

Mob beats 2 'robbers' to death in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Two men were killed by a mob after allegedly being caught red-handed while committing robbery at Kaliganj in Gazipur yesterday.

They were involved with a gang of 10 criminals who allegedly robbed a house in the upazila's Nagori union on Tuesday and targeted another yesterday, said locals.

Both of them were aged around 40, locals added.

Police recovered a machete, a knife, a cutter and equipment for breaking doors from the spot.

Abu Bakar Mia, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station, said a case would be filed in this connection.

Abdul Qadir, chairman of Nagori union in Kaliganj, said the robbers first looted the house of a local named Rabeya Begum yesterday and then tried to enter her neighbour Sayem Akand's house.

Sensing their presence, the family members of Sayem alerted their neighbours over phone and announced the robbers' presence through megaphone of a local mosque. Hearing the announcement, locals chased the robbers and beat them up, he added.

Recently, several other incidents of robbery came to light in the area.

Two BCL men stabbed in Cox's Bazar, Satkhira

STAR REPORT

Two ruling party men sustained stab injuries in separate incidents at Cox's Bazar and Satkhira in last two days.

Hasan Tareq, joint secretary of Cox's Bazar city unit Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the pro-Awami League student body, was taking tea with fellow activists in Panbazar area in the town around 1:30am yesterday.

Some other youths led by Zia Uddin were also taking tea there. At one stage, both Tareq and Zia locked in an altercation over spilling water from the glass. During the altercation, one of Zia's associates stabbed Tareq in his chest, said Shakil Azam, general secretary of the city unit BCL.

He was rushed to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, Shakil added.

Contacted, Zia denied his involvement in the incident and claimed that some people were falsely implicating him and his associates with the incident.

City unit BCL organising secretary Hasan Mehedi Rahman said Tareq had no rivalry with Zia. He suspects a vested quarter used Zia against Tareq.

Fariduddin Khandaker, officer-in-charge of Cox's Bazar model police, said they were conducting drives to arrest the accused.

In Satkhira, an unidentified attacker stabbed Sardar Mashiar Rahman, a vice-chairman aspirant of Tala upazila parishad and former president of the upazila unit BCL, on Shaheen Nazmul Sarani in the town on Tuesday night.

The victim was talking with some of his party colleagues near the Red Crescent office around 10:00pm when the attacker stabbed him from behind and ran away, said Shimul Hossain, victim's cousin.

He was taken to Satkhira Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Mostafizur Rahman, OC of Tala police, said they were trying to trace the attacker although no case was filed as of 7:00 last night.

Locals say rivalry has been brewing between Mashiar and incumbent Vice-chairman Nazrul Islam over the upcoming upazila election.

Man killed

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law enforcers, forcing them to retaliate, Azman added.

Rab later rescued Sohel with bullet injuries and sent him to Panchbibi Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, he claimed.

However, The Daily Star could not independently verify the law enforcer's claim.

The body was handed over to his family members after autopsy.

Rab also claimed to have recovered a pistol, one round bullet, a magazine and 60 bottles of phensedyl from the spot.

With this, around suspected 286 drug dealers or peddlers were killed in "gunfights" with police or Rab since the anti-narcotics drive started last year.

Force Myanmar

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agreements for sending back Rohingyas. "But the implementation process is being delayed."

She said Bangladesh has attached importance to connectivity with Vietnam and emphasised enhancing trade and business.

The two countries struggled for independence, the premier said, adding that she as a student had closely observed Vietnam's struggle for independence.

The PM said a youth delegation had visited Vietnam after Bangladesh's independence in 1971 and her younger brother was a member of that team.

Vietnam Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen said the government and the people of his country were very happy at the reelection of Hasina.

He emphasised stepping up people-to-people contact.

About the Rohingya issue, Nguyen lauded Bangladesh's humanitarian efforts in sheltering the refugees. He said this was a huge burden on Bangladesh.

The deputy minister said his country would donate \$50,000 as part of its solidarity with Bangladesh on the Rohingya issue.

He invited Hasina to visit Vietnam at a convenient time.

PMO Secretary Sajjadul Hassan was present during the meeting.

UAE NAVY CHIEF MEETS PM

LATER, visiting Chief of Naval Staff of UAE Rear Admiral Pilot Sheikh Saeed bin Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Nahyan met Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

The press secretary said both the PM and the UAE Navy chief stressed the need for stepping up cooperation in different fields, including training between the naval forces of the two countries.

Mentioning that there was a man-

Scientists

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and wearable technology, according to the US-led team.

Because of its flexibility, it could also be fabricated to cover large areas. This has major implications for the future of "electronic intelligence", say the scientists.

Professor Tomas Palacios, director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Microsystems Technology Laboratories Centre for Graphene Devices and 2D Systems, said: "What if we could develop electronic systems that we wrap around a bridge or cover an entire highway, or the walls of our office and bring electronic intelligence to everything around us? How do you provide energy for those electronics?"

"We have come up with a new way to power the electronics systems of the future - by harvesting Wifi energy in a way that's easily integrated in large areas - to bring intelligence to every object around us."

In experiments, the rectenna generated about 40 microwatts of power when exposed to typical Wifi signals of around 150 microwatts.

That is more than enough to light up a simple mobile display or activate silicon chips.

The research is published in the latest online issue of the journal Nature.

Ti report

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last year, which is 13th from the bottom.

The Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB), the Bangladesh chapter of the Berlin-based graft watchdog, shared the findings of the global survey on the day.

Reacting to the report, Hasan said, "The method the TIB followed in preparing the graft index was faulty. They didn't make it clear which method they followed. That means their methodology is faulty."

"If there's any specific allegation, I would like to request the TIB to inform the government and the Anti-Corruption Commission. The government will take action."

Responding to a question whether they would reject the report, he said, "Definitely... it's a motivated report."

Replying to another query, the minister said the ACC already sought an explanation from the TIB about the report. He would also ask the TIB to tell the ACC the basis of the report.

He added that the TIB earlier published another report ahead of the general election to implement BNP's agenda.

Around 80 percent of the report echoed the allegations of BNP, the minister said, adding, "So, it's clear that they [TIB] want to implement the agenda of a specific political party."

Hasan said the TIB also raised voice that there had been corruption in Padma Bridge project and then the World Bank stopped financing the project. However, the allegation was proved wrong later, he added.

The World Bank filed a case with a court of Canada where it was defeated, he said, adding, "We thought that the TIB would seek mercy from the nation after their defeat, but they didn't."

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has announced a zero tolerance policy against corruption. When Bangladesh is being praised globally and by the World Bank for curbing corruption, the TIB has published a faulty report to defame the country's people," Hasan added.

power demand in the UAE Navy, Sheikh Saeed said Bangladesh Navy could play a role in this regard.

He expressed his country's interest in developing the shipbuilding sector in Bangladesh.

Hasina said Bangladesh's shipbuilding sector has been flourishing fast due to various initiatives taken by her government.

Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral AMMM Aurangzeb Chowdhury, Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Mahfuzur Rahman, PM's Military Secretary Maj Gen Mia Mohammad Zainul Abedin, PMO Secretary Sajjadul Hassan, the Bangladesh ambassador to the UAE and the UAE envoy in Dhaka were present.

Malaysia to open

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mass graves in Wang Kelian.

During that time, hundreds of bodies of people -- who were suspected to be Rohingyas and Bangladeshis -- were found in the graves in the bordering areas of Thailand and Malaysia.

The victims had been picked up by human traffickers or smugglers from the coasts of Cox's Bazar and Myanmar and transported by rickety engine boats to the coastal jungles of Thailand. There, they were held hostage for ransom.

Those who could pay through their relatives in Bangladesh or Myanmar were released and passed on to Malaysia. Those who failed to pay were tortured and left without food or water -- a situation that led to their deaths.

Following the discovery of the mass graves in Thailand and Malaysia, both countries had beefed up security at the maritime borders, causing a migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea where several thousand Rohingyas and Bangladeshis were stuck.

Later, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia agreed to accept the floating migrants following global outcry.

House formed

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also indulged in vote rigging by snatching people's voting rights."

He further alleged that thousands of the BNP's leaders and activists were arrested before the polls to keep them away from the election, while party Chairperson Khaleda Zia was sent to jail after being convicted "in a false case" ahead of the polls.

He demanded that the government immediately release Khaleda and other arrested party leaders and activists.

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the government and the Election Commission announced the names of so-called MPs "through a plot on December 30" instead of holding a credible election.

"The current parliament is illegal as it was not formed with people's mandate. This is a so-called and stigmatised parliament."

He also demanded a fresh reelection as their party did not accept the current parliament.

Another standing committee member of the party, Moudud Ahmed, said they were stunned at the way the election was held. "We never expected to witness such an election."

Senior BNP leader Abdul Moyeen Khan said the MPs of the current parliament are not representatives of the people.

He alleged that the parliament was formed through "vote terrorism" unleashed by the police and the administration.

India arrests

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JMB's India head Kausar alias "Boma" Mizan, who is a Bangladeshi national. Kador had been on the run since the Burdwan blast on October 1, 2014.

NIA sources said they wanted to question Kador in connection with the bomb blasts at Bodh Gaya, a revered Buddhist shrine in Bihar, on January 19 last year, in retaliation for alleged atrocities against Rohingyas in Myanmar.

The NIA arrested Kador based on Mizan's information during the latter's interrogation, the sources added.

In the run up to the Burdwan blast, Kador had accompanied Mizan to buy explosives in Kolkata. Kador was also trying to establish the JMB network in Assam and mobilise funds for the outfit.

Meanwhile, the NIA said it filed a supplementary charge sheet against Kausar and five other JMB members on January 28 in the IEDs planting case at Bodh Gaya before the NIA special court in Patna.

On September 27 last year, a charge sheet accusing three was filed with the court in the Bodh Gaya blast case. The court took cognizance of the charge sheet.

The NIA said its probe revealed that Kausar, along with the other accused, formed a terrorist gang and hatched a conspiracy to carry out attacks on the Bodh Gaya temple and other symbols of Buddhist faith.

Investigation also established that the accused used fake and assumed names for travel and renting hideouts and used encrypted text for communication to conceal their real identities and the designs of the conspiracy to wage a war against the government.

BB to sue

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A US law firm would file the case in the New York court on behalf of Bangladesh.

After the Bangladesh team returns they will give details on the amount of compensation to be sought in the lawsuit.

Replying to a question about how much it would cost for appointing a law firm the BB governor said it was less than expected. He did not go into details about the amount.

On the reason for the delay in filing the case, the governor said the process of case disposal with the Philippines was a lengthy one. They hoped that much less time would be required in the NY court.

Meanwhile, RCBC, in a statement, said it had engaged a top New York law firm to handle its defence, according to Reuters.

"We welcome this complaint, as it is an opportunity for RCBC to put on record again that it was a victim of what was started in Bangladesh by still unnamed persons," the bank said.

On February 4, 2016, hackers broke into the central bank's system and generated 70 fake payment orders to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York amounting to \$1.94 billion.

The NY Fed's security system flagged the payment orders but only five of them fell through and \$101 million was released.

Of the amount, \$81 million was wired to RCBC's branch in Manila, while \$20 million made its way to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka sent back the entire sum immediately after the heist was exposed while the Philippines sent back \$14.54 million in November 2016 -- meaning \$66.46 million is yet to be retrieved from there.

Kabir said the beneficiaries in this incident were RCBC and other private firms in the Philippines who were complicit in and involved with the incident.

He said the SWIFT system had been abused by the hackers and Bangladesh Bank and NY Fed were the victims.

The BB governor said a decision was taken in 2016 that NY Fed and SWIFT would continue their cooperation until the full amount of the stolen money was recovered.

For one year

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can we do so unless we have any response from Bangladesh side?"

The Express Tribune of Pakistan on January 29 carried a new item with the headline "Dhaka refuses to accept new Pak envoy" and reported that "Diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh stooped to new lows after the latter on Tuesday refused to accept Saqlain Syedah's documents as Pakistan's High Commissioner to the country and sought a new name for the post."

Diplomatic sources told The Express Tribune that the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina did not mention any reason for the refusal.

According to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, it is mandatory to get acceptance letter from the receiving state before formal announcement of new Ambassador. It is essential to get concurrence from the host country.

The nomination of any ambassador may be accepted or rejected and it is the sovereign decision of the host country. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations clearly states that the host country may decline to approve the nomination of the proposed name by showing any reason.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, foreign ministry officials said they were not aware of Dhaka's formal refusal to accept Saqlain Syedah's "Agreement" (documents related to proposal of nomination) as Pakistan's High Commissioner.

"No response as of yet," said a senior official under the condition of anonymity.

An unusual delay in approving nominations can be interpreted as non-acceptance, sources said.

Generally approval is given within a couple of months, but if there is no response for a few months, it automatically gives a negative signal and the sending country proposes new name for acceptance, one senior official at the ministry said.

The post had fallen vacant after the retirement of Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Rafuzaman Siddiqui in February 2018. Afterwards, Syedah was named as his replacement and the relevant documents were sent for Dhaka's approval.

Diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan have soured since the beginning of the trial and execution of war criminals in Bangladesh.

Despite Dhaka's repeated calls to Pakistan to not interfere in the internal matters of Bangladesh, Pakistan's national and provincial parliaments adopted a resolution against the trial of war criminals.

Changing lives, quietly

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panel model made of Styrofoam in a classroom to help students understand better how power is generated. Similar teaching materials were seen in all classrooms.

"We encourage the underprivileged children to follow their dreams. They should not feel any less capable than the privileged ones," Rubel said.

Many of the alumni of this school are now thriving.

Two former students are now in Dhaka University. Four got admitted to different polytechnic colleges in Dhaka and the Narayanganj Fine Art Institute, said Ranojit Mojumder, a teacher of Amader Pathshala.

Momin Moktar Sabuj, one of the former students, is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree at the Faculty of Fine Arts, DU. Reminiscing his school days, Sabuj said, "Those were the best days of my life. On one 'cultural day' my drawing teacher noticed my interest."

"I come from a poor family. To study in Charukala seemed like a dream. But it became possible because of my teachers," said Sabuj.

He now takes the opportunity to give something back to the school. He teaches drawing voluntarily at the school.

Sabuj said the teachers of this school are so cooperative that they even take phone calls from students at late night. Students never felt the need to take private tuitions.

Ahmed Rohan Safin, an eighth grader whose father works for a cable tv service provider, said he wanted to become a scientist and his favourite subject was chemistry.

"My teachers give me innovative ideas like power generation through solar panel. They help me to solve different equations. These drive me towards my dream," he said.

Sheuli Begum, a garment worker, said her son had studied at Amader

Pathshala and is now a first-year honours student at a college in Mirpur. Two of her daughters are studying in class-V and -VIII at the school, she said.

She said the school has teaching methods which are fun for the children. Besides, the school has a library, and gives emphasis on extra-curriculum activities.

"My daughters love the school as the teachers are very friendly and kind-hearted. Without their support, I could never bear the cost of my children's education," she said.

Regular field trips to heritage sites and places of culture and historic significance are also arranged.

A handful of well-wishers manage funds for the school, which has 11 teachers. Of them, three are involved in music, dance and art classes held on Saturdays. Most of them provide voluntarily services, said Rubel.

After graduating from Dhaka University, Rubel joined "Sultan Safa Pathshala", a school for underprivileged children in Dhaka's Banglamotor, as a volunteer teacher in 2002. But after a few years the school had to be closed due to fund crisis.

When Rubel was thinking about establishing Amader Pathshala, his friends Ranojit Mojumder, a graduate from Rajshahi University, and Sylhet Osmani Medical College student Kazi Muntasir Billah came forward to help.

In 2007, they set up the school at a rented house in Pallabi, obtaining permission from the directorate of primary education. The school has recently been moved to another rented building in the same area.

Asked why they were running the school instead of pursuing better jobs for themselves, Rubel said, "Who will shape the future of these hapless boys and girls if everyone runs after money?"

Grenade attack kills 2

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bombing at a cathedral on the neighbouring island of Jolo claimed 21 lives at Sunday mass in an assault claimed by the Islamic State group.

Authorities warned against speculating the mosque attack was an act of revenge, adding they had no indication it was retaliation for the cathedral bombing.

"We're still looking at it, but we have not found any connection," Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told reporters. "In the past when churches were bombed ... there were no revenge attacks."

Authorities have not publicly identified any suspects and no one has claimed responsibility for the mosque attack.

"Regardless of one's faith (we) must resist becoming a victim of this vicious cycle of violence these terrorists are now attempting to create," Zia Alonto Adiong, a politician in the southern Philippines, wrote on Twitter.

"Let us not fall into their trap and give them the satisfaction of turning ourselves (Muslims & Christians) into enemies."

Authorities are also hunting for those behind the cathedral assault, which security forces initially said was not a suicide bombing.

British PM faces

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grounds to organise an emergency summit," said Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar.

The backstop insurance policy could legally lock the UK into EU trade rules indefinitely in order to keep the Irish border free-flowing.

Guy Verhofstadt, who heads the European Parliament's six-member Brexit steering group, said the backstop clause was "absolutely needed" and there was hardly room to change the deal.

Going further, Philippe Lamberts, who is on the group, told BBC radio that hard Brexiters were "believing in a mirage".

"There will be a price to pay, but the calculus made on this side of the Channel is the price of hurting the integrity of the single market will be bigger, and if we have a choice to make between two evils, then no deal is the lesser evil," he said.

London stocks rose 0.6 percent in early trade and the pound rebounded slightly yesterday after suffering heavy losses on worries about a possible no-deal Brexit.

The amendment that May won calls for the backstop to be replaced with "alternative arrangements to avoid a hard border" -- vague wording that did not pin May to any specific approach.

Britain's Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay said "the dynamic did change" with the vote, but offered no specifics

On Tuesday, however, President Rodrigo Duterte contradicted them, saying one of the bombers had blown himself up outside the cathedral.

If confirmed, it would be only the second known suicide attack in the Philippines after a van bombing in July that killed 11 and was also claimed by Islamic State.

Lorenzana appeared to walk back on the president's comments yesterday, saying: "The final conclusion is not there yet. It's still being investigated."

The probe was zeroing in a group tied to the notorious Islamist kidnap-for-ransom group Abu Sayyaf, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

Police said they tried to arrest one of the suspects on Tuesday, but he got away and an armed man was shot dead by officers in the process.

The attacks have cast a shadow over hopes that a vote to give Muslims in the south more control over their own affairs would help quell long-running separatist violence.

Rebels and the government in Manila have expressed hope the new so-called Bangsamoro area will finally attract the investment needed to pull the region out of the brutal poverty that makes it a hotspot for recruiting radicals.

on what the alternative arrangements might involve, saying London was looking at technological solutions, time limits and exit clauses.

Elsewhere in Tuesday's votes, MPs also backed a non-binding measure that "rejects the United Kingdom leaving the European Union without a withdrawal agreement".

But they threw out another plan -- backed by EU supporters -- that would have tried to force through a Brexit delay if no new deal with the EU emerged by February 26.

"I agree that we should not leave without a deal. However, simply opposing no-deal is not enough to stop it," May told MPs.

She said parliament's approval of the backstop amendment gave her the "mandate" to "seek to obtain legally binding changes to the withdrawal agreement".

May promised to give MPs a chance to vote on what happens next on February 14 should she fail to win a new agreement over the course of the next two weeks.

May was due to talk with Tusk and Varadkar, and face MPs in her weekly questions session in parliament later in the day.

Main opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn sat out cross-party Brexit talks ahead of the vote but will now meet May to discuss the way ahead.