

# 'Drug dealer' killed in a 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An alleged drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion in Khulna's Dumuria upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Bikash Kumar Dey, 38.

Samir Sarkar, superintendent of police and assistant director of Rab-6, told The Daily Star that at least 13 drug, extortion, rape and murder related cases were filed against Bikash.

After a tip-off about drug peddlers gathered at Dhanibunia village, a team of Rab conducted a drive there around 12:30am, he said.

Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the criminals opened fire, forcing Rab officials to retaliate, he said, adding that at one stage, the criminals managed to flee the scene, leaving behind Bikash with bullet wounds.

He was taken to Dumuria Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead. Three Rab members were also injured during the incident, he added.

Rab claims to have recovered a foreign pistol, one shooter gun, one magazine of bullets, three bullets, 55 bottles of phensidyl and 207 yaba pills from the spot.

A case is being filed at Dumuria Police Station in connection to the incident.

# Four of a Buddhist

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Other neighbours of what she saw. The neighbours rushed to the spot and informed the police, Dipali told The Daily Star.

Police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies from two rooms, said Nihad Adnan Taiyan, additional superintendent of police (Ukhia circle).

Speaking to The Daily Star, Loken's sister Benu said she last spoke to Mila over phone at around 10:00pm on Wednesday, right before Mila and her family were going to sleep.

"Loken is on his way to Bangladesh from Qatar already," she said.

Police are suspecting that the criminals entered the house through the door on the roof and then slaughtered the four.

Speaking to journalists, ABM Masud Hossain, superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar, said it might be a planned killing. Police are trying to find further evidence to trace the killers.

The bodies were sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy, said the police officer.

Several senior officials of the district administration, police and Buddhist community leaders visited the spot.

Following the incident, the villagers were faced with fear and shock.

Several hundred people, who thronged the area to see the bodies, demanded immediate punishment of killers.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Ratnapalong Union Parishad Chairman Khairul Alam Chowdhury said the murder may have taken place following a family feud over land and property.

# 20 killed

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The US Geological Survey said the quake struck about 37 kilometres (23 miles) northeast of Ambon in Maluku province at a depth of 29 kilometres.

The area was hit by at least two dozen aftershocks including one that measured 5.6 magnitude, Triyono said.

An AFP reporter in Ambon described scenes of panic as people fled their houses when the quake struck.

Architect Suryanto Soekarno said a construction site where he and his employees were working was rocked by the tremor.

"It was a really hard shock," he told AFP.

"Filing cabinets fell over and my employees ran away to save themselves. Some were injured but thank God only with minor wounds."

**'NO NEED TO PANIC'**

Initial reports said the quake struck offshore, but later analysis found it hit onshore, raising the potential for damage, according to Indonesia's national disaster mitigation agency.

Local BMKG head Oral Sem Wilar called for calm.

"People were panicking and started to evacuate in some places, but we are trying to tell them there's no need to panic because there's no tsunami threat," he told AFP.

The Southeast Asian archipelago is one of the most disaster-prone nations on Earth. It experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

In August, five people died and several were injured after a powerful undersea earthquake rocked Indonesia's heavily populated Java island.

Last year, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island left more than 4,300 people dead or missing.

The force of the impact saw entire neighbourhoods levelled by liquefaction -- a process where the ground starts behaving like a liquid and swallows up the earth like quicksand.

Nearly 60,000 people are still living in makeshift accommodation nearly a year after the double disaster, the Red Cross said this week.

# Lokman Lokman has Tk 41cr stashed abroad

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"We arrested Lokman mainly for his links to a casino," the CO said.

Since Rab started an "anti-gambling operation" on September 18, Lokman had been hiding in different places, including in Narayananj.

Lt Col Ashique Billah said Lokman rented out a portion of the club to Mominul Haque Shaheed to run a casino for Tk 70,000 a day.

The casino has been there for nearly two years, he added.

Shaheed, who is in Singapore now, has been running casinos in four sporting clubs. He is a councillor of Dhaka South City Corporation and the general secretary of Bangladesh Hokey Federation.

Lokman rented out the room in line with a resolution of the club's board, the CO said.

"We are verifying if other directors are involved."

Rab filed a case against Lokman under the Narcotics Control Act with Tejgaon Police Station yesterday.

Rab may file a case under the

Money Laundering Act against him, he said.

