

'Drug peddler' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A convicted robber, also an alleged drug peddler, was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Sreenagar upazila early yesterday.

Deceased Mohammad Tajel, 36, son of Din Islam Khorshed alias Yunus Sheikh of Baghorar Rudrapara village of the same upazila, was jailed for seven years in a robbery case. He was also accused in nine other cases for peddling drugs and other crimes, said Yunus Ali, officer-in-charge of Sreenagar police.

Acting on a tip off, police arrested Tajel at Manirampur upazila in Jashore on Friday morning. The law enforcers later took him to Pashchim Baroikhal in Sreenagar around 1:00am to recover hidden firearms, said the OC.

Reza Kibria

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collected Gono Forum's nomination paper and submitted it on Friday, seeking the party's ticket to contest the polls. Oikyafront will contest the election under the BNP's paddy sheaf symbol.

Reza's father, Shah AMS Kibria, served as the finance minister under the Sheikh Hasina-led government from 1996 to 2001. He was elected as a member of parliament from Habiganj-3 constituency in the 2001 general election. The former finance minister was killed in a grenade attack during a public meeting in Habiganj on January 27, 2005.

Speaking to The Daily Star about why he joined Gono Forum, Reza said, "I do not agree with the way the country has been run over the last 10 years. I feel that Awami League has moved away from the policies that my father and Sheikh Hasina previously supported."

He said he was also dissatisfied with the way Awami League has handled the investigation into his father's assassination. "I trust and greatly respect Dr Kamal Hossain and I am comfortable with the thought of him guiding the future of the country after the election," he said.

Replying to a query, he said Dr Kamal was his leader and he was in close contact with him. "I hope to contest from Habiganj-1 which is my ancestral home. My father always wanted to contest from Habiganj-1, but was not able to. I am very keen to contest from there," he said.

Like his father, Reza has worked at the UN. Though he was born in Jalalshap village in Nabiganj Upazila's Debpara Union, he spent most of his youth abroad. Most recently he has been Macro Fiscal Advisor of International Monetary Fund, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cambodia.

Level playing

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Reminded that some countries have expressed their concerns over the fairness of the election at a recent meeting between diplomats and Oikyafront leaders, he said, "One or two countries may raise such questions about the election.... This could be the outcome of lobbying. The BNP is spending a lot of money on lobbying."

Commenting on BNP's recent warning about boycotting the election if the atmosphere is not congenial, he said, "Do they want a congenial atmosphere? Their activities do not reflect that. They swooped on police in broad daylight."

Referring to Wednesday's clash in Nayapaltn, he asked, "Are they now asking for a fair environment?"

Asked about the clash between two factions of AL in Narsingdi that left four, including a teenager, dead and many injured on Friday, he said such incidents had been taking place in villages across the country for the last 50 years and were not connected to the AL.

BIJOYMANCHA AT ALL UPAZILAS

Mohammed Nasim yesterday said Bijoymancha would be set up at every upazila and district on December 16 to celebrate victory day.

Besides, the AL-led 14-party alliance will form teams to conduct campaigns across the country ahead of the 11th parliamentary election.

Nasim, also the health minister, was talking to reporters after a meeting with allies of the AL at the party's headquarter on Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday, reports BSS.

Shop employee

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along with the popular party slogan on it. He was also working hard to collect the money he needed to submit his nomination papers to the Election Commission (EC).

"As I am a poor labourer, I am collecting fees from our party men and common people for submitting the nomination paper. I shall try to submit it by November 24," said Delwar.

As of now, he needs Tk 20,000 as fees to submit his nomination paper to the EC and another Tk 11,000 to collect the disc containing the voter database of Kurigram-3 constituency, which has been a strong hold of Jatiya Party.

Khaleda may file appeals

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Advocate Zainul Abedin, a BNP leader and lawyer for his chief, told The Daily Star on Friday.

He said the defence was now examining the lower court judgement that sentenced Khaleda to seven-year imprisonment in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case on October 29.

He added the grounds of the appeal might include that Khaleda was not involved in corruption and that she was convicted and jailed to cause her political harassment. There was no evidence for convicting or sentencing her in the case, he claimed.

Zainul, also a vice-chairman of BNP and president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, said they would move an appeal on behalf of Khaleda before the Appellate Division challenging the HC verdict that enhanced her punishment from five-year imprisonment to 10 years in the Zia Orphanage Trust case.

