

Minor girl killed, dumped in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday recovered the body of a six-year-old girl in Pabna's Sujanagar upazila who went missing three days ago.

The victim -- Tania Akter, 6, of the upazila's Borkhapur village -- went missing from her home on Thursday, said Bodruddoza, officer-in-charge of Sujanagar Police Station.

Police primarily suspected that the girl was strangled to death. Later, the murderer tied her body with bricks and drowned it in a local pond, he added.

Yesterday, locals noticed the body floating in the pond. On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body, he further said.

The body was sent to Pabna Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The victim's father filed a case with the police station accusing one named and some unnamed people.

Later in the day, police arrested the lone named accused Arzu, 40, who is a neighbour of the victim.

According to the victim's family members, Tania's father and the accused had a long standing enmity and the murder might have taken place over that.

Regulator halts LR Global's investment in bdnews24.com

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The stock market regulator yesterday put a pause on LR Global Bangladesh's investment of Tk 50 crore in local online newspaper bdnews24.com and instructed the asset management firm to hand in all documents within 24 hours to verify if the transaction is compliant with securities rules.

As per securities rules, an asset manager can invest in listed securities, initial public offerings (IPO), pre-IPO placement shares and securities that are transferrable in the money market.

But bdnews24.com is a non-listed company.

"So, we want to check whether the investment follows all rules," said a top official of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) on condition of anonymity.

In 2015, LR Global Bangladesh, an asset management firm, was fined Tk 50 lakh for its investment in four non-listed private companies: Guardian Healthcare, Thyrocare Bangladesh, Property Investors and Tribeca Management.

Contacted, Reaz Islam, managing director and chief executive officer of LR Global Bangladesh, said: "We follow all the existing rules."

Toufique Imrose Khalidi, editor-in-chief of bdnews24.com, said: "We followed all rules and regulations and closed the transaction after a long process. LR Global has also consulted with lawyers."

Bus conductor sent to jail for attempted rape of minor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Habiganj court yesterday sent a bus conductor to jail on charges of attempting to rape a third-grader girl in a running bus in the district's Madhabpur upazila.

Manik Mollah, of Noakhali's Sonaimuri upazila, is the conductor of Ena Paribahan.

KM Amiruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Madhabpur Police Station, said the girl, along with her parents, was going to Dhaka in the bus from Baniachong upazila on Saturday afternoon.

Manik took the girl, 10, to the back seat and tried to rape her at Itakhola of Madhabpur.

Hearing her screams, her parents and other passengers rescued her and caught Manik.

Later, he was handed over to police.

The girl's father said he lives in Dhaka and works as a gardener there. His daughter is a school student in Baniachong.

The OC said the father filed a case against Manik with Madhabpur Police Station on Saturday night.