**FU WANG RAID**

Police found nothing illegal at the Fu Wang Club two days ago. But during a raid early yesterday Rab found liquor beyond the permissible limit of Fu Wang's trade licence. A large number of foreign cigarettes was also seized, Rab said.

Rab arrested three salespersons and sealed the club.

Lt Col Sarwar-Bin-Quasem, director of Rab's legal and media wing, said nearly three percent of the liquor bottles at the club were stored illegally and the club could not produce the legal papers for all the bottles.

Around 2,000 bottles of spirit, 10,000 cans of Hunter beer and Tk 7 lakh were seized.

**DMP COMMISSIONER**

The intelligence unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police has been asked to identify the policemen who benefited from the casinos, DMP Commissioner Shafulq Islam said.

"I do not think we will be able to

file cases. But if we find any proof [of involvement] of any policeman, we will take departmental action," the DMP chief told a meeting of the Crime Reporters' Association Bangladesh.

But he said it was very difficult to make a thorough investigation since those who gave money and those who took it would not admit anything as both were beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, the DMP suspended Assistant Sub-inspector Golam Hossain Mithu and constable Dipankar Chakma for their alleged involvement in helping 15 Nepalis, who worked at the club, flee from their Segunbagichha apartments after Rab launched a raid at Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club on September 18.

Another person seen in a CCTV footage with Mithu and Dipankar is an officer of an intelligence agency.

"Investigation is going on. Action will be taken if they [the policemen] are found guilty," the DMP commissioner said.

A CCTV footage of the building shows that 15 Nepalis fled after the

two policemen and the intelligence agency official came out of their flats.

On Wednesday, DMP "stand released" an Inspector and an ASI of the Detective Branch over allegations of taking bribe.

**SHAMIM, BODYGUARDS SHOWN ARRESTED**

Golam Kibria Shamim alias GK Shamim and his seven bodyguards were shown arrested yesterday in a money laundering case filed with Gulshan Police Station on Saturday.

The bodyguards are: Delwar Hossain, Murad Hossain, Zahidul Islam, Shahidul Islam, Kamal Hossain, Shamsad Hossain and Aminul Islam.

The charges of investigation of two other cases have been transferred to Rab from the DB. One of the cases was for possessing firearms and the other for possessing drugs.

Besides, Rab will investigate the two cases filed against Dhaka south unit Jubo League Organising Secretary Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan under the Arms Act and Narcotics Control Act.

# ABT converting

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officials told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the outfit collects funds through different mobile banking services.

Later, they convert their funds to dollars and use it to buy Bitcoins, the officials said, adding that a five-member "cell" of ABT was controlling the whole process.

Cryptocurrency is a type of money that is completely virtual. One can use it like an online version of cash to buy products and services, though some countries have banned it altogether.

The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit claimed to have got the information after arresting two members of the cell -- Awar Newaz, 38, and Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury, 18 -- on Wednesday.

A CTTC team arrested the two with Islamist books and a mobile phone in the capital's Jatrabari area. They had gone there to attend a secret meeting of ABT members, said Ahamedul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of CTTC.

A case was filed with Jatrabari Police Station in connection with the incident.

According to the First Information Report of the case, Rabbi got involved in militancy activities two years ago after getting an invitation from Joyal alians Jony, 18, a student of a polytechnic college in Sylhet.

Jony also provided him some literature of ABT's spiritual leader Jashimuddin Rahmani, who is now in jail.

When Rabbi agreed to work for the ABT, Jony asked him to open a Telegram account and added him to a telegram channel titled "Fee Sabillillah in Sam".

The channel is maintained by an account named Saad, reads the FIR.

The cell members used to send different "videos of Muslims being persecuted" in Syria and Myanmar to ABT supporters and asked them to donate money for running so-called jihadi activities, said ADC Ahamedul.

The cell members also sent some instructions to its supporters on how to send money to them, he said.

According to the instructions, a member has to donate money from roadside mobile banking service agents who does not have permanent shops.

"We have so far been able to identify 50 supporters who have donated around Tk 4 lakh in the last one year," said ADC Ahamedul.

"We are now trying to collect details of Saad and other members of the outfit," he added.

# Chairman the first student!

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For the lecturer post, the circular said applicants must have a Master's degree.