"If we don't get the certified copy of the High Court verdict soon, we will move a criminal miscellaneous petition [known as provisional leave to appeal] before the apex court seeking a stay on the High Court verdict in the Zia Orphanage Trust case," he said.

The lawyer further said there would be no legal bar on Khaleda from submitting nomination papers and contesting the national polls once the appeals are filed.

A special court in Dhaka on October

29 convicted Khaleda in connection with the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case and sentenced her to seven-year rigorous imprisonment in her absence.

The court also sentenced Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to the then prime minister Khaleda, his assistant personal secretary Ziaul Haq Munna, and Monirul Islam Khan, assistant personal secretary of then Dhaka mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, to the same jail term.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the Zia Charitable Trust case against Khaleda, Harris, Ziaul and Monirul with Tejgaon police on August 8, 2011.

The BNP chief landed in jail being sentenced to five-year imprisonment in the Zia Orphanage Trust case by the same special court on February 8 this year.

The HC on October 30 enhanced her punishment to 10 years' imprisonment in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case after dismissing her appeal.

The same day, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan claimed there was no scope for Khaleda to contest the upcoming polls unless she was acquitted.

Law Minister Anisul Huq, however, referred to previous verdicts delivered by the SC on eligibility of a convict to contest the parliamentary polls and said the court would decide about Khaleda's eligibility to candidacy.

Multiple aspirants

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of the People's Order, the law that regulates elections.

Parties have until November 28 to file nomination papers.

In the 11 days between November 28 and December 9, alliance leaders will discuss and negotiate about their final nominee, said the sources, adding that they would focus on competence rather than the candidates' party affiliation.

"All the parties have agreed in principle to field winnable candidates. Which party is getting more seats is not in our consideration," BNP Standing Committee Member Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Our focus is on competent candidates. We will accommodate competent candidates no matter which party they belong to," he added.

Col (ret) Oli Ahmed, coordinator of the 20-party alliance, echoed Moudud's view.

"I told them [alliance partners] in clear terms that it's not certain that they would be offered seats just because they have a party. I also told them that it is not possible for the BNP to set aside a large number of seats to the alliance partners depriving its own leaders," said Oli, also president of Liberal Democratic Party, a 20-party component.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a number of senior leaders of the two alliances said their target was to bag at least 151 seats, the minimum number required to form government.

Two senior leaders of the BNP, a key component of both the alliances, said they were planning to field dummy candidates alongside party candidates in several dozen constituencies.

These candidates will run as independents to ensure presence of more party men in the polling stations.

The Awami League is considering to field dummy contenders in all the 300

constituencies.

Every candidate can appoint one agent in each booth. The polling agents remain present in the booth during voting and counting.

"This will ensure our strong presence in every polling station," a senior BNP leader said.

The party has already urged grassroots leaders and activists to form polling station-based committees to guard some 42,000 voting centres.

Yesterday, Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain himself urged the supporters to guard polling stations.

Meanwhile, the BNP high-command asked its grassroots not to engage in any confrontation with law enforcers.

"We urged our grassroots leaders not to fall into any trap by countering police action. We asked them to avoid conflicts till the election," a senior BNP leader said.

MEETING THE ASPIRANTS

The BNP's parliamentary board starts meeting the party nomination-seekers from today.

As many as 4,580 BNP aspirants collected nomination forms in the last five days since Monday. In the 2008 election, 3,186 BNP hopefuls collected nomination forms.

The AL has sold 4,037 nomination forms this time.

Today, the BNP parliamentary board will interview nomination-seekers from Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions.

It will sit with the aspirants from Barisal and Khulna divisions on November 19; those from Chattogram, Cumilla and Sylhet divisions on November 20 and those from Mymensingh, Faridpur and Dhaka divisions on November 21.

At a meeting on Friday night, the BNP standing committee decided that no standing committee member would contest from more than one constituency, sources said.

Move to check

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Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk).

"An application for a permit for rain water harvesting and drainage work shall be submitted.... by a licensed plumber and the [building] owner or by their appointed person or agent...." reads the code.

Taqsem A Khan, managing director of Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, said installation of each groundwater recharge system would cost around Tk 5 lakh.

"If all government buildings follow the [revised] building code, 20 to 30 percent areas of the city [Dhaka] will be covered," he said.

