

Chased by cops, BNP man dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A BNP man died after he suffered a cardiac arrest while hiding in a pond to avoid arrest in Manikganj's Shiblalaya early yesterday, his family members said.

The dead, Nizam Uddin Khan, 56, was a former general secretary of Mahadebpur union unit Jubo Dal, the youth wing of BNP.

His nephew Rahat Khan said police raided Nizam's house in Barangail village just after Thursday midnight. Sensing their presence, Nizam got down in a nearby pond.

After the law enforcers left the place, his family members discovered him in the pond unconscious.

Doctors declared him dead after he was taken to a local hospital, Rahat said, adding that the physicians told him that his uncle had suffered a heart attack.

Khondaker Akbar Hossain Bablu, agriculture affairs secretary of Manikganj BNP, said Nizam had been involved with the party and its associate organisations for long.

Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shiblalaya Police Station, said Nizam stood accused in seven narcotics cases filed with the police station, and an arrest warrant was issued for him in one of them.

He, however, claimed that police did not raid his house yesterday.

The house is situated behind Barangail police outpost. Police members on patrol often come to the outpost, the OC said.

A patrolling police team went to the outpost yesterday as usual. Nizam might have thought that police were trying to raid his home to arrest him, added the police official.

Jubo League

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secretary of Betmore Rajpara union unit Jubo League, with Mathbaria Police Station on Thursday.

Shafikul said the accused, in a Facebook post uploaded from his account recently, made "defamatory" comments about Farazi, KM Tarikul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station, told The Daily Star.

On July 6, a college teacher filed another case under section 57 with the same police station, accusing Ajmol Haque Helal, senior reporter of daily Shokaler Khabor, and local Jubo League activist Nurul Amin of making defamatory comments on the lawmaker.

Jubo League is the youth wing of ruling Awami League.

Sugar

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for the British Dietetic Association, said this recommendation was "unproven".

Problems with the study, she said, included that sugar consumption was self-reported, and that sugar intake from alcohol was not counted.

The researchers, she said, appeared to confuse naturally-occurring sugar from foodstuffs such as milk, and "free sugars" added to hot drinks or in sweets.

"The dietary analysis makes it impossible to justify the bold claims made by the researchers about sugar and depression in men," Collins said via the Science Media Centre in London.

"Reducing intake of free sugars is good for your teeth, and may be good for your weight, too. But as protection against depression? It's not proven."

Nutrition expert Tom Sanders agreed the results should be interpreted "with caution".

"From a scientific standpoint it is difficult to see how sugar in food would differ from other sources of carbohydrate on mental health as both are broken down to simple sugars in the gut before absorption," he said.

Nightlong

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The two groups armed with local weapons then retaliated at police and they got locked in the clash that lasted until 3:00am yesterday.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Nur Hossain, 26, sustained head injuries in the clash and was rushed to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital, the OC said.

Several residents of the area said the hoodlums vandalised street lights and cut off electric cables creating a blackout in the areas, which caused a serious panic among the locals.

Nobody was arrested in this connection; the process of filing a police assault case was underway.

The Daily Star tried to reach other BCL men involved in the incident despite several attempts.



A rickshaw puller tries to cross the Dhaka-Chittagong highway through an unauthorised opening of the road divider, putting his life at risk as speedy and heavy vehicles like buses and trucks ply this busy thoroughfare. To cut short their travel, pedestrians, bikers and rickshaws often use such gaps created after the road dividers are breached, making the spots prone to accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Of human library

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conventional library we are accustomed to see.

People have prejudices and stereotyping tendencies about different humans who belong to different communities. The persons who have faced such prejudices or social injustice will appear as "books" and will talk with the "readers" in the event under the theme "Don't judge a book by its cover".

Five young university students -- Mushfiquzzaman Khan, Rafsanul Hoque, Upoma Rashid, Rifa Tasfia Khan and Ashrafuzzaman -- launched this platform in Dhaka.

Mushfiquzzaman got this idea from humanlibrary.org, founded by Dutch national Ronni Abergel, while surfing internet last month.

"After seeing such interesting platform I decided to open up an event in Dhaka and sought permission of the founder," he said.

While waiting for a response, which did not come instantly, Mushfiquzzaman found in Facebook that a similar event was being organised in India.

So he contacted with them and collected Abergel's phone number.

"He received our call warmly and sent us an email providing official papers for the approval of opening up the event in Dhaka," said Mushfiquzzaman.

WHAT IS HUMAN LIBRARY

A Human Library is an event that intends a discourse for a better understanding between two people.

The young organisers say because of the untraditional nature of the initiative people first get puzzled whenever they approach them with this idea.

"We tried to share an article on our Facebook page, clarifying what the human library is," said Upoma while

talking about the "book" collection process for their library.

Here, humans are books and volunteers are librarians who will help "readers" find their desired "books", she said.

The concept of a Human Library was first initiated by Ronni Abergel in 2000 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Ronni introduced the Human Library as a social reform to encourage conversation around marginalised communities. Later, the Human Library movement was expanded to around 70 countries, according to the website of humanlibrary.org.

CATEGORIES OF HUMAN LIBRARY

Categories for human library are similar with that of the conventional library. People get to choose according to their choice in regular library to pick a book for reading. In the similar fashion, anyone in human library can choose a category or subject, on which a person will be "borrowed" instead of books for the readers.

In today's event, there will be at least 10 categories including challenged people, single mother, old people and anticipated extremist. They will share their experience with the readers about how they were judged or faced problems and overcame it.

Contacted via messenger, Roni Abergel said, "I think that stereotypes, prejudices and stigmas are universal. I believe that every society in the world can benefit from having a space to ask difficult questions and to get answers from the people who know from personal experience."

"I am thrilled to see the initiative coming from the youth of Bangladesh and it sends a very strong signal for the future of Bangladesh. That the youth are not afraid to ask to better understand how we are different but yet very much the same."

The never-ending misery

FROM PAGE 1

year they cannot carry the water to the river.

Officials of the Board said the embankment along the Shitalakshya also blocked the canals mouths in the DND area. To take the water across the embankment, a pumping station at Shimrail with four pumps was built in the 1960s.

But the underpowered pumps cannot transfer the water quick enough, which is another major reason for the continued waterlogging.

Meanwhile, Shahana's daughter Shumi Akhtar, a college student, has to go to her classes wading knee-deep water every day.

"I go to my classes in drenched clothes, which is really humiliating," she said.

Every year, thousands of residents of the DND area suffer due to a lack of proper pumping stations and active canals, and most importantly, failure of the authorities concerned to take long-term measures to improve the situation.

Badsha Mia, a resident of Adorsha Nagar said, "There is a canal connecting Shahid Nagar and Adorsha Nagar, but encroachment near Tushardhara area blocked the flow of water, causing

waters to remain stagnant in the two neighbourhoods.

"There was no stagnant water in our area only five years ago. But now we have to suffer like this for almost half the year," Badsha said, adding that cleaning up the canals could have eased their sufferings.

Moinuddin, another resident of the area, said several hundreds low-lying plots were being used as fish farms, choking the canals. His doctor said his feet were sore from being in the water all the time.

Abdul Awwal, project director of a Tk 558.2 crore Development of Drainage System of DND Areas project, said they had taken up a four-year scheme to solve the problem. He hoped that the work would start in November.

The components of the project include excavating 93.98km canals, constructing 13.5km walkways, setting up two pumping stations at Shimrail and Adamji Nagar and three pumping plants at Pagla, Shyampur and Fatullah.

Referring to the project, Narayanganj City Corporation Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy recently said the woe of people of the area may last for another year, our Narayangaj correspondent added.

Showdown looms in crisis-hit Venezuela

AFP, Caracas

Venezuela careened towards a showdown yesterday between anti-government protesters and security forces, as the death toll from months of demonstrations against embattled President Nicolas Maduro mounted -- as did international concern about the spiralling violence.

The opposition has called fresh nationwide demonstrations in defiance

of a new government ban on rallies ahead of Sunday's controversial vote to elect a body to rewrite the constitution.

Four months of protests against the unpopular leftist Maduro have already claimed 113 lives, according to prosecutors -- eight of them during a two-day general strike that ended Thursday.

Among the dead was a police officer who was shot in the head in the north-western town of Ejido, prosecutors said yesterday.

Café attack

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Basharuzzaman Chocolate and Rashed alias Rash.

Of the five, Sohel was arrested by CTTC on July 8 in Chapainawabganj. Chocolate and Mizan were killed in an anti-militancy raid on a "Neo JMB" hideout in the same district on April 27. Sagor is absconding.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia said they arrested Rashed based on information from Sohel Mahfuz, who supplied bombs for the café attack.

Sohel used to smuggle arms and explosives from India and hand those to Rashed. Tamim and other senior militants used to receive those from Rashed, the DMP boss told reporters after a programme in the capital yesterday.

An official of the CTTC said Rashed received the arms for the café attack from Sagor and Chhoto Mizan at a Shewrapara den of the militants in the city days before the incident.

Later, the arms were handed over to another planner, Nurul Islam Marjan, and finally used in the deadly Gulshan attack that left 20 hostages, mostly foreigners, and two policemen dead on July 1 last year.

"Rashed coordinated the arms training of the Gulshan attackers," Asaduzzaman, superintendent of police in Bogra, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Rashed is from Kanchanpur village of Manda upazila in Naogaon and locally known as Aslam Ali Mohon. His father Abdus Salam moved to Rajshahi from Naogaon six years back, according to police and locals.

He completed SSC from Naohata Model School and went to Rajshahi Model College, they added.

His mother Nasima Khatun told The Daily Star that he was a second-year student and staying in a mess when he went missing in Ramadan of 2015.

Mahbub Alam, officer-in-charge of Manda Police Station of Naogaon, said Mohan has long been missing and none of his family members live in Naogaon. His father Salam, an accused in a financial case, has also been absconding for the last two to three years, he said.

According to CTTC sources, Rashed joined "Neo JMB", an offshoot of banned outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, at the end of 2015 and later became the coordinator of its training programmes.

His another responsibly was to collect information on new recruits.

Law enforcers first came to know about him on September 30 last year from the confessional statement of 14-year-old Tahrim Kaderi, son of "Neo JMB" militant Tanvir Kaderi.

Tanvir, who used to rent houses to shelter militants, was killed during a raid in Azimpur on September 10.

In his statement, Tahrim said Rashed used to visit their Uttara house along with Major (ret'd) Jahid, who was killed in an operation in Rupnagar on September 2.

Tahrim said after they moved to a house in Pallabi, Rashed started to visit them along with Maynul Islam Musa, another key militant killed in an operation in Moulvibazar on March 29.

Through Rashed, they got acquainted with Basharuzzaman Chocolate and Akifuzzaman.

Akifuzzaman was killed during a raid in Kalyanpur on July 26 last year.

Tahrim also said that they rented a house in the capital's Bashundhara area during Ramadan last year as suggested by Chocolate and Rash.

Investigators say the five gunmen who stormed the Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1 last year went to the upscale eatery right from the Bashundhara house rented by Tanvir.

Big cats in big trouble

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tiger population has decreased drastically in the forest.

The department had recorded 58 and 65 tiger attacks in the area in 2008 and 2009. But the number came down to six and seven in the last two years.

This year has seen only three tiger attacks so far.

At least two to three Bengal tigers had died each year for several decades at the hands of villagers around the Sundarbans. However, not a single tiger has died there since 2013.

The concern for saving tigers comes at a time when the world observes International Tiger Day today.

Tapan Kumar Dey, former conservator of forest (wildlife), said, "Problems of the Sundarbans have increased over the years. Suddenly we see fewer tiger-human conflicts. Where have all the Bengal tigers gone?"

He called upon the government to take the issue seriously and consider appropriate measures.

Dr M Monirul H Khan, a tiger expert from Jahangirnagar University, said the sudden drop in tiger attacks shows the tiger population has declined.

"As tigers are territorial animal, they don't usually leave their territory. So it is unlikely that Bengal tigers have moved from one place to another in the Sundarbans."

He, however, said it was difficult to pinpoint what happened to the tigers without carrying out a study.

Law enforcers recovered 30 body parts of tigers, including 22 skins, from 2011 to 2016. Of them, 21 skins didn't have any hole made by bullets. This suggests poachers used insecticides to kill tigers.

Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University and two British universities jointly conducted a research on how the Bengal tigers were killed. The recent study found poachers used Furan (carbofuran), a very popular agricultural pesticide, to kill tigers.

Poachers mix the pesticide with venison and leave it for tigers to eat, said the study.

Samia Saif, a student of Kent University in London, last year wrote a thesis on "Investigating Tiger Poaching in Bangladesh Sundarbans". She found trading of tiger skin had been going on

in Bangladesh for long. Besides, there was a recent commercial demand for tiger bones for its medicinal value.

She carried out the survey by interviewing local people and officials from different government agencies. The study put the price of a tiger skin between Tk 40,000 and Tk 90,000, bones Tk 1,500 and Tk 3,000 per kg and a canine Tk 1,000 and Tk 7,000.

Experts feared Bengal tigers would soon be extinct in the Sundarbans if such poaching continued.

"The government has to act very sincerely to save all the remaining Bengal tigers," said Tapan Kumar.

Mahbubul Alam, coordinator at Conservation Action of the USAID's Bagh Activity, climatic factors like rise in sea level and saline water intrusion affect the life of tigers. But the demand for tiger bones and skins increased in international market.

"We've been working in 76 villages of Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira where 340 volunteers in 49 teams are creating awareness among people about saving tigers," he told The Daily Star.

Nearly 6,000 people enter the Sundarbans every day to fish and collect honey and nipa (golpata). But the forest department doesn't have enough manpower and resources to keep watch on them.

Madinul Hassan, wildlife warden and divisional forest officer of Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Division, said it became very difficult for them to protect and preserve wild animals, including tigers, in the Sundarbans due to shortage of manpower and poor logistics support.

Amir Hossain Choudhury, conservator of forest, said they conduct frequent drives against poachers and hand them over to law enforcers.

In 2015, there were 3,890 tigers in the world, including 106 in Bangladesh, 103 in Bhutan, seven in China, 2,226 in India, 371 in Indonesia, two in Laos, 250 in Malaysia, 85 in Myanmar, 198 in Nepal, 433 in Russia, 189 in Thailand and five in Vietnam.

Cambodia had 50 tigers in 2010, but five years later it had none. The tiger population was declining fast in Malaysia, Indonesia and China also.

NU exam venue

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board to this end, he said, adding that a team from the NU would be sent to the shifted exam venues so that the exam would be held in a peaceful atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the decision of shifting the examination centre for a political meeting has sparked criticism.

"Such decisions are unethical, unsystematic and harmful. No student and guardian can accept this," said Jahirul Haque Mandol Bachchu, general secretary of Gazipur Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, which is a component of the AL-led 14-party alliance.

There would be an uncertainty among the students and guardians whether the exam would be held peacefully at the new centres, he added.

Jerina Sultana, principal of Bhawal Badre Alam Government College, said,

"The decision was made after talking to NU VC, exam controller and the people concerned."

She added that they gave permission to hold the meeting on the college premises after getting an application from Gazipur AL in this regard.

The number of examinees is always high and it is their routine duty to hold exams at multiple venues, she said.

Shafikul Islam, a former Chhatra League leader and also senior lawyer of Gazipur district judge court, criticised the decision, saying it might cause trouble for the students as the examination venues are near the spot where the meeting would be held.

Contacted, Sakhawat Hossain, additional superintendent of Gazipur police, said, "As usual, police will provide security during the public examinations."

Govt moves to buy rice

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Following this year's crop loss owing to Haor flashfloods and fungal attacks (rice blast), the government approved a 2.5 lakh tonnes of rice import from Vietnam in mid-June for replenishing stock in public granaries that slipped to a six-year low.

Besides, the food directorate floated six international tenders in the last two months to buy three lakh tonnes of rice.

These moves came at a time when domestic retail markets saw a 47 percent hike in prices of coarse rice in June this year comparing to that of last year.

Bangladesh, the world's fourth largest rice producer, has emerged as a major importer of the staple this year due to the depleted stocks and record local prices following the flashfloods.

Official sources said prices of rice, now under the import pipeline, ranged between \$400 to \$470 a tonne. But both India and Thailand are asking Bangladesh to pay \$500.

Badrul told The Daily Star, "We're going to Cambodia this Tuesday and see if we get a competitive price offer there. There is no desperation as our stock is now being gradually replenished with Vietnamese rice reaching our ports."

Apart from this, private traders have imported 1.22 lakh tonnes of rice, mostly from India, since July 1 after the import duty was lowered to 10 percent from 28 percent.

Yet, the rice market remains volatile with prices of largely consumed coarse rice still hovering around Tk 43 to 45 a kilogram, down by just Tk 2 to 3 from their peaks in June in Dhaka's retail markets.

In this backdrop, the government is now looking to import at least two to three lakh tonnes of the staple from Cambodia, which produces more than nine million tonnes of rice a year with a third to spare for export.

Now Trump suffers Obamacare blow

AFP, Washington

US Republicans failed spectacularly yesterday in their latest effort to dismantle Obamacare, leaving the party shocked and in disarray and signalling the potential death knell for President Donald Trump's dream of repealing his predecessor's health reforms.

The vote -- held in the dead of night -- came down to the wire, with the decisive moment resting with Senator John McCain, recently diagnosed with brain cancer, who sided with two moderate Republicans and all

Democrats in opposing the legislation.

"This was a disappointment, a disappointment indeed," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told colleagues after one of the most tense votes in years on the Senate floor.

"I regret that our efforts were simply not enough this time."

The collapse marks a major setback for Republican leadership and for Trump, who had campaigned relentlessly on a pledge to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act that passed into law under his predecessor Barack Obama in 2010.