killing.

Of the six, Nurul Islam alias Rashed and Md Nurunnabi were killed in a "gunfight" between criminals and law enforcers in Chittagong on July 5.

Musa and Kalu have been on the run while the others are now behind bars.

MURDER CASE

Asked about the development in the investigation into the murder case, Assistant Commissioner Md Kamruzzaman of the Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police said they were trying to arrest Musa and Kalu.

Also the IO of the case, Kamruzzaman said they were working hard to submit the charge sheet to the court as early as possible.

"Once Musa is arrested, the remaining work of the investigation would be easy," he added.

On July 21, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque told the media that they made "enough progress" in the investigation into the murder.

Earlier on July 4, Musa's wife Panna Akter at a press conference at Chittagong Press Club claimed her husband was picked up by plainclothes law enforcers in the morning of June 22 from a relative's house in the city's Bandar area.

KALYANPUR RAID

## Missing youth's family claims he is not among the dead

Father files general diary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chittagong*

Azizul Haque Chowdhury, father of missing youth Sabbirul Haque Kanik, 22, recorded a general diary with Bakalia police on Friday night, more than five months after his son had disappeared.

Sabbirul has been missing since February 21.

It was earlier suspected that one of the nine militants who were killed in a gunfight with police in the capital's Kalyanpur was Sabbirul, police said. Azizul's family members also went to Dhaka to verify it, they added.

"After seeing the body on Thursday they confirmed to the police that it was not Sabbirul," said Nure Alam Mina, superintendent of Chittagong police.

Contacted, Azizul said he and his nephew Wahidul Haque Chowdhury stepped for Dhaka on Tuesday. But he returned home on way to the capital as he was not feeling well, he said, adding, "My nephew saw the body and confirmed that it was not my son."

Azizul said Wahidul took with him Sabbirul's voter ID card, from which the police retrieved his fingerprints.

In the GD, Azizul, a tax collector of Chittagong City Corporation, said his son went out of his house at Kalamia Bazar in the port city on February 21 taking Tk 500 from him. He said he was going to attend a wedding party at Raozan upazila and did not return since then, said Abul Mansur, officer-in-charge of Bakalia police.

Sabbirul is the eldest of the two sons and a daughter of Azizul, also a former president of Burumchhara union unit of Awami League in Anwara upazila.

A student of economics and banking at International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Sabbirul passed the SSC examinations from Government Muslim High School in Chittagong in 2010 with GPA-5. He passed the HSC examinations from Government Commerce College, Chittagong in 2012, said AKM Emran Bhuiyan, Chittagong's additional superintendent of police (south zone).

Contacted, Squadron Leader (ret'd)

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Hangouts reel from shock

FROM PAGE 1

Not too far from Nandos is the Butlers Chocolate Café. An international food chain, the eatery is quite famous for its pizzas and array of chocolates.

The place used to get so crowded on most evenings that it often created mini traffic jams in the Gulshan 2 Avenue. It was not uncommon for the restaurant's parking arena to overflow.

But even there, one could see the drastic fall in the number of customers. While the past week seemed a lot better than the Eid weekend, it still doesn't match the kind of reception it used to get before the attack in which 20 hostages, 17 of them foreigners, and two police officers were killed by militants.

A few hundred metres from Butlers lies the Gloria Jeans Cafe, a place where you are welcomed by two smiling gunmen these days. Just like Butlers, Gloria Jeans is a place where foreigners tend to visit often.

In fact, the place used to get so crowded on weekends and festivals that waiters were often compelled to use walkie-talkies to immediately inform their colleagues the presence of a free seat in the restaurant.

The scenario, quite obviously, seems to have changed drastically since the attack. A visit to the restaurant around 9:00pm on Tuesday revealed that its top floor was closed and it barely had customers on the ground floor. Things

have been almost the same these past few weeks.

Some of the smaller, yet popular restaurants have had it worse. Cafe Mango, a popular eatery which made its mark 16 years ago closed down last week. The restaurant announced its closure through its Facebook page.

"The recent incident at Holey Artisan Bakery and Restaurant has pushed all neighbourhood-based cafes and restaurants to be shut down on days' notice. As an architect and citizen of this city, I find the decision premature and not rational. In a city like Dhaka, places like Cafe Mango and others act as public living rooms. They offer refuge to those who wish to take a break from the immensely disturbed urban Dhaka. To take such rare and few spaces from the city dwellers does more harm than not," the post read.

The Yellow Submarine Cafe at Gulshan 2, popular for its pancakes, also decided to close down. They were open for one last night yesterday.

It seems as though the anxiousness in the region is yet to recede.

"It's not as though I am scared. I would still go to Gulshan and hang out like I used to. But I don't have too many friends willing to go there after evenings now. It just seems a hassle with all the security checks and with all the restaurants closing early," explains Tahmeed Hossain, a resident of Uttara who used to stay at Gulshan until midnight quite

frequently until last month.

Several people in Gulshan have decided to shift the hangouts indoors.

"I am sure there will come a time when all this tension will end and we can all enjoy the late nights in Gulshan again, but until then we just need to order in and chill at home. Besides, in my home everyone gets tense if I am out after six in the evening these days," says Zyma Alam, a resident of Gulshan 2.

Even the defiant ones who still prefer hanging out at Gulshan until ten or eleven at night seem to have backup plans churning in their minds before they enter a restaurant.

"I have stopped going to restaurants alone now. And also every time I go to a restaurant, my friends and I try to look for a place near the exit. It doesn't make much of a difference, I know, but it gives you a hope of escaping if anything bad happens," smiles Bushra Rubayet Khan, a resident of Baridhara DOHS.