The groundwater table of the capital has dropped in recent years as Wasa installed more deep tube wells every year to quench the thirst of ever-increasing number of residents of the world's one of most densely populated city.

According to Wasa, around 80 percent of its supply comes from groundwater extracted through 805 deep tube wells and around 20 percent from four plants that treat surface water at Sayedbad and Chandnighat in Dhaka and Godnail and Sonakanda in Narayanganj.

"Over 2,000 authorised private deep tube wells across the city are also extracting groundwater. And there are around 2,000 illegal ones," said a Wasa official preferring not to be named.

He added that the Wasa provides about 235-40 crore litres a day.

The approach, similar to drawing money from a bank without making an effort to deposit, is alarmingly depleting the aquifer.

According to a Bangladesh Water Development Board report, the average rate of annual groundwater decline in different parts of the city was 0.17 metre to 0.6 metre from 1970 to 1980; 0.15 metre to 0.69 metre from 1980 to 1990; 0.56 metre to 2.26 metre from 1990 to 2000 and 1.24 metres to 3 metres since 2000.

Anwar Zahid, director of groundwater hydrology at BWDB, said the reasons behind the declining groundwater are

excessive extraction, filling up of low lands, canals, water bodies and unplanned urbanisation.

Artificial recharge into the aquifers is imperative if people want to prevent the aquifers from dropping to a critical level, he added.

The excessive use of groundwater is quite interesting in a country which is cobwebbed by so many rivers, including a few of it flowing right through the heart of the capital.

But due to excessive dumping of human and industrial waste the water of the Buriganga river has become toxic beyond the use for domestic purpose, said a Wasa official.

Unplanned dumping of sewage, household and industrial waste, in the rivers and other water bodies, makes it difficult for Wasa to use surface water, resulting in its dependency on groundwater, the Wasa official added.

Mohammad Abu Sadeque, member secretary of the revised building code steering committee, said people in urban areas depend on ground water, instead of surface water, and that was the reason why the water tables in cities are going down.

Sadeque, also former director of Housing and Building Research Institute, feared that trees and forest would also not get proper nutrition if groundwater keep depleting. He also said it had to be ensured that groundwater recharge is done in a scientific way.

Dhaka Wasa in 2009 began a pilot project, titled "Artificial Recharge from Rainwater" at 10 places of the city. The places are Lalmatia, Mirpur, Uttara, Segunbagicha, Banani, Gulshan, Khilgaon, Motijheel, Mohammadpur and Gandaria said a Wasa official.

Under the project, rainwater is being harvested, filtered and sent to aquifers through wells on a limited scale, the official said. The Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) is carrying out a field analysis on groundwater recharging of those sites, the report of which is yet to be submitted.

BSS Managing

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He was admitted to the hospital on Wednesday following a heart attack.

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held after Zohr prayers tomorrow at the Jatiya Press Club.

Shahriar wrote over 30 books on interviews of gallantry award winning freedom fighters.

He also made documentaries and wrote region-based history of the Liberation War.

EC wants

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before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka.

The clash erupted a day after the EC sent a letter to the police urging proper enforcement of the code of conduct of polls ahead of the 11th parliamentary election, scheduled for December 30.

After the incident, EC Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed said the EC would examine the incident in Nayapaltn.

"We will want to know about the incident from the police," he said.

STERN ACTION IF POLLING OFFICIALS FOUND BIASED

The EC yesterday warned its officials of punitive actions if they are found guilty of bias during the upcoming election.

"If any allegation of bias is raised against any of the election commission officials and those are proved through investigation, the commission will take punitive action," said Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret) Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury.

"Neutrality is very important for this election," he said during a training programme for the field-level EC officials at the Nirbachan Bhaban in Dhaka.

The programme was arranged to train the field-level election officers on the uses of electronic voting machine (EVM), election management system software and result management system software.

The upcoming election would be a participatory one, the commissioner said, adding that the officials would have to create equal opportunity for every candidate.

It should be ensured that voters can exercise their franchise freely and return home safely, said Shahadat.

An election beyond any question is what the EC wants, he said.

Syria

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against the IS pocket" in September, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. The coalition has repeatedly said it does its utmost to prevent civilian casualties.

"The avoidance of civilian casualties is our highest priority when conducting strikes against legitimate military targets with precision munitions," spokesman Sean Ryan told AFP this week.