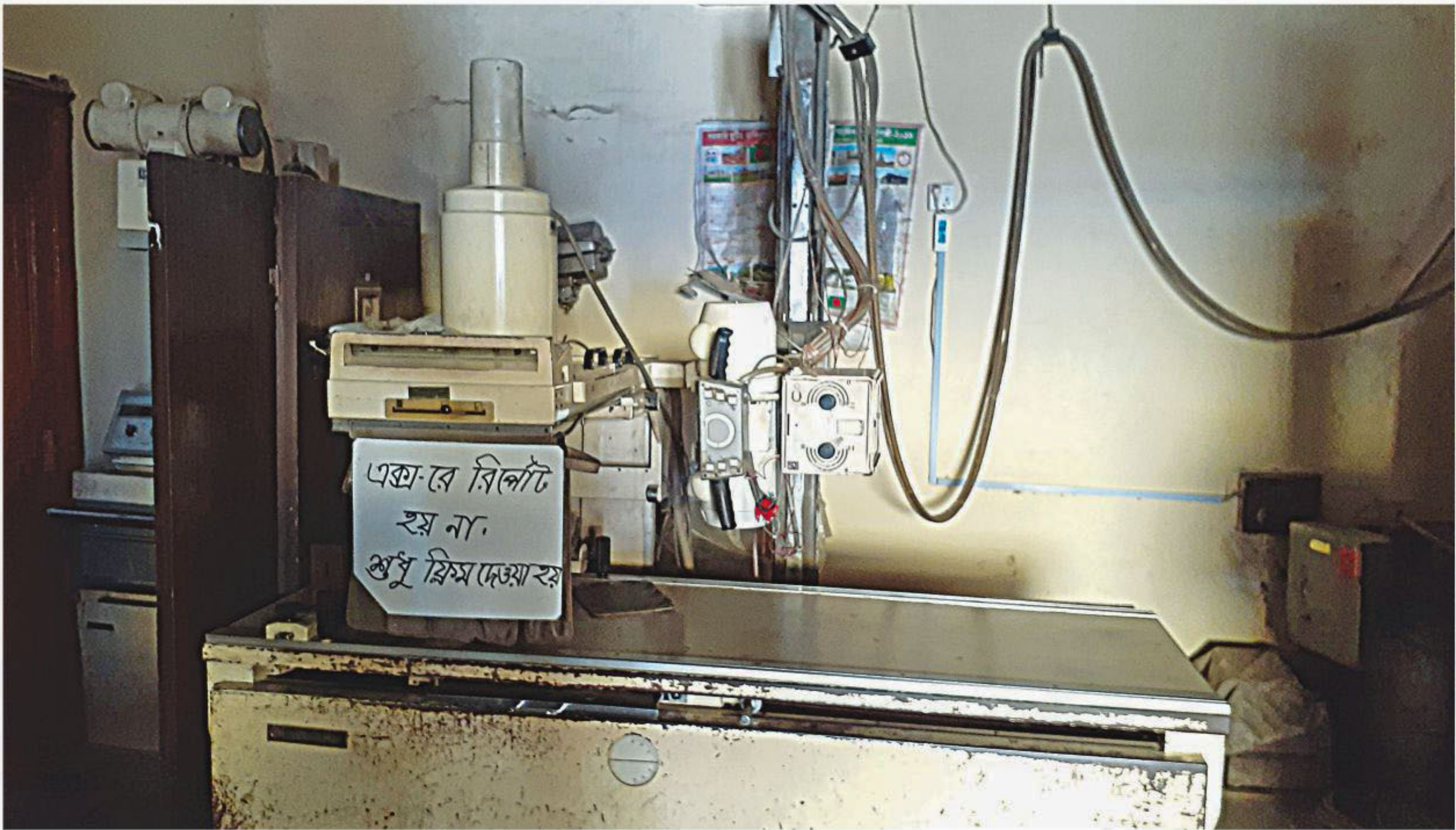
The accused was produced before a court that sent him to jail yesterday.

Scotland releases man mistaken for French murder suspect

AFP, Glasgow

Scotland's police on Saturday released a man after he was mistaken for a French fugitive wanted for killing his wife and four children eight years ago.

French judicial sources had initially believed that they had finally caught up with Xavier Dupont de Ligonnes, who was subject to an international arrest warrant for the 2011 killings which transixed France.



A sign in front of the lone x-ray machine at Faridpur General Hospital reads "X-ray report is not given; only the film is given." The machine has remained inoperative for three months due to the lack of a radiologists, resulting in patients having to pay almost three times as much to get the examination done at private diagnostic centres. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

37pc teachers rely on 'guidebooks'

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Teachers in Bangladesh in the Light of SDG 4, shows that less than half the teachers of religion, accounting, Bangla, Bangladesh and global studies, biology, ICT, higher mathematics, geography, and history have subject-specific training.

"Many of these teachers resort to using [unauthorised] guidebooks to overcome their shortcomings," Rasheda said.

The researchers interviewed 3,000 teachers from 600 government and private secondary educational institutions across the country.

"GUIDEBOOKS"

English and mathematics teachers use the so-called guidebooks sold in the market to teach students of every grade in the secondary level. Physics, chemistry and higher mathematics teachers use such books in grade IX and X classrooms, the survey found.

In all grades of the secondary institutes, 39 percent of English teachers, 33 mathematics teachers, 23 percent science teachers, 21.5 percent Bangla teachers, and 17.1 percent Bangladesh and global studies teachers use such books.

The rampant use of "guidebooks", instead of the government provided textbooks, and private tutoring are major impediments to improving the quality of education, the report observes.

Some of the "guidebooks" contain questions that are likely to appear in exams. The answers are also given there. As a result, the students or teachers do not need to solve the problems. All they have to do is memorise.

The use of guidebooks undermines the textbooks and the teachers' involvement in private tutoring affects



their classroom teaching, the report says.

"As these teachers fail to properly teach students, the latter become dependent on guidebooks and look for private tutors," said Rasheda.

