

Wife's affair

FROM PAGE 18
pills mixed in it by his wife Snigdha Bhowmik Dipa, the Rab chief said quoting Shighda as saying during interrogation.

As the 58-year-old became unconscious after drinking the milk, Snigdha and her lover Kamrul Islam strangled him to death with a scarf between 10:30pm and 11:00pm. The two stashed the body in a steel almirah, Benzair added.

Around 5:00am the following day, Kamrul went out of the house and returned there four hours later along with three men and a rickshaw van. He told the men that he would take a steel almirah to an under-construction building.

Kamrul took the almirah to the under-construction building, owned by his brother Khademul Islam, around 500 metres off Rathish's home.

According to the Rab chief, a pit was dug in the ground on March 26. Two of Kamrul's students from Tajhat Mollahpara area dug the pit and buried the body there.

A Rab-13 team picked up Snigdha from her home around 11:30pm on Tuesday and interrogated her at its office. Gleaning information from her, the law enforcement agency recovered the body, said Armani Rabbi, acting commanding officer of Rab-13.

Police detained Kamrul in his Rangpur city home on Tuesday. Snigdha and Kamrul are teachers at Tajhat High School and Rathish is the president of the school's managing committee, said Towhida Khatun, headmistress of the school.

The elite force handed over Snigdha to police around 2:30pm yesterday.

Police have showed the victim's wife, her colleague and the two school-children arrested in a case filed in connection with the murder.

Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of Rangpur police, said they were trying to arrest the others involved in



Kamrul Islam Snigdha Bhowmik

the killing. Snigdha on Saturday had told law enforcers and journalists that her husband went out of home around 6:00am on March 30 riding on a motorcycle of an unidentified man. She claimed that she tried to reach her husband over the phone, but found it switched off at 7:00am.

The same day, the victim's younger brother Sushanta filed a general diary with Rangpur Sadar Police Station over his brother's going missing.

On April 1, he filed a case with the police station in connection with the incident. Police said it would be turned into a murder case.

During investigation, police found that Rathish had his last conversation over the phone around 10:22pm on March 29. Later, it was found switched off.

Besides, CCTV footage from roads near the lawyer's house showed that he did not come out of his house on the morning of March 30.

BLOODSTAINED SHIRT RECOVERED

Police on Tuesday afternoon recovered a bloodstained shirt by a ditch near Rathish's home in Tajhat Babupara area. Law enforcers conducted a search in the 12-feet-deep ditch, but found nothing.

Saifur Rahman, additional SP (circle-1) of Rangpur, said they would carry out a forensic test on the shirt.

According to police, they examined the call list of Snigdha's phone and found that she used to call Kamrul

more than 30 times a day. Rathish's family members said they on several occasions had tried to settle the issue of Snigdha's extramarital affair at family level, but in vain.

His body was cremated in Rangpur city's Dakhiganj cremation ground yesterday evening after an autopsy was carried out on it at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Earlier, the body was taken to Rangpur court premises, Rangpur Public Library ground and Lions School and College, where lawyers and people from all walks of life paid their last tributes to the deceased.

The lawyer was the law affairs secretary of Rangpur Awami League. He was the public prosecutor in the murder cases of Japanese national Kunio Hoshi and Khademul Islam. He gave testimony against war crimes accused ATM Azaharul Islam, an assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami, in 2014. The International Crimes Tribunal had awarded death sentence to the Jamaat leader.

The attorney was also involved with different social-cultural organisations in the district.

As the news of his going missing spread early this week, different organisations, including the Rangpur chapter of Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad, Rangpur Lawyers Association and Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, started staging agitations in Rangpur city demanding the authorities rescue Rathish unhurt.

Bonamal Pal, president of Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad's Rangpur chapter, Abdul Maleque, general secretary of Rangpur Lawyers Association, and Rezaul Karim, general secretary of Rangpur Awami League, yesterday demanded capital punishment for the murderers of the lawyer.

Woman killed in abandoned mortar shell explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A woman was killed and three others injured in an explosion of an abandoned mortar shell at Maidharchala village in Chatail upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Moyna Khatun, 23, daughter of late Yakub Ali of the village.

Confirming the incident, Sanjit Kumar Roy, superintendent of police at Tangail, said the woman had entered the restricted Firing Range area illegally and collected used mortar shells.

The explosion took place in her house, leaving her dead, the SP said.

Police sent the body to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Abul Kalam Azad, chairman of Digor Union Parishad, said Moyna used to collect used mortar shells from the Firing Range area and sell these as scrap metal. She went there yesterday and returned home at around 12:30pm, after collecting shells in a bag.

The explosion took place when she emptied the bag by pouring the shells on the ground.

