

# MISDIRECTING AUG 21 PROBE CID SP testifies against three ex-colleagues

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The last investigation officer of the August 21 grenade attack cases yesterday testified in court against three former Criminal Investigation Department officials over their involvement in diverting the course of probe.

Abdul Kahar Akond, special superintendent of police of the CID, who had completed an investigation into the incident, narrated before a Dhaka court how former CID special superintendent of police Ruhul Amin, ASP Abdur Rashid and ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman made a drama linking one Joj Miah.

Akond said that before he took over the investigation charge several other officials, including the three, investigated the 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka, which killed 24 party leaders and workers and injured more than 300 others.

Four days after the attack, the then ASP Rashid took up the responsibility of probing the incident. He arrested 20 people including Joj Miah in the cases.

During his investigation, Rashid produced three accused -- Joj Miah, Abul Hashem Rana and Shafiqul Islam -- before magistrates for recording their confessional statements.

Later the confessional statements of

the three were found to be false and fabricated in the investigation done by the next IO Fazlul Kabir.

ASP Rashid did not make any move to arrest Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) leader Mufti Abdul Hannan and his accomplices though they had been involved in carrying out the grenade attack.

Even after Hannan's arrest in October 2005 in other cases, Rashid did not take any step to show him arrested in the August 21 attack cases.

Following Rashid's retirement, ASP Atiqur Rahman took over the charge of probing the cases in December 2005.

He also did not show Hannan and his accomplices arrested in the August 21 cases though they had confessed to their involvement in the grenade attack during their interrogations in cases linked with the attacks on the then British high commissioner and in other places.

Throughout the time, the then CID special superintendent of police Ruhul Amin supervised the probes conducted by Rashid and Atiqur Rahman.

In July 2007, ASP Fazlul Kabir began investigating the grenade attack cases and found that the previous CID officials had not probed the incident properly.

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This bridge on Dhaka-Dohar road in Godarbagh of Keraniganj has been in this appalling state for almost three years. Locals claim that they had asked the local administration several times to have it repaired but to no avail.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# AL, BNP at loggerheads

FROM PAGE 1

Islam on Thursday said it was the president's jurisdiction to form a search committee for forming the new EC.

He called upon the BNP not to make the EC and other constitutional bodies controversial and that the EC formed by the president must be "acceptable to all".

A number of AL senior leaders, including Joint General Secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif, yesterday told this newspaper that the president would constitute an acceptable EC as it was his job.

"We believe the honourable president will form a neutral commission and for that he might take any step," he said.

But BNP leaders think the government wants to form a "Kazi Rakib Uddin style" EC paving the way for holding another "one-sided" election, like the one held on January 5, 2014.

Top BNP leaders have already warned the government against any

move to form a "subservient election commission".

Sources inside the BNP said the party was preparing a proposal on the formation of the "search committee" and on ways to ensure neutral election commissioners.

It has even moved to create opinions in its favour at home and abroad.

The party is also getting ready to respond to the government's call to submit a list of individuals for the "search committee" or the election commission, they said.

Addressing different programmes over the last two weeks, senior BNP leaders said that they want to talk to the government on the process of the EC formation.

"We don't want government-sponsored search committee. We want the Election Commission to be formed as per the opinion of the people, otherwise, people will not accept the new election commission," BNP Secretary General Fakhru Islam Alamgir said.

Speaking at a discussion at the

city's Dhaka Reporters Unity, he also said, "BNP would not accept any ploy in the name of search committee and any tamed Election Commission."

Senior BNP leader Shamsuzzaman Khan Dudu told The Daily Star, "The BNP wants the government to hold dialogue on the process of forming the new Election Commission."

"We are very well aware what this committee will do," Dudu, also the BNP vice-chairman, said.

While forming the Kazi Rakib-led EC, then president Zillur Rahman consulted 23 political parties. Five parties had proposed forming a search committee, while four suggested enacting a law that could be followed for such appointments.

Zillur finally appointed an Appellate Division judge as the head of a four-member search committee to recommend names for the EC in 2012.

That committee, after screening, short-listed 10 people. Later, Zillur picked five and formed the EC on February 9, 2012.

# Tk 20,000cr loss to economy a year

FROM PAGE 1

Bank and the UNDP.

Prof Mahmud presented a paper on the challenges of mass transport during the day's second session titled "Urban Poverty: Access to Services". The session was chaired by Prof Sekandar Khan, vice-chancellor of the East Delta University.

He used the RSTP figures in his paper.

According to the RSTP, he said, the city dwellers make around three crore trips every day. Of them, some 47 percent involve buses, nine percent cars while 32 percent are made in rickshaws.

"Dhaka city's urban transport system is unique and predominantly road-based," he added.

Some 45 percent city households are from the low income group while 51 percent from the medium income group. Only four percent of the households are from the high income group, said the teacher, quoting the RSTP.