"I have grown up here and I am sure that within the next few weeks everything will be back to normal," she adds.

Four weeks into the attack, there have been a number of positive turns. The frequency of the security checks has increased and several militant dens have been busted.

However, by the looks of it, it seems as though it will still take a while before the capital's thriving nights can return to where it belongs, Gulshan.

## Delhi to support Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

Talking to BSS prior to his departure from New Delhi to Dhaka concluding his three-day India tour, the Bangladesh home minister categorically said that there was no existence of IS in Bangladesh although they are misleading people in the name of such international militant group.

"They [militants] all are home-grown ... the militant activities which Bangladesh is facing in the recent times are the exposure of some local and international conspiracies to halt Bangladesh's ongoing progress.

Describing the Gulshan tragedy as a new dimension of terrorist attack, he said Bangladesh has faced militant activities in different forms and manifestation in the past. They included blast of bombs in 63 districts across the country at the same time, attack on judges, bomb blasts in courts and cultural functions.

"In the past, we have witnessed emergence of militant organisation like JMB [Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh] and Huji [Harkatul Jihad] whose activities were encouraged and supported by the then state machineries," he added.

Apart from this, Asaduzzaman said the JMB, Huji and other terrorist organisations, which are active in Bangladesh, are actually operated by the leaders of Islami Chhatra Shibir, pro-Jamaat-e-Islami student front.

When we launched anti-terrorism drive on a large scale, then they were terrorising the country by killing people and conducting arson attacks on moving vehicles in Dhaka to foil the ongoing trial against the perpetrators who were accused in crimes against humanity during the country's Liberation War in 1971, he added.

The home minister said as part of their deep-rooted conspiracies, they killed an Italian citizen and a Japanese develop-

ment worker to tarnish the country's image abroad.

Not only that they also hacked 35 people belonging to minority communities to death during the period in a bid to destabilise the country and blacken Bangladesh's thousand year's glory of communal harmony, he said.

"The style of such attacks had got a new dimension when the law enforcement agencies became active to take the culprits to book with the help of people," the minister said, adding that the main objective of the terrorists is to turn Bangladesh into an "ineffective" country.

Responding to a question, Asaduzzaman said the government is forming anti-terrorism committees in each village across the country involving people from walks of life to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

"People are now united to supplement the government's efforts to root out terrorism and militancy from the country."

The home minister arrived in Delhi on July 27 to have bilateral talks with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh on various issues, especially focusing on current issues of terrorism and violent extremism.

Senior Secretary to the home ministry Mozammel Haque Khan, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Haque, Coast Guard Director General Rear Admiral Aurangzeb Chowdhury, BGB Director General Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed and senior government officials accompanied the minister.

During his visit, the home minister also called on the Indian PM when the premier expressed India's firm commitment to stand by Bangladesh the way it stood by the people of the next-door neighbour during the 1971 Liberation War.

FROM PAGE 1

crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War, had done "no earthly sins".

"I think Turkey's stance is unacceptable. Interference in other countries' internal affairs is illegal under international law and in particular the United Nations Charter," said the ambassador of a Muslim-majority country stationed in Dhaka.

Dhaka called back Allama Siddiki for consultations last month.

"The consultation with him is over and he might go back to Ankara soon," said a foreign ministry source.

On the ties between the two countries, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam recently told The Daily Star that the government would definitely reach out to the Turkish authorities.

## Ice yet to thaw

FROM PAGE 1

"We will also try and find out what political gains they would have by opposing the trials of war criminals," he said, adding that Turkey was a big facilitator in various multilateral forums and hoped that it would stop reacting in the way it had been reacting.

Diplomatic sources said even though Dhaka had not yet taken any visible move to repair the ties with Ankara, it was in touch with countries that have strong relations with Turkey.

Tension with Turkey flared following former Turkish president Abdullah Gul's letter to President Zillur Rahman in December 2012 calling for "clemency" for the war crimes accused for the "sake of peace in the society".

Gul demanded that the accused belonging to Jamaat-e-Islami be pardoned as they were too old to stand trial.

The letter irked Dhaka, which said it was "not acceptable at all" and the government viewed it as "a clear interference in the internal affairs of Bangladesh".

Moreover, Bangladesh asked the international community not to make any requests in favour of those facing trial for war crimes.

The visit of a 14-member delegation of Turkish NGO Cansuyu Aid and Solidarity Association on December 20-24, 2012, actually created the initial problem. The delegation member came "hiding their identities and misusing the on arrival visa facilities," making Dhaka unhappy, said a source.

The incident prompted the Bangladesh foreign ministry to summon the then Turkish envoy Mehmet Vakur Erkul and the government asked him to explain the team's visit.

## Town that won't

FROM PAGE 16

As the plate creeps northwards pressure builds up at the boundaries until it is finally released by earthquakes.

So much pressure had built up at the fault line underneath Norseman that around midnight on May 28 the town was hit by two magnitude 5 earthquakes in the space of an hour.

By comparison, the strongest-ever earthquake recorded in Australia was a magnitude 6.6 shock which hit the Northern Territory in 1966.

Resident John Fry compared the May 28 shake to a train rumbling through the town.

He said: "I thought it was just a train coming through. The last thing you think of is an earthquake."

The pair of magnitude 5 earthquakes triggered a sequence of aftershocks which will continue until all the tension at the fault line disappears.

In 1985 Norseman was rocked by a massive magnitude 5.6 shake which generated five years of aftershocks.