The criterion was, however, relaxed only for candidates for the lecturer post of Electrical and Engineering department. The university allowed candidates having BSc (engineering) to apply for the post.

At that time, Akkas who had obtained Bachelor's degree in CSE from Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet) in 2011, was doing his Master's at Buet.

Still he got the job, apparently in violation of the university rules.

Contacted, Akkas insisted that a candidate having a BSc (engineering) could apply for the post at the CSE department.

And the university authorities recruited him as a lecturer on February 2, 2016.

"I did extremely well in my written and viva voce exams. The recruitment committee and our VC sir were happy with me and gave me the appointment letter," Akkas told The Daily Star.

Interestingly, within four months of his joining, Akkas was promoted to the post of assistant professor. And another three months later, he was appointed the chairman of the CSE department.

"Our vice-chancellor sir found me the right candidate for the post," said Akkas.

Despite repeated attempts, the VC, Prof Khondoker Md Nasiruddin, could not be contacted for comments.

Since September 19, several thousand students have been demonstrating for the VC's removal,

bringing allegations against him of sexual harassment, nepotism in recruiting teachers and other employees, and corruption in development projects, including the construction of the Shaheed Minar and Bangabandhu's mural on the campus.

In April, Akkas was barred from taking part in academic and administrative activities at the university for life. The order came following a sexual scandal.

**THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME**

The BSMRSTU opened the master's programme at the CSE department in early 2017.

"He [Akkas] was the first student of the programme. It was opened only for him," said one of his colleagues, preferring to be unnamed.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of Akkas' admission form, curriculum vitae and transcript of academic records of his master's programme.

His admission form shows that he applied for the master's programme for the semester starting in April 2017.

At the bottom of the back page of the form, there is a handwritten note that reads the university accepted 60 percent credits (that he has completed in Buet).

Right beneath it is the signature of department chairman Akkas, approving his enrolment in the Master's course.

"You see the document shows he himself approved the enrolment," said a teacher of the CSE department.

**HE SET HIS COURSE OUTLINE**

To run the master's programme, BSMRSTU Registrar Prof Md Nuruddin

Ahmed issued an office order on April 2, 2017.

The order reads the chairman of the department, as per department's syllabus, will fix course outline and the number of lectures required for the course. The time for each lecture was fixed at one hour and remuneration for each lecture Tk 1,000.

In the order, the registrar appointed Mohammad Nuruzzaman Bhuiyan, assistant professor and director of the Institute of Information Technology of Noakhali Science and Technology University, as a part-time teacher for the master's programme.

Nuruzzaman was supposed to take classes on three courses -- Advanced Computer Communication and Networks, Distributed Computing Systems and Wireless Sensor Networks -- and supervise Akkas' thesis.

Contacted, Nuruzzaman said he took a total of four classes in the four-month-long semester.

Registrar Prof Nuruddin said the VC asked him to issue the order.

"It's not our duty to check who is the chairman and who is the examinee," he told The Daily Star.

The move left the teachers of the department surprised.

"Isn't it funny? Akkas was the chairman and he dictated what he would study. Nowhere in the world, except this department, you'll find such things," said a teacher of the CSE department.

In the semester final examination, three teachers prepared questions and evaluated Akkas's answer sheets, documents show.

Assistant Professor Nuruzzaman was one of them. The other two were

part-time lecturers -- Moushumi Bala and Husnul Azra -- who are administratively junior to Akkas.

Akkas approved a six-member exam committee for his final test for master's programme on May 4, 2017. Husnul was made chairman of the committee.

On May 14, 2017, the BSMRSTU VC approved the exam committee.

Exam Controller Golam Haider said he carried out his duties as per directives from the CSE department.

Husnul, who was chairman of the exam committee, said she followed Akkas' order.

"I was a part-time teacher at that time. I was not aware of university regulations. Since he was the department chairman, he must have known regulations better than me," she added.

**MISMATCHING INFO**

According to Akkas' master's transcript, he was conferred the degree in July 2017.

According to it, he obtained GPA-3.5 out of 4 in the first two semesters at Buet in 2012. In the third semester in 2013, he got GPA-4 out of 4.

And he secured 4 in all three courses and thesis at BSMRSTU's exam in 2017.

But the provisional grade sheet of BUET shows something different.

It says Akkas got GPA-3 in his first semester, GPA-3.25 in second semester, GPA-4 in third semester and GPA-2.5 in fourth semester.