The injured -- Sharif Miah, 35, and Mohammad Joynuddin, 60, of the same village, and one Abdur Razzak, 50, of Elega in Kalihati upazila -- were sent to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) of Ghatail cantonment, he said.

ACC seeks 8

FROM PAGE 18
Morshed Khan; Executive Committee Member Tabith Awal, and Joint Secretary General Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel.

Morshed Khan's son Foysal Morshed is also being investigated.

Wishing to be unnamed, an official said they sent letters to seven private banks for transaction details of their accounts.

The BNP leaders had termed the ACC's move "politically motivated".

Meanwhile, the High Court has cleared the way for a lower court to continue with the trial proceedings against former BNP minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury in a corruption case filed during the military-backed caretaker regime.

The HC yesterday summarily rejected a review petition filed by Altaf challenging the trial court order that framed charges against him last year.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Shahidul Karim said there were specific allegations against the accused in this case and it should be examined by the trial court.

The ACC filed the case on December 18, 2007, with Ramna Police Station against Altaf for concealing information or giving false information about movable wealth worth Tk 59 lakh and amassing wealth worth Tk 2.56 crore beyond known sources of income.

Cashless shopping

FROM PAGE 1
the last five years, said Mahbubur Rahman Alom, an associate professor of BIBM.

Mobile financial services platform channelled most of the transactions, according to the study.

Cashless transactions reduce the scope for tax avoidance on real estate purchases, curbs generation of black money, reduces the costs of currency printing and its management.

Dutch-Bangla Bank has the country's highest number of ATMs and the biggest agent banking network.

The cost of an electronic transaction is one-fourth that of human-given services, said AbulKashem Mohammad Shirin, managing director of DBBL.

Cashless transaction still has huge potential in Bangladesh, as only 1 percent of the country's transactions are made through digital platforms, Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager of MasterCard.

The e-commerce market now stands at more than Tk 400 crore a year and is expected to grow manifold.

The mobile financial services platform has grown significantly over the last couple of years, which has grown 120 percent a year since 2011.

It's negligence

FROM PAGE 18
In the report, the IO appealed to the court, seeking permission for lodging a case against three officials -- Nazmul, Siddiqui and Shah Alam -- for their alleged negligence in duty.

On November 27, 2016, the VVIP flight carrying Ashina made an emergency landing at Hasegat International Airport in Turkmenistan on her way to Budapest after a loose nut caused engine oil leak, and oil pressure loss in engine no-1 of the Boeing 777-300ER aircraft.

On December 21 that year, wing commander (retd) MM Asaduzzaman, director of engineering and material management of Biman, filed the case against nine staffers under the Special Powers Act with Airport Police Station.

The nine were sent to jail following their surrender. Two more Biman officials were arrested later. The officials were suspended.

Dredging makes a desert

FROM PAGE 18
rendering many farm fields useless.

"I was happy," says farmer Uday Shankar Mukharjee, 40, from Maddyia Hurka. "From shrimp and paddy farming on three bighas, my family lived comfortably. Now the land is covered in sand. Nothing will grow. I tried to remove the sand to sow paddy but I failed. Since the dredging, we have relied on income from another bigha located elsewhere. It doesn't cover living costs."

As he spoke with The Daily Star three years after the dredging works ruined his land, Uday together with his wife were still trying to remove sand. They still hope to reduce the land's elevation such that water might collect there as it used to, as suitable for paddy.

"My son Arpan studies in class X, my daughter Anti in class VIII," Uday continues. "I used to dream they would complete higher education. That dream is shattered. For now they are still in school, but for how much longer I don't know."

The dredging project in that section of the Kumarkhali River-linked channel was implemented by Bashundhara Dredging Company Limited. The project aimed to facilitate an alternate transport route for cargo vessels that would reduce the impact of shipping on the Sundarbans.

Of course, for the approximately 300 farmers in these two villages whose land was affected by indiscrimi-

nate sand dumping, the project's broader merit is of no consequence.

"I had six bighas to farm that are now sand," says another farmer from the same village, Tusar Kirtaniya, 55. "I have a little land elsewhere; and I work other people's land to have any hope of my two daughters finishing their education. I tried to grow paddy in the sand. Even potatoes wouldn't grow. Besides, our cattle are at risk for the lack of available pasture."

When he spoke of his three bighas, forty-year-old neighbour Biswajit Kirtaniya cried. "I had coconut palms and other trees in my orchard," he says. "The trees died from the saline water. All that's left is a desert."

"We do favour saline-tolerant crops in these areas," says Bagerhat's deputy director of the agriculture extension department, Mohammad Aftab Uddin, "but the salinity of the dredged sand in Maddyia Hurka and Charkhali is still too high. No crops will grow there now, not for the next several years."