Some 97 percent of the low and medium income groups use public

transport, he said, adding that only three percent of the higher income group uses such transport.

Quoting the report, the JU teacher also said only 400km road in Dhaka has footpath although it is a compulsory part of the road. Moreover, around 40 percent of the footpaths are occupied by street vendors, shops, garbage bins and construction materials.

He made some recommendations to improve the city's traffic situation: discouraging all auto-run transport infrastructural investment and encouraging investments in bus and mass rapid transit.

"Above all, there is a need for strong political will to develop an affordable public transport system in the city," he added.

Dhushyanth Raju of the World Bank presented a paper on understanding the variation in health and nutrition "outcomes" in Bangladesh's cities.

He said Bangladesh's position was lower than many other countries in relation to the urban health outcomes.

Local government bodies are

responsible for ensuring public health services, and preventive and curative care through public facilities and licencing of private providers, but institutional reviews suggest poor performance by the bodies, he said.

"Private practices and pharmacies are the main providers of health services," he added.

Liaquat Ali Choudhury, senior research fellow of the PPRC, presented a paper on the service realities in metropolitan cities and small towns in Bangladesh.

Choudhury said the growing urban population flow is building up serious pressure on urban facilities.

Quoting a PPRC survey, he said urban households in Bangladesh are obliged to change their residences relatively more in large cities than in small townships because of house rents.

Some 38.5 percent households change their residences in Dhaka citing rise in house rent as the main reason. In Chittagong it is 34.4 percent and in small towns 17.4 percent, he added.

# Tigers return to action

FROM PAGE 1

game since a match at home against Zimbabwe in November 2015.

The cricket-crazy nation will once again be looking to have some relief from their everyday struggles through the entertainment of cricket. The expectation is that the Tigers will continue their remarkable run in the One-Day Internationals and pick up where they left off last year. Bangladesh unfortunately had a long break after claiming series wins over Pakistan, India, South Africa and Zimbabwe to follow-up their historic success in the 2015 World Cup in Australia-New Zealand.

Playing aggressive cricket was the team's motto during their five consecutive series wins and the team think-tank, backed by Mashrafe, made it

clear that they would continue to follow that mantra.

However, the biggest challenge will be for them to get back into their rhythm as quickly as possible to make a winning start to their journey this year in ODI cricket.

Bangladesh are well-prepared for the series though it was planned in a rush, as training camps started two months ago in order to get them ready for next month's England series. Fitness-wise the home team are in good shape and they also played some practice matches besides undergoing various skill-based training sessions under the guidance of shrewd tactician Chandika Hathurusingha, who is respected for his well-measured planning.

The team as well as the fans will

definitely miss the bowling of pace sensation Mustafizur Rahman, who was ruled out of action due to a shoulder operation, but they will be delighted to have Taskin Ahmed back in the team to bolster their already-exuberant pace attack.

Another issue Bangladesh has faced is the problem with their number three batting position, so it will be interesting to see whether the team management comes up with any new plans to solve it. Imrul Kayes has a chance but Sabbir Rahman also showed in T20 cricket that he can bat at this position and possesses the ability to build the innings before going for big shots.

Another question is whether Mosaddek Hossain will make his debut. He is part of the plan and if he makes the cut, then perhaps Nasir

Hossain may sit out again. However, if there is rain like there was in the shortened practice match on Friday morning, the entire strategy of the team may change.

The team management hinted during the press conference at pacer Shafiqul Islam's chances of making the team and in that case Rubel Hossain will sit out.

The Tigers lost their only ODI game against Afghanistan in the 2014 Asia Cup at Fatullah, so revenge may be on their minds, but the Tigers have a chance to move to from number seven to six in the ODI rankings if they win the Afghanistan series 3-0 and then win the series against England, but these issues were far from the Tigers' minds; rather their only wish is to execute their plans in the middle.

# SWAT-like teams

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Nine suspected militants were killed in Kalyanpur on July 26. Three others, including the alleged mastermind of Gulshan café attack Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury, were shot dead in Narayanganj on August 27.

"The two operations were successful because of the dedication and hard work of the team members," said Ashiqur Rahman, an additional deputy commissioner leading SWAT. The team was also quick to respond after militants seized the Holy Artisan Bakery and held diners hostage on July 1.

SWAT members immediately reached the spot but they were not allowed to carry out any operation after grenades hurled by militants killed two police officials and injured several others. The next morning, an army-led commando operation ended the siege, killing five militants and rescuing 13 hostages.

As part of the training, ADC Ashiqur said, a SWAT man fires numerous simulation bullets every week and 200 live rounds every month.

Intelligent, courageous, physically fit and tactful police men are included in SWAT. It has an ADC, an assistant commissioner, four inspec-

tors, 12 sub-inspectors. The rest are assistant sub-inspectors and constables.

The SWAT men usually use M4 assault rifles and Glock-17 pistols.

"We soon are going to get 200 pieces of submachine gun KRIS Super V to be used specially in close quarters battle against terrorists," he said.

SWAT has three internal teams. The command and control team which plans and coordinates operations. The second one examines ways to break into a militant or crime den during an operation, while the sniper and intelligence team is skilled in killing a suicide attacker or terrorist with heavy arms.

Ashiqur said the DMP has planned to increase the number of SWAT members to 100.

According to senior police officials, the government has planned to provide the unit with two bullet-proof vans for operations in an open space.

"As our main job is to fight terrorists or militants equipped with bombs, grenades and heavy weapons, the government should allocate special incentives for us," said a member of the team who took part in both the operations in Kalyanpur and Narayanganj.

# That baby flown to Dhaka for treatment

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(NICU) of Square Hospitals, said hospital sources.

Solaiman Shukhon, head of marketing at Aamra Networks Ltd, told The Daily Star that he arranged for the helicopter on behalf of a friend in Hungary, who does not want to disclose his name.

Shukhon said the baby was admitted to the hospital. "We will arrange for funds for the baby's treatment if needed."

Earlier in the day, Khandokar Md Abdulla Sahad, a child specialist at Faridpur General Hospital and head of the team for the treatment of Galiba, said after examining her around 9:50am that the baby was doing well in

an incubator.

"The baby is responding to treatment better than before, so she can be moved to Dhaka in a well-equipped ambulance," the doctor said.

"We tried our best, but she needs treatment at a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit," he added.

Faridpur Deputy Commissioner

Umme Salma Tanzia visited the baby around 10:00am yesterday.

She asked the management committee of Jahid Memorial Child Hospital to form a six-member probe body led by KM Kamruzzaman, additional deputy commissioner of Faridpur to probe why the child was declared dead early Thursday.

# Air strikes kill 42 in Aleppo

FROM PAGE 16

Rebel-held districts in east Aleppo came under intense air and artillery fire for a fifth night on Friday as the army prepared a ground offensive to recapture the whole of the divided city.

Syria's main opposition coalition denounced the "silence of the international community", saying Damascus and its Russian allies were committing "a crime" in Aleppo.

Yesterday's death toll of 45 in Aleppo city was feared to rise because people remained trapped, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group.

It said another seven people were killed elsewhere in Aleppo province yesterday.

"We were home when a missile crashed into our road," said one resident of the Bab al-Nayrab district who gave his name as Nizar.

"Half of the building just caved in and our baby was hit on the head. He died on the spot," Nizar said, the body of his son on the ground wrapped in a blanket.

Seven people were killed in a strike as they queued to buy yoghurt at a market in the Bustan al-Qasr district on the front line dividing the government-held west from the rebel-held east of the city.

The attack left a pool of blood and body parts strewn across the site, said an AFP correspondent on the scene.

Medics said they were carrying out

many amputations to try to save the wounded, while supplies of blood and IV drips were running out.

There was massive destruction in several neighbourhoods, including Al-Kalasseh and Bustan al-Qasr, where some streets were almost erased by the bombardment.

Residents and activists said one type of bomb had produced earthquake-like tremors upon impact, razing buildings right down to their basements where many residents desperately seek safety during attacks.

The civil defence organisation known as the White Helmets was overwhelmed by the scale of the destruction, particularly after several of its bases were damaged by bombing on

Friday.

With no electricity or fuel for generators, the streets of Aleppo are pitch black and difficult to navigate at night, and the fuel shortage has also made it tough to fill up vehicles.

In many places, rubble has rendered streets impassable, effectively sealing off neighbourhoods.

The UN children's agency UNICEF said the loss of mains water posed serious health risks in rebel-held areas as the only alternative source of drinking water was from highly contaminated wells.

"It is critical for children's survival that all parties to the conflict stop attacks on water infrastructure," it said.

Further south in the central city of

Homs, a convoy of 36 aid trucks reached the rebel-held district of Waer, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

The denial of access to food, water and medicines has been used repeatedly as a weapon by all sides in the five-year war, which has cost more than 300,000 lives and displaced over half the population.

The approximately 250,000 people in east Aleppo have been under near-continuous siege since government troops encircled the area in mid-July.

A truce deal negotiated between Moscow and Washington brought a few days of respite in Aleppo earlier this month, but no humanitarian aid.

The deal has since fallen apart, and

on Thursday the Syrian army announced an operation to retake all of Aleppo.

US Secretary of State John Kerry met his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov again in New York on Friday to try to restore the ceasefire, but without success.

Kerry said they had made "a little bit of progress" on resolving their differences. But Lavrov said that it would be "senseless" to impose a new truce because the United States had failed to separate moderate rebel groups from jihadists.

Muallem also told the UN that a US-led coalition air strike that killed at least 62 Syrian soldiers a week ago was intentional "and not an error, even if the United States claims otherwise".