Asked, Akkas said he sat for exams following rules.

"I'm a victim of conspiracy," he said, without elaborating on the matter.

# Move is a threat to president, Democrats

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A high-profile congressional debate on the president's alleged abuses of power could influence middle-of-the-road voters who supported Trump in 2016 -- voters he can ill afford to lose, given that his margin of victory was so slight.

"If I were the president, I would be worried about this," Hudak said.

"There's a real risk here that this damages him with key constituencies."

**RISKS FOR DEMOCRATS TOO?**

Democrats are by no means in the clear. Their liberal base has been clamouring for impeachment, but it could blow up in their faces, experts say.

"There's the chance that Democrats will muff their opportunity to get articles of impeachment passed, demobilising the Democratic base,"

said Larry Sabato, head of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

Even if Trump is impeached in the House, a failure to convict by the Senate will appear to some as vindication for Trump and a sign that disgruntled Democrats were engaging in political theatre.

Christopher Arterton, professor emeritus of political management at George Washington University, said that without a smoking gun in the transcript of Trump's call with Ukraine's president, or in the whistleblower complaint at the heart of new abuse-of-power allegations, those in the political centre "are likely to see this as an effort by Democrats to overturn the 2016 election."

There is no "off ramp" for Democrats now, Arterton added. "If they don't hold an impeachment vote, or they hold one and can't pass it, Trump will claim total exoneration."

Democrats also face a tight timeline. Should they not proceed quickly, the issue will hang over the entire presidential campaign.

**WHAT WOULD IMPEACHMENT MEAN FOR WASHINGTON?**

The short answer is, even more gridlock. Republicans and Democrats already have been at loggerheads over key issues like immigration, infrastructure and guns.

Arterton said he foresees "no real progress on festering problems" from now through the election.

Not only would a drawn out

impeachment fight paralyze Washington, it would dominate much of the debate in the presidential campaign.

Democrats would be "consumed by impeachment and not able to talk about their agenda," Arterton said.

A Senate trial would bring all other legislative action to a halt, potentially for months. Bill Clinton's 1999 Senate trial after impeachment lasted more than five weeks.

The impeachment scenario "will dominate the news for the rest of this year," predicts Wolfensberger.

But in 2020 it has the potential to be relegated to a "diversionary" partisan issue, Wolfensberger said, particularly if the Senate declines to convict Trump.

# Khashoggi was killed

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"It happened under my watch. I get all the responsibility, because it happened under my watch," he told PBS' Martin Smith, according to a preview of the documentary, The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, set to air on October 1, ahead of the one-year anniversary of Khashoggi's death.

After initial denials, the official Saudi narrative blamed the murder on rogue operatives. The public prosecutor said the then-deputy intelligence chief ordered the repatriation of Khashoggi, a royal insider who became an outspoken critic, but the lead negotiator ordered him killed after discussions for his return failed.

Saud al-Qahtani, a former top royal adviser whom Reuters reported gave orders over Skype to the killers, briefed the hit team on Khashoggi's activities before the operation, the prosecutor said.

Asked how the killing could happen without him knowing about it, Smith quotes Prince Mohammed as saying: "We have 20 million people. We have three million government employees."

Smith asked whether the killers could have taken private government jets, to which the crown prince responded: "I have officials, ministers to follow things, and they're responsible. They have the authority to do that."

Smith describes the December exchange, which apparently took place off-camera, in the preview of the documentary.

A senior US administration official told Reuters in June the Trump administration was pressing Riyadh for "tangible progress" towards holding to account those behind the killing.

Eleven Saudi suspects have been put on trial in secretive proceedings but only a few hearings have been held. A UN report has called for Prince Mohammed and other senior Saudi officials to be investigated.

Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist, was last seen at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, where he was to receive papers he needed for his upcoming marriage. His body was reportedly dismembered and removed from the building, and his remains have not been found.

**SERIES OF SETBACKS**

According to Mahjoob Zweiri, the director of Qatar University's Gulf Studies Centre in Doha, Prince Mohammed's admission represents the "minimum responsibility".

"He said this assuming that this will be received positively [by the international community], that he's a leader who is accepting responsibility, but one that shouldn't be criminalised based on that," Zweiri told Al Jazeera.

"I call it a moral responsibility rather than a criminal responsibility."