"About 200 acres of farmland has been degraded by the dredging, leaving more than 300 families in distress," says Bagerhat's deputy commissioner Tapan Kumar Biswas. "The government will take the initiative to solve the problem. Technical experts are needed and I am not sure if any project has been initiated. I will inform higher authorities about the woes of the area's farmers."

Rohingya relocation

FROM PAGE 2
constructed on the island, Kamal said.

Bangladesh allocated \$280 million last November to make the island suitable for habitation as hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar crammed into squalid camps near the border.

Nearly 700,000 Rohingya have crossed into Bangladesh since August alone, fleeing army violence in Rakhine state that US and UN officials say amounted to ethnic cleansing.

Kamal said refugees most vulnerable to the approaching monsoon would be offered the chance to relocate to the small island, which lies west of the port city of Chittagong.

The process would be voluntary, he added.

The UN says 150,000 Rohingya in the camps were at risk of landslides, heavy rains and diseases when the monsoon season hits in June.

UN resident coordinator Mia Seppo said Bangladesh wanted to start the process in June but said more discussion was needed.

"That is the timeline they are looking

at," Mia Seppo told AFP, adding any relocation must be "voluntary" and conducted safely and with dignity.

The refugees "need to have a say, need to be consulted and need to understand the conditions to which they would be moving", she added.

The island is one hour's boat journey from the nearest inhabited land.

Critics warned the whole island could be inundated by floods or wiped out by cyclones, which have killed hundreds of thousands along Bangladesh's turbulent coast in the last half century.

The plan was shelved but revived in August as unprecedented waves of refugees poured into Bangladesh's southeast, placing enormous strain on the limited resources in the region.

Many Rohingyas remain opposed to the relocation plan, but officials are confident tens of thousands will be persuaded to leave dire conditions in existing camps.

Meanwhile proposals for Rohingya to return to Myanmar have stalled. An agreement between Bangladesh and Myanmar to repatriate Rohingyas has not seen a single refugee return.

Indian foreign secretary due on April 8

FROM PAGE 2
counterpart Md Shahidul Haque when they have a comprehensive review of relations.

The two foreign secretaries would review areas of bilateral cooperation between the two sides, including pending issues of upcoming important visits that include Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh's tour likely in June.

The proposed meeting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in London during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) on April 16-20 would also come up prominently at the meeting.

It would also finalise the agenda for discussion of the meeting between Hasina and Modi, diplomatic sources say.

As per the programme schedule, Gokhale arrives at 4:00pm on Sunday and would have an interaction with the think-tank leaders, civil society and media persons. The next day he along with Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi takes part in a bilateral conclave on "India-Bangladesh Relations: Deepening Cooperation and the Way Forward" to be organised by the Institute of Policy, Advocacy and Governance (IPAG).

He is also set to attend the signing ceremony of some Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) at the State Guesthouse Meghna at 11:30am on Monday. He would also make a press statement there. In the evening, he is expected to call on the prime minister.

The substantive part of Gokhale's visit, first since his taking over as the top diplomat in February, would be as much on bilateral issues as on regional including the Rohingya crisis.

The Indian army chief's recent remarks over Bangladeshi migrants in Assam, Rohingya repatriation and non-issuance of national identity cards to the Muslims in Assam would also come up for discussion.

Gokhale is also expected to enquire about Bangladesh's growing ties with China in recent months.

During his talks with Hasina and Ali, the Indian foreign secretary is expected to convey his country's firm commitment to further consolidating bilateral ties with Bangladesh under the rubric of 'neighbourhood first' policy underlined by Modi.

However, Bangladesh and India also have some rough edges in their relations as Dhaka still waits for a breakthrough on the Teesta water-sharing treaty and

expects New Delhi to put more pressure on Myanmar to begin repatriation of the Rohingya refugees. There is considerable disappointment in Bangladesh over India's stand on the twin issues so far.

On Teesta, Modi repeatedly conveyed to Bangladeshi leaders that efforts were on to bring West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on board, but there has been little visible progress beyond that. He also gave the word to sign the water-sharing deal during his and Hasina's current tenure.

On the Rohingya issue, Bangladesh wants India to use its robust ties with Myanmar to weigh on Myanmar leaders to at least make a beginning of the refugee repatriation exercise.

The two neighbours have a convergence of views on the threats posed by terrorism and radicalisation of youth and work closely to tackle terror and terror groups.

The two countries have recently signed a trilateral MoU with Russia to help build the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Pabna. The Indian foreign secretary during his visit may discuss how to take forward the partnership in civil nuclear area.