IS overran large swathes of Syria and neighbouring Iraq in 2014, proclaiming a "caliphate" in land it controlled.

But the jihadist group has since lost most of it to various offensives in both countries.

In Syria, the group has seen its presence reduced to parts of the vast Badia desert and the pocket in Deir Ezzor.

The SDF in September announced an assault to oust the jihadists from the eastern pocket, which includes the town of Hajin and the village of Al-Shaafa.

The alliance made slow advances until last month when a tough jihadist fightback pushed the SDF out of the whole of the IS pocket.

Following the setback, hundreds of Kurdish fighters were deployed to the area's outskirts as reinforcements.

But the SDF then put the offensive on hold to protest Turkish shelling of Kurdish militia positions in northern Syria.

Reverse

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temperature of the forehead," Dr. Gómez Milán explained the findings.

"At the same time we feel anxious, which lowers the temperature of the nose."

For this study, researchers asked a number of 60 students to perform various tasks while being scanned by thermal imaging technology. One of these tasks involved calling a 3 to 4 minutes call to their parents, partner or a friend and telling a significant lie. Participants had to devise the lie themselves during the call, and the thermal cameras picked up this 'reverse Pinocchio effect' caused by the fluctuation in temperature in the nose and forehead.

Interestingly, the thermal lie detector picked up the temperature difference in 80 percent of test subjects, which is a better rate of success than that of any modern lie detector.

"With this method we have achieved to increase accuracy and reduce the occurrence of 'false positives', something that is frequent with other methods such as the polygraph," said Dr. Emilio Gómez Milán, who added that law enforcement interviewers could one day combine other lie detection technology with thermal imaging to achieve better results.

CIA blames Saudi

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Khashoggi, a Post columnist, had gone to the consulate to obtain documents necessary to marry his Turkish fiancée.

Saudi Arabia -- which quickly dismissed the reported CIA findings -- has repeatedly changed its official narrative of the October 2 murder, first denying any knowledge of Khashoggi's whereabouts and later saying he was killed when an argument degenerated into a fistfight.

In the latest version presented by the Saudi prosecutor on Thursday, a 15-member squad was formed to bring Khashoggi back from Istanbul "by means of persuasion" -- but instead ended up killing the journalist and dismembering his body in a "rogue" operation.

The CIA examined multiple intelligence sources, the Post said, among them a phone call between the prince's brother -- the Saudi ambassador to the United States -- and Khashoggi.

The ambassador reportedly told the late journalist that he would be safe to go to the consulate in Istanbul and get the papers he needed.

But a Saudi embassy spokesperson said that Ambassador Khalid bin Salman had never discussed "anything related to going to Turkey" with Khashoggi.

The prince said in a Twitter post on Friday that the last contact he had with Khashoggi was via text on Oct 26, 2017, nearly a year before the journalist's death, reported Reuters.

"I never talked to him by phone and certainly never suggested he go to Turkey for any reason. I ask the US government to release any information regarding this claim," Prince Khaled said.

The US intelligence agency also said in determining the crown prince's role it considered him a "de facto ruler" of Saudi Arabia: "The accepted position is that there is no way this happened without him being aware or involved," the Post quoted an official as saying.

That official dubbed Prince Mohammed a "good technocrat" -- but also someone unpredictable who "goes from zero to 60, doesn't seem to understand that there are some things you can't do."

The Post said the CIA also examined a call from inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul after Khashoggi's killing.

Maheer Mureb, a security official who has often been seen at the crown prince's side, made the call to Saud al-Qahtani, a top aide to Prince Mohammed, to inform him the operation had been completed, the Post said, citing people familiar with the call.

The New York Times cited officials as saying US and Turkish intelligence so far have not found direct evidence connecting the prince to Khashoggi's killing.

Following the reports, US Vice President Mike Pence yesterday said Washington "is determined to hold all of those accountable who are responsible for that murder."

On the sidelines of an APEC summit in Papua New Guinea, Pence described the Saudi journalist's killing as an "atrocious" and an "affront to a free and independent press" but declined to comment on classified information.

The CIA conclusions threaten to further fray relations between Washington and longtime ally Riyadh, which has sought to end discussion of the murder and rejected calls for an international investigation.

Polls situation

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Waris Husain, South Asia policy analyst at the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, in his speech, highlighted the past attacks on minority groups during election period and stressed the need for additional protection and assurances from political leaders that this would not happen during the 2018 election.

Laura Bramon, Senior Program Manager for Child Protection and Education, International Programs Group, while speaking about the upcoming election, said political violence remains a grave, cyclical danger for Bangladeshi children.

"We have seen great progress in Bangladesh, but there is still work to be done and the US plays a crucial role in leading this work. The US should continue these efforts to provide leadership and coordination around ending violence against children," he added.

Former US Ambassador Marica Bernicat also attended the programme.

UN condemns

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were reported killed and 39 maimed in Myanmar since August last year, and a large majority of them were Rohingya.

"These findings are in line with what other UN bodies have found, confirming killing, maiming, and rape, for which Myanmar's armed forces have already been listed on the Secretary General's Annual Report from last year," Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for the secretary general, said.

The resolution on the human rights situation in Myanmar, co-sponsored by the European Union, Canada and the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to the UN General Assembly's Third Committee-Social, Humanitarian and Cultural, won 142 nations.

In addition to Myanmar, China and Russia, seven other countries voted against it and 26 nations, including Japan and India, abstained. It would be put to a voting in a plenary session and be formally adopted by the 193 member of UN in December.

In November last year, the Third Committee had also passed a similar resolution on the "Situation of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar" which was adopted by 135 countries in favour, ten against and 26 abstentions.

A month later, on December 24, 2017, the full UN General Assembly voted on the resolution with 122 countries in favour, ten 'No' and 24 abstentions. In both of these resolu-

tions, India had abstained.

Meanwhile, a new report by the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict found that boys and girls in Myanmar suffered patterns of "grave violations" following the start of the crisis in northern Rakhine.

The Third Committee motion also acknowledged the label "ethnic cleansing" made by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and other UN officials "with grave concern".

It also called on the Myanmar authorities to ensure that those responsible for rights violations and abuses were held accountable and removed from positions of power.

Turkish Ambassador Feridun Sinirlioglu, speaking on behalf of the OIC, called the commission's findings "devastating".

The representative of Austria, on behalf of the EU, called for unhindered access to humanitarian assistance and recalled the Security Council's authority to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court.

Bangladesh's UN envoy Masud Bin Momen said Bangladesh had agreed on November 15 to commence voluntary repatriation of individuals and families verified by Myanmar as Rakhine State residents.

It, however, appeared that the Rohingyas were not sufficiently convinced by the words of assurance. None of them came forward to avail the option of returning, said a press release of Bangladesh Mission in UN.

Melodic soundscape

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Catalans are Alba Carmona on vocals and Roser Loscos on violin. They all came to the group with one common passion: Flamenco. You can hear it in the rhythms of the guitarists, the dancing violin lines, and the raw power of the vocals.

The second last act, Arnob & Friends, led by popular singer-musician Shayan Chowdhury Arnob performed some fan favorites, including *Amar Haar Kala Korlam Rey*, *Lal Paharir Deshe Ja*, among many others.

Pakistani classical singer Shafqat Amanat Ali Khan, who belongs to the Patiala Gharana, took the stage as the ultimate performer. He has so far earned acclaims for his popular songs namely, *Aankhon Ke Saagar*, *Khamaj*, *Aankhiyan*, *Mitwa*, *Phir Wohi Raastey* and *Allah Megh De*. The recipient of the President's Pride of Performance civil award, performed several of his mega hits as the showstopper of the festival.

Shafqat was introduced to Bollywood by Shankar Mahadevan. One morning while driving to his

studio, he heard Shafqat's hit song *Aankhon Ke Saagar* on the radio. He immediately called the radio jockey who was his friend and got Shafqat's contact number. Shafqat sang *Mitwa* composed by Shankar Ehsaan Loy for the movie *Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna*. The song was listed in the top charts in India, propelling Shafqat into stardom.

The evening, however, began with Bangladeshi band Nakshikatha performing songs of mystic yards, followed by an authentic display of folk music by Baul Kabir Shah, who delivered an excellent performance getting the audience on their feet.

As the curtains came down on the Dhaka International Folk Fest 2018 last night leaving music lovers spellbound with the echoes of action-packed musical performances, the wait began again for next year's iteration of the festival.

The Dhaka International Folk Festival, presented by Meril, powered by Dhaka Bank in association with Grameenphone was organised by Sun Communications Limited.