Prince Mohammed's statements arrive at a time where Saudi Arabia is suffering a series of setbacks, Zweiri said.

This ranges from the targeting of their oil facilities, to the cooling of US-Saudi relations, and to shouldering

the Yemen conflict after the United Arab Emirates scaled down their role in the Saudi coalition against the Houthi rebel group in Yemen.

"When you put these factors together, they compose a sort of political and media pressure on Saudi Arabia," Zweiri said. "In other words, it would be very difficult for Mohammed bin Salman to wash his hands and say 'I have nothing to do with this.'"

**'DO NOT DO IT, YOU WILL SUFFOCATE ME'**

Earlier this month, a Turkish newspaper released transcripts of audio recordings of Khashoggi's final moments.

The recordings were obtained by Turkey's national intelligence and detailed the conversation between the Saudi journalist and members of the 15-man hit squad moments before his assassination.

In the 10 minutes before he was killed, Maher Abdulaziz Mutreb, a senior Saudi intelligence officer and the bodyguard of Prince Mohammed, asked Khashoggi to "leave a message" for his son telling him not to worry if he could not reach the journalist.

When Khashoggi refused, Mutreb said: "Write it, Mister Jamal. Hurry up. Help us so we can help you, because in the end we will take you back to Saudi Arabia and if you don't help us you know what will happen eventually."

The operatives then drugged the Saudi journalist. His last words before losing consciousness were: "I have asthma. Do not do it, you will

suffocate me."

The sound of an autopsy saw dismembering the 59-year-old's body can be heard at 1:39pm local time. The procedure lasted 30 minutes.

**Lanka's tallest**

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Raja is an unofficial national treasure because he is one of the few tuskers chosen to carry a casket of Buddha relics in an annual pageant at the most sacred Buddhist shrine on the island, the Temple of the Tooth.

Raja walks 90 kilometres (55 miles) to the hill resort of Kandy for the event, called the Esala pageant. He walks 25 to 30 kilometres a day, travelling mostly at night when it is cooler.

The pageant in August involves nearly 100 elephants and many more traditional dancers, fire-eaters and drummers, and is a key tourist attraction.

However animal rights campaigners say captive elephants are often maltreated.

On Tuesday an emaciated 70-year-old elephant called Tikiri died, weeks after attending the Esala festival.

The animal was withdrawn from the finale of the Temple of the Tooth pageant last month after a social media firestorm erupted against parading the feeble animal.

Many rich Sri Lankans keep elephants as pets, but there have been numerous complaints of ill-treatment and cruelty.

# Woman raped

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over the criminals to police, Majharul Islam, officer-in-charge of Damkura Police Station, said.

The victim, daughter of a late freedom fighter, was immediately taken to a safe home and later sent to One-Stop Crisis Centre at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, the police official added.

Locals said Asadul and his cohorts were illegal cattle traders. They used to bring cattle from India with Tk 12,000 per pair. They stayed at a house in the victim's neighbourhood before committing the crime.

Meanwhile, a magistrate court in the district sent the accused to jail as the victim identified them before it yesterday evening.

Police sought a seven-day remand for each of the accused but the court fixed September 29 for further hearing of the case.

# RTI failed

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government officials have to be more cooperative for the law's success.

In terms of standards, Bangladesh's law is 26th among 124 across the globe.

According to a TIB concept paper shared with the media, 99,238 applications were filed under the act until 2018.

"This [number] is nominal in terms of Bangladesh's population, lack of good governance and massive corruption," it said.

Journalist and media analyst Afsan Chowdhury said he conducted a survey on 100 individuals from different tiers of the society and found that 89 of them had experienced corruption in their daily lives.

However, 75 of them did not know about the RTI. Twenty of them heard about the law and had a "clear concept" about it, he said.

Sixty-five respondents said information can reduce corruption, he added while presenting the survey outcomes.

The RTI can give people better knowledge of governance and sense of participation, said Afsan.

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said the RTI is the only law whose implementation depends on the people.

He said the RTI should also be applied to get information from political parties. He said corruption is not indulged in "without political parties' patronage".

Dnet Executive Council Member Ananya Raihan said RTI's section-2 says the law will have a priority over all other laws in case of dissemination of information.

The government has made some progresses in disclosing information willingly in recent years because the law's section-6 makes it responsible for doing so, he said.