Suspect killed in 'shootout'

FROM PAGE 18
Mymensingh was killed during a "gun-fight" with police early yesterday.

The dead is Ujjol Mia, 33, son of Samor Ali, of Jalkhana Road area in Gouripur municipality.

Ujjol allegedly stabbed sub-inspector Asaduzzaman Asad, 37, posted at Gouripur Police Station with a knife on March 28 and has been in hiding since.

DB police arrested Ujjol from Gouripur on March 31 but he fled the police van while being taken to Mymensingh town.

On receiving a tip-off about his whereabouts yesterday, a team of detec-

tive branch of police led by its officer-in-charge Ashiqur Rahman raided Faliamari area in Mymensingh sadar upazila around 3:00am.

Sensing police presence, Ujjol and his gang allegedly fired gunshots at the police who fired two rounds of bullets in retaliation, SA Newazi, additional police superintendent (Crime) of Mymensingh, said.

Ujjol who sustained bullet wounds was rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) where the doctors declared him dead, the ASP said.

Other members of the gang fled the

area. Two policemen, sub-inspector Iftekhar and constable Faridul Islam, also sustained injuries during the incident, the ASP added.

Ujjol's body was sent to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile the stabbed sub-inspector Asad who was flown to CMH, Dhaka from MMCH by a helicopter on March 29 is still undergoing treatment.

His condition is improving gradually, Delwar Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Gouripur Police Station said quoting doctors at the hospital.

Youth dead with throat slit at mess in Cumilla

FROM PAGE 18
Bancharampur upazila of Brahmanbaria.

Sagor was a student of Comilla Government College and Sajib, a student of Victoria College.

Police arrested the owner of the building, Chinmoy Bhowmik, who is an employee at a private clinic at Shasongasa in Cumilla city.

Shefali Bhowmik, Chinmoy's wife, said they lived on the second floor of

their three-storey building while the other two floors are rented out.

Six tenants have been occupying the ground floor of the house for the last one year. Some of these six were working people, while others were students.

Locals said that around 6:00am they heard gun shots from inside the house and rushed out to see two or three youths fleeing.

They recovered the two boys who had their mouths taped, from the

house. One, whose throat was slit, lay in a pool of blood and another had a bullet wound on his chest but seemed to be alive.

Additional Police Super Tanvir Salehin Emon said Shajib has been sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Police are trying to arrest the other four residents of the house for further investigation, he added.

Even monkeys need a spa day

FROM PAGE 18
Japan's "snow monkeys" are known for their love of hot springs in the country's northern Nagano region, with tourists flocking to photograph the mediating macaques soaking in steaming baths.

It was long assumed that the blissed-out bathers were simply trying to warm up during the chilly winter months, when snow blankets the region.

But experts at the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University who observed 12 female

Japanese macaques in 2014 at the Jigokudani Yaen-Koen monkey park in Nagano found there was more to it.

They examined the bathing behaviour of the monkeys and collected their excrement to measure glucocorticoid, a hormone whose concentration increases when stress levels are high.

They found that stress levels in the monkeys, aged between five and 24, were about 20 percent lower on average after bathing.

The results of their study were published this

week. "The study showed that bathing in hot springs is beneficial not only for people but for Japanese macaques too," researcher Rafaela Sayuri Takeshita told AFP.

Takeshita believes the spa treatment may have additional benefits for the macaques, perhaps increasing both fertility and longevity.

"We also want to study the relationship between bathing and their reproduction and longevity in the future," she said.

Burial mix-up

FROM PAGE 1
laid to rest. As Faisal's brother and uncle took the body out, they found that the body was not of Faisal's, and the polythene it was wrapped in bore the name 'Ms. Nazia Afrin Chowdhury'.

With thousands of people, including Faisal's family, relatives and several hundred villagers, attending the funeral, they didn't announce the mix-up and instead buried Nazia Afrin's body at Faisal's village in Dakshin Damudya that day.

They later contacted Nazia's family and they were both convinced that Faisal's body was buried in Banani graveyard, where Nazia's body was to be buried.

Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Sheikh Hafizur Rahman passed the order after hearing the

petition submitted by Faisal's younger brother Saiful.

The court also ordered Dhaka district magistrate to take necessary action to exhume the body in presence of an executive magistrate and hand it over to his family at Damudya in Shariatpur, after identification.

A separate petition was submitted before the chief judicial magistrate's court in Shariatpur yesterday by Ali Ahad Chowdhury, Nazia Afrin's brother. The hearing of the petition will be held today.

At least 27 Bangladeshis including Ahmed Faisal and Nazia Afrin Chowdhury, and 48 others, were killed in the US-Bangla plane crash at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu.