

Rathish murder suspect dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

An accused of lawyer Rathish murder case died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital on Friday night.

Police picked him up on March 30 for interrogation.

The dead, Milon Mohanta, 30, a resident of Rangpur city's Tajhat area, was the personal assistant of Rathish Chandra Bhowmik, 58.

Amzad Hossain Don, jailer of Rangpur Jail, said showing Milon arrested in the murder case on April 5, police produced him before a court which sent him to jail.

Later in the day, Milon was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as he fell sick. He died there around 9:00pm on Friday, said the jailer.

On Saturday, police handed over Milon's body to his family after an autopsy. Rathish, public prosecutor at the Special Judge's Court in Rangpur, was murdered over alleged extramarital affairs with his wife Snigdha Sarkar Dipa and her colleague Kamrul Islam, police and Rab said earlier.

Snigdha and Kamrul are teachers at Tajhat High School, while Rathish was the president of the school managing committee.

On information gleaned from Dipa, a team of Rab-13 dug out the lawyer's body from an under-construction building in the city's Tajhat Mollahpara area on April 4.

Quoting Dipa, Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed on that day said Dipa and Kamrul murdered Rathish at his home in Tajhat Babupara area on March 29 night.

The Rab chief was speaking at a press conference at the Rab-13 Rangpur office.

Police arrested five people, including Dipa, Kamrul and Milon, in connection with the murder.

All the arrestees gave their confessional statements before the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Rangpur, said Abdul Mia, officer-in-charge of Rangpur Sadar Police Station.

Russia-West 'alienation' is worrying

Says German president

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier yesterday voiced alarm over the growing "alienation" between Russia and the West, stressing the need for dialogue as post-Cold War tensions peak.

Speaking to the Bild am Sonntag newspaper, Steinmeier said last month's poisoning of a former Russian spy in England, which Britain and its allies blame on Moscow, was "a very serious incident".

"But we should be at least as worried about the galloping alienation between Russia and the West, the consequences of which stretch far beyond this case," the former foreign minister said.

Moscow vehemently denies involvement in the nerve agent poisoning of former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, which triggered a wave of tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions between Russia and Western countries.

A dispute over Western intervention in Syria has dramatically added to the tensions in recent days.

Defying Russian warnings, the United States, France and Britain carried out air strikes to punish the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, a close Moscow ally, for an alleged deadly chemical attack on the town of Douma.

Russia on Saturday failed to win UN backing for a resolution that would have condemned the "aggression" against Syria, highlighting Moscow's isolation on the international stage.

Steinmeier said while it was right to show Russia its actions have consequences, as demonstrated by the sanctions imposed over the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine, "we can't abandon direct dialogue".

He also cautioned against demonising an entire nation.

"Independently of Putin, we can't declare the whole of Russia, the country and its people, as our enemy," he said, warning there was "too much at stake".

On Syria, Steinmeier said there could be no improvement on the ground until US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin engaged with each other in a constructive manner to try to negotiate a solution.

"Of course you can't do it without the regional neighbours in the end, but everything begins with the US and Russia," he was quoted as saying.

"Putin and Trump owe it to the world to take the first step."

No public jobs

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In the programme at the press club, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan announced holding a mass gathering at Suhrawardy Udyan on April 30 to press home their demands. A month-long countrywide programme was also announced.

The month-long programme includes: memorandum to PM by all district administrator and upazila nirbahi officer on April 18, public rally from April 20 to May 31 at different districts and representative meeting of freedom fighters on April 22.

A national convention is also scheduled to be held on May 5 in this regard.

Several hundred people participated in the programme organised by Muktiyoddha Santan O Prajanma Somonnoy Parishad, Sramik-Karmachari-Peshajibi Muktiyoddha Somonnoy Parishad.

Those against the spirit of liberation war should not be given public jobs, the minister said.

He said confusion was created over the quota system. "Now the question is: whom will we call meritorious? We can't call anyone meritorious without [them having] the spirit of liberation war."

"We didn't fight in the liberation war for quota.... Honourable Prime Minister, you scrapped quota and we accepted it. But you have to meet our demand."

On Wednesday night, the PM in parliament announced scrapping of the quota system and asked students to end the quota reform demonstrations.

Though abolishment of quota was not the demand, the students and job seekers have for long demanded its reformation, terming it "discriminatory" and "hugely disproportionate".

Currently, 44 percent of public service recruitment comes from the merit list and the remaining 56 percent from various quotas.

Addressing the protestors, the shipping minister said, "You may not respect the freedom fighters, but [you] can't disrespect them."

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is ruling the country with the spirit of liberation war. Is it right to give jobs

to the children of Razakar and Jamaat-Shibir?" he asked.

The parishad also announced a six-point demand, including exemplary punishment of those who created anarchy by spreading rumours in the name of quota reform movement, an enactment of a law similar to the Holocaust Denial Act and ensuring trial of those who demean freedom fighters, liberation war and Bangladesh.

"You have seen students protesting for quota reform. Students can protest for any cause. But those who have attempted to kill Dhaka University's Vice-Chancellor... we have to find them," the ministers said.

At the rally, Mukijoddha Santan O Prajanma Somonnoy Parishad convened Ashibur Rahman Khan, Ismot Kadir Gama, Abdul Malek Miah, Osman Ali, ABM Sultan Ahmed, JSD general secretary Shirin Sultana, journalist Abed Khan, actress Rokeya Prachi were present among others.

In Shahbagh, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad Santan Command, a forum of the children of freedom fighters, also demanded the same at a rally arranged in front of National Museum.

The forum also demanded punishment for those who, it claimed, have disrespected freedom fighters and their family during the recent quota reform movement. It also asked for enactment of a freedom fighters' family protection law.

President of the organisation, Mehedi Hasan, demanded the government punish the criminals who vandalised the DU VC residence and "tried to spread agitation through social media as well as disrespecting the freedom fighters".

On February 17, students under the banner of Bangladesh Shadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad launched the movement over a five-point demand, including reducing the quota privilege to 10 percent from the current 56.

The movement turned violent on Sunday after police action against protestors. At least 100 people were injured and several others detained as violence flared up in Shahbagh and its adjacent areas.

Outsourcing firms eye

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concerns in different countries, including Telenor Myanmar, said Prince Mojumder, co-founder and chief executive officer of the company.

The company that employs about 4,000 young men and women is demonstrating its products and services in the two-day Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) summit in Dhaka Sonargaon Hotel.

It picks up over 60 million calls a year.

Genex also serves multinational companies in Bangladesh but it is not the only one. Other companies compete for the work here in Bangladesh.

Acceleco is maintaining UK-based company metafour's accounts online. It has about 150 clients in the country and is gradually meeting business firms outsourcing demands in the accounting segment.

Government helpline 999 receives 15,000 calls every day and is run by the police. It too is attending the BPO Summit 2018.

Wahidur Rahman Sharif, president of Bangladesh Association of Call Centre and Outsourcing (BACCO), which organised the event, said some of their members were doing well in different countries. He said their target was to explore the untapped local market as well.

"Local market will be our practice field..." said Sharif.

Right now, global BPO market is about \$500 billion and Bangladeshi companies hardly grab \$180 million of that. Another \$120 million a year is earned from the local market, Sharif said.

This earning would exceed \$1 billion a year in the next three years, he hoped.

In different sessions of the first day of the summit, industry insiders said more than 40,000 people work in about 105 BPO companies in Bangladesh. They predicted that the number of workers would reach 100,000 by 2021.

Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy inaugurated the event at the Sonargaon Hotel while Telecom and ICT Minister Mustafa Jabbar chaired a session.

A large number of young men and women, mostly university students, went there on the first day.

"Youths do not need to wait for government jobs... ICT has created a huge opportunity for them and now they can earn a lot of dollars through outsourcing, even staying at their rural homes," said Joy in the inauguration session, reports BSS.

It has become possible because of the government's policies, Joy said.

"The present government has introduced ICT education at primary level," he said, adding that he wants the youths and children of the country to know how to operate computers and understand the language of computer.

Industry leaders said BPO in the country began in 2008 with just 300 jobs, which now has turned into

40,000 jobs.

Attending a session, Telecom Secretary Shyam Sundar Sikder said, "We want to increase our income from digital products, but in the education curriculum, digital contents like big data analysis, artificial intelligence, and IOT issues are fully ignored."

At least 20 foreign experts and 60 local speakers are sharing their knowledge and experience at the seminars being held on the side lines of the summit. Some companies were also doing on-the-spot recruitment.

Give me

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Division from the ruling AL.

"The Jatiya Party will also have to be given the charge of 10 to 12 ministries. If Awami League does not meet our demand, we will contest in 300 constituencies and will go to power by winning the next polls," he said.

Ershad added JP would take part in the election irrespective of whatever decision BNP took to that end.

He said, "Though I was innocent, the government of Khaleda Zia put me in jail without granting me bail for five years. Now, she [Khaleda] is in jail and it reflects the persecution done to me back then."

Termining the movement for reform in the quota system logical, Ershad said, "It was not logical to completely cancel the quotas. I think the prime minister herself did not want to totally scrap it."

"There is a quota system in the Constitution. It cannot be cancelled by anyone. It is necessary to make some reforms to bring it to a logical level and there should be a quota system for the freedom fighters."

Ershad expressed the hope that the premier would give a decision to keep some quota for the freedom fighters.

In another rally in Rangpur, the JP chief yesterday said people want change and freedom as they are "living in an unpleasant situation".

"Incidents of rape and killing are taking place everywhere. There are nepotism and looting all over the country. There is no money in the banks. The executive is not paying any heed to anyone," he alleged.

Pointing to the PM, Ershad said nothing works without her instruction. "We do not want a one-party rule. We want people's rule. We will have to establish good governance through abolishing bad rule. The opportunity has come this time."

Ershad also said AL would not come to power if the upcoming election was held in a free and fair manner.

JP Co-Chairman GM Quader, State Minister for LGRD Moshir Rahman Ranga, JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Jawladar, among others, addressed the rally.

Not meant

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freedom of expression rather to protect minorities and stop spreading of lies or hate speeches in social media," said Joy, son of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of two-day "Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) Conference" at a city hotel.

"Any individual, specially the minority community can be affected by misleading news or rumors. We cannot allow that... it is not expression of freedom, it is carried out to spread hatred and those who are doing it should be brought under the law," he said.

He said the ICT sector has created an enormous scope for jobs and youths can earn a handsome amount of dollars through outsourcing.

Joy said the digital security act should be passed in the Jatiya Sangsad immediately.

While highlighting the huge potentials of ICT development, Joy urged the youth men and women to be associated with ICT sector without waiting for government jobs.

"Youths need not to wait for government jobs... ICT has created a huge opportunity for them," he added.

Describing Bangladesh as a leading ICT hub in the world, the PM's son urged all not to misuse "Facebook".

"Misleading information often spreads in Facebook, but we cannot shut down Facebook for it," he said, urging the regulatory bodies concerned to develop necessary tools so that harmful contents are not seen from Bangladesh.

Around 4,000 youths get jobs through Bangladesh Public Service Commission every year, but there are huge job seekers who can take training in ICT and manage jobs easily.

"I hope that this sector would create jobs for 100,000 people by 2021," he added.

He said Bangladesh is now earning around 20 crore dollars from BPO business and the government has been working to increase the earning to 100 crore dollars by 2021.

He described the youth population as Bangladesh's assets and giving training to these youths is the government's priority task.

Posts, Telecommunications and ICT Minister Mustafa Jabbar presided over the opening session of the two-day conference organised jointly by the ICT ministry and Bangladesh Association of Call Center and Outsourcing.

Jabbar said the number of internet users was only 24 lakh in 2008 and this number has reached 8 crore.

State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak said there are over 6,00,000 freelancers in outsourcing jobs.

Probe points

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waiting for an order from the DGHS to go for further probe into the matter as none of the victims' families lodged any complaint with them.

Two deceased -- Asma Begum, 24, wife of Shakhawat Hossain in Kallagram village in Sylhet Sadar upazila, and Foyzunnahar Chaity, 22, wife of Rubel Ahmed in Cunahati village in Jaintiapur upazila -- were buried in their village homes after their namaz-e-janaza on Friday afternoon.

The victims' caesarian operations were conducted by Minoti Sinha on Thursday late night. Asma died around 7:00am and Foyzunnahar around 7:30am on Friday.

Talking to News24 on Friday, Minoti said the surgeries were successful. The patients' condition worsened on Friday morning, but she was not informed of the matter. She also asked the authorities concerned to investigate the incident.

Foyzunnahar's husband Rubel told journalists that when his wife's condition deteriorated on Friday morning. The on-duty doctor administered an injection to her. "After that, her condition began to worsen more."

He said the on-duty doctor then requested them to take her to the ICU and they rushed her to Jalalabad Ragib Rabeya Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead.

Abdul Kaiyum Roni, cousin of another victim Asma, also blamed the on-duty doctor's negligence and wrong treatment for his sister death.

After the incident, officials at the DMT Safeway Hospital left the hospital and they let the families go with the bodies even without paying the hospital bills, the deceased families also said.

Asma gave birth to a girl child and Foyzunnahar to a boy child. Both the babies are healthy, family members said.

This correspondent could not reach the authorities of DMT Safeway Hospital as well as the on-duty doctor.

Four jump to death

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Six of the injured were transferred to DMCH while the rest were admitted to a local hospital.

Following the accident, rail service between Dhaka and the rest of the country, except Narayanganj, remained suspended for more than four hours.

Communication was restored at 4:45pm when the carriages were removed, said Syed Faruk Ahmed, general manager (East) Md Arifuzzaman. Three fire engines had rushed to the spot.

The reason for the accident could not be known immediately.

Officer-in-Charge Yasin Faruk of Dhaka Railway Police Station said the train carriages detached and derailed as the train was switching lines. He said the bodies had been sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Railway authorities formed a three-member probe committee led by its chief engineer (East) Md Arifuzzaman. The committee is to submit their report within three days.

Jarina Begum, a passenger of the train said she along with her elder sister and son Israfil was travelling from Mymensingh to Dhaka. The train waited for around one hour at Tongi Railway Station. As the train left the station, it started shaking unusually and after sometime, they found their carriage was detached.

"Then, we jumped off the train. My son's right leg was broken but we survived unhurt," she said at DMCH where her son was admitted.

Witnesses said panicked passengers on board and on the roof jumped off shouting "fire, fire".

Three of the deceased were identified. They are: Amir Uddin, 35, Khokon, 37, and Shahadat Hossain, 35.

Rickshaw puller Shahadat was pronounced dead after he was taken to the DMCH in critical condition, said Shahadat's maternal uncle Aminul Islam who was injured.

Masud Rana, a doctor of Ahsanullah Master Health Complex in Tongi, said seven injured, including Shahadat were transferred to DMCH while several others were admitted in his hospital. Twelve took first aid.

Asked about the reason for the accident, Railway GM (East) Syed Faruk Ahmed pointed to the ongoing probe.

Sources, however, claimed that the train line-changing mechanism had been triggered while the train was changing lines. This caused the carriages to detach and eventually derail.

Railways Minister Mazibul Hoque and Railway Director General Amzad Hossain visited the spot and assured monetary assistance for the families of the deceased and promised to bear the cost of treatment of the injured.

PM reaches Saudi Arabia

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International Airport yesterday at 8:00pm (KSA time).

Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud will oversee the conclusion of the Joint military drill today in the presence of Hasina and a number of leaders of "friendly" countries participating in the exercise, including Bangladesh.

The leaders will also witness military parades of the various participating forces due to start at 1:00pm and conclude at 4:00pm. Hasina will leave Dammam for UK at 5:00pm (KSA time) today by a special flight to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London.

Gulf Shield-I is organised by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Defense having participants from land, air and naval forces of 23 countries, including USA, UK, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Mauritania, Malaysia, Pakistan, Chad, Djibouti, Niger, Comoros, Afghanistan, Oman, Guyana, Turkey, and Burkina Faso.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said earlier that an 18-member delegation of Bangladesh Armed Forces have participated in the exercise.

The military exercise, which began on March 18, is considered one of the largest in the region, both in terms of the number of participating countries and the quality of its weapons. It aims to raise military readiness in the region, modernise joint mechanisms and enhance coordination and cooperation with joint military and security integration, reports Arab News.

"The drills featured two types of military operations that included conventional military operations represented by coastal defence attacks against the enemy, in addition to the irregular war operations carried out by besieging and penetrating villages and industrial installations so as to cleanse them of hostile elements," spokesman for Joint Gulf Shield-1, Brig Gen Abdullah Al-Subaie told local, Arab and international media yesterday, according to Arab News.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and other high civil and military officials are accompanying the PM during her Saudi visit.

Apart from attending various sessions of the Commonwealth Summit, Hasina is expected to hold bilateral meetings with her counterparts of different participating countries, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the sidelines of the summit.

On April 17, the prime minister will attend the Commonwealth Women Forum and address the session on "Educate to empower: Making equitable and quality primary education and secondary education a reality for girls across the Commonwealth" at Queen

AL candidates

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He also mentioned in the affidavit that his business outlet is now closed.

Manju has cash worth Tk 3 lakh and his wife Tk 2 lakh.

The BNP candidate in Gazipur, Hasan Uddin Sarkar, earns about Tk 10 lakh a year from house rent and business, his affidavit shows.

His cash in hand and cash at bank stand at Tk 64 lakh while that of his wife at about Tk 77 lakh.

Interestingly, Jahangir Alam, the AL candidate in Gazipur, made no mention of any assets in his wife's name.

CASES None of the AL candidates faces any cases.

Khaleque had nine cases against him, but they were all withdrawn or dismissed.

The two cases filed against Jahangir Alam were also withdrawn.

BNP's Nazrul Islam Manju stands accused in four cases filed between 2013 and 2018. Hasan Uddin Sarkar is facing two cases.

Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Westminster as the main speaker.

She will also join a high-level programme to be organised by Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a prestigious think tank of the UK, in the afternoon. She will be the keynote speaker on "Development Progress of Bangladesh: Policy, Progress and Prospect" in the programme.

On April 18, the Bangladesh prime minister will attend the Asian leaders' roundtable - "Can Asia keep growing?" The PM will join the Welcome Reception followed by a dinner to be hosted by British premier Theresa May in the afternoon.

On April 19, Hasina will attend the formal opening of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and official welcome ceremony to be hosted by the British PM.

The PM will join a reception to be hosted by Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland QC and a presentation and reception followed by a dinner of Queen Elizabeth II in honour of Heads of Government and spouse/partners at the Buckingham Palace.

On April 20, the prime minister will attend three retreat sessions and the closing executive session of the summit.

On April 21, she will attend a reception for participating Commonwealth Heads of Government and the Queen's Birthday Party Concert to be organised by the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS). The prime minister will join a community reception the same day.

She will depart UK by special flight of Biman on April 22 at 6:20pm and is expected to reach Dhaka at 9:15am on April 23.

Two charged

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against the two BCL leaders.

After getting the probe report, Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Nabi scrutinised the charge sheet and accepted it. The court also granted them permanent bail after they surrendered before it seeking bail in the case. They were earlier granted bail till sub mission of the probe report.

On October 27, 2016, several Bangla dailies published photographs showing Sabbir and Ashiqur brandishing firearms during a clash between hawkers and an eviction team of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

The clash broke out after the DSCC team launched the drive to remove illegal makeshift shops from the pavements and the underpass market area in Gulistan. The two were seen shooting during the clash between DSCC staff and hawkers that left 10 people, including two corporation employees, injured.

Three days later, SI Abdul Mannan of Shahbagh police filed the case against the two and 50 to 60 unnamed people.

Following the case, the two who were expelled from the party, surrendered before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Md Khurshid Alam and secured bail on November 17, 2016 on grounds that the charges brought against them were not specific.

The bail triggered a mixed reaction among the people and litigants and different national dailies published a series of reports on it.

Later on December 4 that year their bail was cancelled, and the court issued arrest warrants against them as they remained absent that day.

Following the arrest warrant, the BCL leaders surrendered before another court on February 9, 2017 and sought bail in the case. But the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sarafuzzaman Ansari rejected their bail petition and sent them to jail.

Soon after order for sending them into custody, the IO submitted a seven-day remand prayer for quizzing them about the incident. But on February 12 the same year, another Dhaka court rejected their remand prayer and they got bail on February 16.