

A well-planned

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municipality councillor and local AL leader Maksud Alam, gave Shahadat Tk 10,000 for carrying out the committee's activities.

Failing to persuade Nusrat to withdraw the case, Shahadat, Nuruddin, madrasa teacher Hafez Abdul Kader and several other committee members met Siraj again at jail on April 3.

Siraj asked them to increase pressure on Nusrat and her family, and if necessary, kill her by setting her afire, said the PBI chief.

From the Tk 10,000 given by Maksud, Shahadat gave some money to his relative Kamrunnahar Moni to buy burkas.

Later, Shahadat and other accomplices of Siraj met at a tin-shed room beside the madrasa on April 4 and discussed the plot to kill Nusrat.

Nuruddin, Javed, Jubayer, Umme Sultana Poppy and Moni, among others, were present there.

As per plan, Shahadat, who owns a mobile-credit recharge shop at Bhuiya Bazar, bought one litre of kerosene from a shop around 5:00pm on April 5 and carried it home in two black polybags.

THE FATEFUL DAY

The following day, Siraj's associate Shahadat, Nuruddin and Kader entered the madrasa between 7:00am and 7:30am.

Shahadat brought a glass from the principal's room and kept it with a black plastic bag full of kerosene in front of the washroom on the rooftop of the cyclone centre inside the madrasa compound.

Moni brought three burkas and four pairs of gloves, and kept those in a room on the third floor of the cyclone centre. Two other accused -- Mohiuddin Shakil and Mohammad Shamim -- stood guard in front of the centre so that no one could enter the building, according to the PBI.

Four other accused, Iftekhar Uddin Rana, Imran Hossain Mamun, Abdur Rahim Sharif and Kader took position in front of the madrasa main gate to make sure that only students could enter the madrasa compound.

One of Siraj's associates, Sonagazi upazila AL president Ruhul Amin, was tasked with dealing with police and keeping an eye on the situation outside the madrasa.

Shahadat, Javed and Jubayer

entered the madrasa around 9:30am and put on burkas on the third floor of the cyclone centre.

Soon after Nusrat entered the madrasa to take the Alim exam, Poppy told her that someone was beating up one of her friends on the cyclone centre rooftop.

Nusrat rushed to her exam hall, some 15 yards from the main gate, and kept her belongings at the hall. She then ran towards the cyclone centre.

Poppy followed Nusrat and stopped her on the second floor. She then asked Nusrat to withdraw the case against Siraj but Nusrat refused.

As Nusrat and Poppy climbed the stairs to the rooftop, Shahadat, Jubayer, Javed and Moni followed them from the third floor. They threatened Nusrat, asking her to withdraw the case. They also told her to sign a blank paper but she refused, said the PBI chief.

Shahadat then gagged Nusrat. Javed and Jubayer tore Nusrat's scarf into two. They bound her legs with one piece and her hands with the other.

Javed then brought the plastic bag full of kerosene and the glass. He filled the glass with kerosene and poured it on Nusrat. He kept doing it until the bag was empty.

Instructed by Shahadat, Javed struck a matchstick and set Nusrat ablaze. At the time of the incident, Javed and the other accused addressed Poppy as Shampa to create confusion about their identities, said Banaj.

After setting fire to Nusrat, Poppy and Moni rushed to their exam hall while Shahadat and Jubayer got down to the second floor and changed their clothes.

They then scaled the boundary wall, dumped the burkas into the nearby madrasa pond and escaped.

Javed, however, did not take off burka. Wearing it, he came out of the madrasa through the main gate. He took it off at the bank building beside the madrasa.

Nusrat came down from the rooftop after she managed to free her hands and legs from the scarf that got burnt in fire, said the PBI chief.

Police later took her to hospital.

With 75 percent burns, Nusrat died at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on April 10, triggering a huge public outcry across the country.

Don't go abroad illegally: PM

UNB, Tokyo

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the countrymen not to go abroad illegally by selling off everything as it might cost people's lives.

"Many people go abroad in search of Golden Deer. This is true that many people can change their fate and our country also gets benefited...there's no doubt about it. But, I think, there's no need at all to go to another country illegally," the PM said.

She came up with the remarks while speaking at a civic reception accorded to her at a hotel in Tokyo.

Hasina said many people were selling off their houses and lands to make their way into abroad without knowing any details about their job.

"May be the middlemen lured them with big dreams and people started chasing that dream, and they finally lost their lives."

The PM said the government had introduced a registration system in all digital centres across the country for overseas jobseekers and their lists will be preserved at the Expatriate Welfare Ministry.

"Anyone can go abroad after checking the nature of the job, salary and other necessary information regarding the job."

The premier said the government is providing training to overseas jobseekers so that they could get better jobs as well as set up Prabashi Kalyan Bank to give them loan.

She said the overseas jobseekers do not need to sell their houses and land as there is provision in the bank to provide collateral-free loans to the extremely poor people.

Mentioning that 100 economic zones are being set up across the country, she said there would be huge investment as well as jobs which will eventually improve the people's lifestyle.

The PM recalled the contributions of expatriates towards developing the country and urged them to invest in Bangladesh.

She called on the expatriates to abide by the laws of the countries they live in.

State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Imran Ahmad and State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shariar Alam also spoke at the programme.



Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Toshiko Abe receives Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Haneda International Airport in Tokyo yesterday. Bangladesh and Japan are expected to sign the 40th ODA deal involving \$ 2.5 billion during Hasina's four-day official visit to Japan.

PHOTO: BSS

Japan was always close to my heart

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she has had a fascination for Japan. "I used to collect Japanese art, calendars, stamps, dolls, etc."

In the article titled "Japan-Bangladesh partnership for development", she mentioned that the friendship between the two countries was tested in the terror attack in Dhaka in July 2016, which led to the tragic death of seven Japanese nationals.

"It was during that moment of national anguish and mourning that yet again, the Japanese people and government stood by us and reassured us of Japan's continued support to Bangladesh's development. Japan and Bangladesh are resolved to fight terrorism and extremism together," the article reads.

She said the two countries would be celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2022. "I am confident that with our shared values and commitment to promoting peace and development, we shall ensure

prosperity for our peoples. Our twin flags are a reminder of the umbilical ties that bind us together."

The PM mentioned that Bangladesh offers the most liberal and congenial investment regime in South Asia.

"We welcome foreign private investment in almost all sectors of the economy with no restriction on the amount of investment," she said.

The PM mentioned that foreign investors are eligible to take advantage of a wide range of generous tax concessions and other fiscal incentives. "We have bilateral investment treaties with 32 countries and Avoidance of Double Taxation treaties with 28 countries, including Japan."

"As part of our Dream Trajectory, we have approved Delta Plan 2100 with the vision of ensuring long-term water and food security, economic growth and environmental sustainability. In its implementation, Agenda 2030, Vision 2041 and 2071 are our milestones of different development

flights," the PM wrote.

She said they are transforming from an agrarian economy into a service and manufacturing sector-led growth trajectory.

The PM mentioned that some transformational projects initiated by the current government, such as Padma Bridge, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, High-tech Park and ICT Parks are now visible.

She said they have initiated massive infrastructural development for ensuring multimodal transport system, safeguarding energy security, maintaining food security, keeping a regional balance and ultimately improving our standard of living.

"We believe our time-tested friend Japan and its people will be with us on our transformative journey to development and prosperity," the PM wrote.

The PM reached Japan yesterday afternoon on a 12-day tri-nation tour that would take her to Saudi Arabia and Finland.

16 named in charge sheet

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a madrasa on April 6, minutes before her exam was to begin. She died in a hospital five days later.

Of the 16, the suspects named in the First Information Report (FIR) are: Sonagazi Senior Fazil Madrasa Principal Siraj Ud Doula, 57, Fazil (graduation) students Nuruddin, 20, and Shahadat Hossain Shamim, 20, Sonagazi municipality ward-4 councillor and expelled acting general secretary of the Local Awami League unit Maksud Alam, 50, madrasa students Saifur Rahman Mohammad Zobayer, 21, and Javed Hossain alias Shakhawat Hossain, 19, the madrasa's Hefzo teacher Hafez Abdul Kader, 25, and English teacher Afsar Uddin, 33.

The others are: a niece of suspect Shahadat Hossain Shamim and also an Alim examinee Kamrunnahar Moni, 19, Alim examinee Umme Sultana Poppy, 19, Alim examinee Mohammad Shamim, 20, madrasa students Abdur Rahim Sharif, 20, Iftekhar Uddin Rana, 22, Imran Hossain Mamun, 22, Mohiuddin Shakil, 20, and Sonagazi upazila AL president Ruhul Amin, 55.

All the suspects are now behind bars and 12 of them, including Siraj, Shahadat, Nuruddin, Zobayer, Javed, and Poppy made confessional statements giving details of the roles played by the 16.

The court also recorded testimonies of seven witnesses. The charge sheet named 92 prosecution witnesses.

The plastic bag used for carrying kerosene, a glass used for pouring kerosene on Nusrat, match sticks, notes written by Nusrat about being sexually harassed by Siraj, three black burqas, and the mobile phone of suspect Shahadat would be produced as evidence, Deputy Inspector General and PBI chief Banaj said.

The phone has recorded conversation between suspects Shahadat and Sonagazi upazila AL president Ruhul Amin.

Peon of the madrasa and a witness of the case, Nurul Amin, found the glass on the roof. He kept it after washing it as it had the odour of kerosene.

The PBI chief quoting the finalised charge sheet said Nusrat was set on fire as Principal Siraj Ud Doula was arrested following a sexual harassment case filed by Nusrat's mother on March 27. The filing of the case irked some people loyal to Siraj.

"Nusrat irked all those who control the madrasa and enjoy its financial benefit. She also upset those who used to abuse madrasa girls," said the PBI chief.

PBI chief Banaj said even though just a Fazil student, Nuruddin was one of the two who controlled the madrasa. After the incident, he along with suspect Shahadat planned to cross the border and flee but the police were able to arrest them following a tip off.

Shahadat was annoyed with Nusrat as he had turned down his advances.

She said ward councillor Maksud on March 28 took part in the planning of the murder but went to Feni during the incident in his attempt to have an alibi.

Madrasa teacher Hafez Abdul Kader was loyal to principal Siraj. He was guarding the madrasa gate on the fateful day. When Nusrat's brother Noman wanted to get inside with her that day, he was not allowed.

Noman requested Kader, who he had considered a friend, to enquire about his sister. The PBI chief said Kader a few minutes later told Noman that his sister was on fire.

Moments before the incident, English teacher Afsar Uddin had called Noman over phone and threatened him with consequences if he did not withdraw the sexual harassment case, DIG Banaj said.

He said six suspects gave details of Sonagazi AL president Ruhul Amin's role in the incident. They said Ruhul had assured that the police and the administration would be "managed". On March 28, Ruhul had asked all to intimidate Nusrat into withdrawing the case.

Nusrat's family alleged that after the incident, local police tried to make it look like a case of suicide. Without consulting the family, police tried to frame the case to save the culprits.

A committee formed by the Police

Headquarters to probe the murder found four policemen, including suspended Feni superintendent of police SM Jahangir Alam Sarkar and suspended officer-in-charge of Sonagazi Police Station Moazzem Hossain, guilty of negligence in duty.

Sub-inspectors Abu Yousuf and Iqbal Ahmed of Sonagazi Police Station have also been suspended. Ex-SP Jahangir had written to Police Headquarters that Nusrat's family was not cooperating with police.

A tribunal in Dhaka issued an arrest warrant against former OC Moazzem for taping a statement of Nusrat that ended up on social media. The PBI has submitted a report against the OC.

The police probe report also blamed the governing committee of Sonagazi Senior Fazil Madrasa for not taking any action against Principal Siraj despite allegations of him sexually assaulting students.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday said the nation demands exemplary punishment of the people involved in Nusrat's murder.

"I hope the trial proceedings against the accused starts soon," Mahbubey said.



Rivers contaminated

ANTIBIOTICS AND THE RISK OF SUPERBUGS

Rivers tainted
New study finds one or more common antibiotics in 65% of river sites tested

Examples

- Trimethoprim
For urinary tract infections
Most prevalent in rivers -- found in 307 of 711 sites
- Cipro oxacin
For intestinal and urinary tract infections
Surpassed safety levels in 51 places
- Metronidazole
Used for skin and mouth infections
Found at 300 times greater than 'safe' level in one site in Bangladesh

SOURCE: WHO/Smithsonian Institute/malaria.wellcome.ac.uk/nih/Nature/Lancet/ClinicalInfectiousDiseases/amr-review.org

Evolution of drug-resistance

- ▶ Microbials, such as bacteria, reproduce in vast numbers and frequently mutate
- ▶ Antimicrobials inadvertently "select" the mutations that withstand them

Original parasite

Random mutations occur naturally

By chance a mutation may allow a microbe to resist a drug

The successful mutation then multiplies

The process repeats as different drugs are used

Spread of superbugs

Resistance can be transferred through the environment and community

→ Antimicrobial drugs
→ Drug-resistant microbes

Manufacturer → Hospital
Agriculture → Community
Ground water → Soil

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the world is running out of antibiotics that still work, and has called on industry and governments to urgently develop a new generation of drugs.

Discovered in the 1920s, antibiotics have saved tens of millions of lives from pneumonia, tuberculosis, meningitis and a host of deadly bacteria.

Overuse and misuse of the drugs are thought to be the main causes of antimicrobial resistance.

THAMES TO TIGRIS
But the growing presence of antibiotics in the environment may be a key factor too, the new research suggests.

Boxall and his team looked for 14 common antibiotics across six continents.

Safety limits were most frequently

exceeded in Asia and Africa, but samples from Europe and the Americas showed that the problem is global in scope.

The countries with the highest levels of antibiotic river pollution were Bangladesh, Kenya, Ghana, Pakistan and Nigeria.

Within Europe, one site in Austria had the biggest concentrations anywhere on the continent.

Frozen water samples were collected from the Danube, Mekong, Seine, Thames, Tigris, Chao Phraya and dozens of other rivers.

"Until now, the majority of environmental monitoring work for antibiotics has been done in Europe, North America and China," said co-author John Wilkinson, also from the University of York, where the samples were examined.

"Our study helps fill this knowledge

gap with data from countries that had never been monitored before."

River systems around world are coursing with over-the-counter and prescription drugs of all kinds, according to another study from last year.

On current trends, it estimated, the amount of pharmaceutical effluence leaching into waterways could increase by two-thirds before mid-century.

A large number of drugs found in the environment -- analgesics, antibiotics, anti-platelet agents, hormones, psychiatric drugs, anti-histamines -- have been detected in nature at levels dangerous for wildlife.

Endocrine disruptors, for examples, have notoriously induced sex changes in fish and amphibians.

The two-day annual meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry ended yesterday.

Amnesty for probe into Pakistan activist killings

AFF, Islamabad

Amnesty International has called for an investigation into the killing of three activists during a deadly clash between Pakistani troops and protesters in a restive tribal region near the Afghan border.

The activists were part of a demonstration organised on Sunday by the Pashtun Protection Movement

(PTM), which has rattled the military since it burst onto the scene early last year with a call to end alleged abuses by security forces against ethnic Pashtuns.

Two members of parliament were leading the protest when a confrontation broke out at a security checkpoint at Boya, in the North Waziristan region.

"The Pakistan government must immediately order an independent and effective investigation," said Rabia Mehmood, South Asia Researcher at Amnesty, in a statement on Monday.

"If the reports are correct that the army killed protestors by unlawfully using live ammunition, this would be a very serious violation of international law."