PRIVATE TUITION

Although it is likely that some of the teachers may have not revealed the truth, 22.4 percent acknowledge that

they are involved in private tutoring.

About 50 percent of the maths teachers are involved in private tutoring. They are followed by English teachers, 37.5 percent of whom are involved in private tutoring.

The teachers revealed that they do this to earn something that can compensate for their meagre pay, the report mentions.

Teachers, mostly from the private educational institutions, reported that their salary and benefits were not enough to run their families.

"Majority of the science teachers, including myself, are involved in private tutoring. I cannot maintain my family with the salary I draw from my school... I have to engage in private tutoring," a chemistry teacher of a school in Sylhet was quoted by the report as saying.

SECOND JOB

As a second job, 23.3 percent of the teachers are into farming, 19.5 percent into household management, 11.3 percent into private tutoring, 4.4 percent into small and medium businesses, 2.8 percent into aquaculture and 5.7 percent into other occupations.

The average annual income of a teacher is Tk 2,59,601. It is Tk 5,37,804 for government teachers, Tk 2,86,034 for MPO enlisted teachers and 1,41,035 for non-MPO teachers, one of the researchers, Samir Ranjan

Nath told this newspaper.

Only 29 percent of the teachers were satisfied with their salary.

The teachers said they taught more than three subjects. On an average, they teach for 16 hours and 10 minutes a week.

Question papers for exams are prepared through different means. Only 43.7 percent of the teachers said they themselves prepare the question papers.

The report says, 36.8 percent bought the question papers from different teachers' associations, 14.4 percent from market, and 10.3 percent took the help of their colleagues.

There are 29,330 secondary level educational institutions with 358,907 teachers against 1,21,97,554 students across the country, said the report.

THE GOVERNMENT SAYS

Speaking at the report launching ceremony, Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury said the report was an objective assessment of secondary education.

He said the government would improve the quality of education.

He added that the guidebook sellers were powerful businessmen who compel teachers to recommend the guidebooks to students. The teachers receive a cut from the sales.

"We need cooperation from all," he said.

Whose welfare is it anyway?

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and control the residence and discipline of the students. This body is virtually the custodian of all the residential students at the university.

Its role came to the fore after Abrar Fahad, a second-year student, was beaten to death by some Chhatra League leaders at the Sher-e-Bangla Hall of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology last week.

Many believe the murder stemmed from the culture of impunity prevailing at Buet as in other universities, and the situation would not have become this bad if steps were taken against rule breakers in recent past.

On November 14, 2012, some students vandalised room No 223, 302, 324, 330 and 410 of Nazrul Islam Hall and set fire to the furniture. The hall provost identified six involved in the incident and prepared a report mentioning their names but the DSW took no action.

The CSE department launched a web page called uReporter in 2016 for recording complaints of students. As of October 9, 166 incidents were reported in this platform.

In July, 103 of the complaints were printed and submitted to the university authorities but no visible action was taken, according to a Buet teacher.

A student wrote in this page that Buet teachers or the DSW don't have the courage to say anything to the political leaders. If DSW was active and took action regarding the complaints, the situation would have been different.

"Abrar killing is an incident which got exposed," a student told The Daily Star.

"But there are hundreds of incidents of harassment. The DSW knew all those. But as the incumbent DSW director is chosen by the Chhatra League leaders, he never takes any action against them. Rather, he was seen wishing the Buet Chhatra League's general secretary happy birthday on Facebook," he said, wishing anonymity.

Another student said hundreds of former Buet students are staying in the halls illegally and everybody knows it. But the Buet administration did nothing to evict them from halls in the last few years.

Khondoker Jamius Sani, president of Buet BCL, completed his graduation in 2018 but he was staying in Ahsanullah Hall till Saturday. There

are around 30 others like him in that dormitory.

"I left the room Saturday. I was preparing to leave the hall for the last few days," he told The Daily Star.

He also said, "Yes, there are some students staying in the hall even after their academic tenure expired but they are very few in number."

Mohammad Muntasir, a student of electrical and electronic engineering (EEE) department, wrote in Facebook page Buetian that Chhatra league men beat up a student of 17th batch last year but nothing happened."

He mentioned a number of incidents of harassment by Chhatra League men, saying no action was taken against anyone.

Last year, Chhatra League members beat up a student and handed him over to police for supporting the movement of road safety. The student, Daiyan Nafis Prodhan, was branded a Shibir activist.

A POLITICAL CHOICE

The current director of DSW, Prof Mizanur Rahman, took over three months ago and the Buet Chhatra League leaders had a major role in his selection, said teachers and students.

"There was a time when senior teachers were made the director of DSW. But now it has become a political choice. So how come will he ensure the welfare of general students?" asked a senior teacher of Buet, wishing not to be named.

Many students demonstrating for justice for Abrar said from the first day of the protest, they have been demanding resignation of Mizanur because "he is the main patron of BCL".

Students and teachers alleged that whenever they raised any issue with the DSW, Mizanur asked them to "manage" the situation.

But Mizanur said, "If anyone can say in front of me that I told of managing the situation. I will resign at that very moment."

He declined to admit his failure to rein in Chhatra League, saying he took charge only three months back. "It is not my failure. It may be institutional failure."

Asked whether he would resign, he said, "I wanted to resign but students said, 'Why should you resign sir? We do not have any complaint against you. You should not resign.'"

Agitating students, however, say Mizanur is lying and they want him to step down.

The DSW chief also said, "At a

university teachers' association meeting, I said sometimes I could not carry out my duty the way I wanted because my power is very limited. I did not get proper cooperation from the VC.

"I also said that as we are passing through critical times, let's overcome the situation first. After this, if the VC remains in the post, I will resign."

Mizanur, however, did not raise the issue of non-cooperation before this, while Vice Chancellor Prof Saiful Islam trashed this allegation yesterday.

According to teachers and students, Mizanur is biased towards Chhatra League as he was involved with the organisation during his student life.

As a Chhatra League candidate, he contested hall council elections in 1991 and 1992 when he was a resident student of Nazrul Islam Hall but he could not win. In 1996, he became the general secretary of Shahid Smriti Hall Sangsad.

He is now the adviser to Bangabandhu Parishad's Buet chapter.

"In student life, anyone can believe in any ideology but after I took charge of DSW, no one can say that I favoured Chhatra League. If anyone can mention one such occasion, I will resign immediately," he said.

SHIFTING BLAME

Buet sources say things started to change after Delwar Hossain took the charge of DSW in 2012. Since then, BCL started to get a free rein in the university halls and "ragging" took an ugly turn.

But Delwar does not think so.

"It is not 100 percent true but in some cases I may show some preferences to somebody but at the same time I took harsh action," he told The Daily Star.

Delwar, who was the DSW director from 2012 to 2016, said he took the charge at a time of crisis. In the beginning, he was in trouble as there was human chain where he was branded as the patron of Jamaat-Shibir.

"But gradually I engaged with students, teachers and guardians and the situation improved," he said.

He rather blamed his successor Satya Prasad Majumder for not taking any action against the unruly activities. Incumbent director Mizanur too was silent on the activities of rowdy students, he added.

Many students and teachers alleged that Satya Prasad, who took charge in December 2016, was inactive and reluctant to take action against BCL men.

Denying the allegation, Satya Prasad, said, "We regularly visited the halls and monitored the activities of the students. There were some incidents of ragging which lasted for the first two to three weeks after freshmen came to the university."

He claimed that during his term -- December 2016 to May 2019 -- they took action regarding all the incidents.

"Monitoring and vigilance in halls has stopped since the present DSW director assumed office," he said.

Both Delwar and Satya Prasad said Mizanur Rahman cannot shrug off his responsibility as the killing took place during his time.

Dr AKM Masud, president of Buet Teachers' Association, also echoed their view.

Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, president of Buet Alumni, said basically DSW acts as coordinator of the provosts. "The DSW director cannot deny his failure as he is the custodian of the students in halls," he added.

Court frames

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jail, pleaded not guilty after Judge Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal read out the charges.

The six are alleged killing squad leader Moinul Hasan Shamim alias Samir, 24; alleged trainer Abdus Sabur alias Samad, 23; and suspected ABT operatives Khairul Islam alias Fahim, 24, Sheikh Abdullah, 27, Abu Siddiq Sohel, 34, and Mozammel Hossain alias Simon, 25.

The court also issued arrest warrants for fugitives -- Maj Zia and Akram Hossain.

The tribunal fixed November 18 for starting the trial.

Dipan, 43, publisher of Jagriti Prokashani, was stabbed to death at his office in Shahbagh on October 31, 2015.

Later, his wife filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station accusing unknown persons.

Dipan was stabbed twice in the head and once in the neck with a machete, according to the autopsy report.

Just hours before the attack, publisher Ahmedur Rashid Tutul and his friends -- bloggers Ranadipam Basu and Tareque Rahim -- were injured in a machete attack at Tutul's publishing house Shuddhoswar in Lalmatia.

Both Tutul and Dipan were publishers of writer-blogger Avijit Roy, who was stabbed to death by assailants in TSC area of Dhaka University on February 26, 2015.

No link

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freedom of expression," Nahida Sobhan, director general of UN wing at the foreign ministry, told The Daily Star.

The ministry summoned Seppo yesterday, four days after her office issued a statement deploring the murder of Abrar Fahad allegedly for freely expressing his views on a bilateral deal recently signed between Bangladesh and India.

The statement issued on October 9 read that campus violence in Bangladesh over the years had affected and claimed too many lives, with apparent impunity for those bearing the responsibilities.

The statement also said the UN Bangladesh notes steps taken by the authorities to apprehend the alleged perpetrators and encourage independent investigations that should lead to justice, and measures to prevent such incidents further.

"Freedom of speech is a human right, and nobody should be harassed, tortured or killed for exercising it," the statement also read.

In a talk of the Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh the same day, Mia Seppo said as a mother of two, she found such a killing "horrific and nightmarish".

Abrar, a second-year student of Buet's electrical and electronic engineering department, was beaten to death by a group of BCL men at the university's Sher-e-Bangla Hall in the early hours of October 7.

Before that, Abrar was asked if he was involved with Shibir, student wing of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. The last Facebook post of Abrar was critical of the agreements signed between Bangladesh and India on sharing the water of Feni river.

At the meeting with Seppo that lasted for nearly half an hour since 11:00am, Nahida said the government guarantees freedom of expression of the citizens.

The issue of Abrar killing came up during a regular meeting where we have discussed various issues, Nahida said.

A foreign ministry official said the fact that the government was not happy about the UN statement was communicated to the top UN official in Bangladesh.

Also, UN doesn't usually issue such a statement when any student is killed in a developed country, he told The Daily Star.

Mia Seppo couldn't be contacted for comments.

Mujahid told the magistrate that following a Facebook post by Abrar, some students of the 17th batch brought him to room 2011 at Buet's Sher-e-Bangla Hall on October 6 evening, suspecting that he was an Islam Chhatra Shibir activist.

Mehedi Hasan Robin, organising secretary of Buet BCL, was the first to hit Abrar, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering at Buet. Anik Sarkar, information and research secretary of Buet BCL, hit him the most, the police official said quoting Mujahid.

Earlier, three other accused in the murder case had given confessional statements to magistrates. They are Deputy Social Welfare Secretary of Buet BCL Ifi Mosharraf Sakal, Sports Secretary of the BCL unit Meftahul Islam Zion, and Anik.

According to their statements, Anik indiscriminately struck Abrar more than a hundred times with a stump in his knees, legs and arms.

At one stage, Abrar fell on the floor. The BCL men then pulled him up and started beating him again.

After a few hours, Abrar started vomiting. He threw up thrice before becoming motionless.

The grisly murder took place between 7:30pm on October 6 and 2:30am on October 7. The incident touched off a firestorm of protest on university campuses across the country.

Metropolitan Magistrate Nivana Khair Jessi recorded the statement of Mujahid, a third-year student of electrical and electronic engineering and a member of Buet BCL, and then sent him to jail.

Mujahid was arrested along with nine other accused immediately after Abrar's murder. He was placed on a five-day remand.

So far 19 people -- 18 accused and one suspect -- have been arrested in the murder case.

CHARGE SHEET NEXT MONTH

DMP Deputy Commissioner Masudur said they have made significant progress in the murder investigation.

"Four accused have already given confessional statements, admitting their involvement in the murder. They have also divulged information on other accused and suspects," he told The Daily Star last night.

He further said they would complete forensic tests of the mobile phones of the accused and the victim by the first week of next month.

2 REMANDED, 5 SENT TO JAIL

A Dhaka court yesterday placed two accused in the murder case -- Buet students Shamim Billah and Abu Huraira -- on a five-day remand.

The court also sent five other accused to jail on expiry of their five-day remand. They are Buet BCL leaders Mehedi Hasan Russell, Muhtasim Fuad, Ishtiaq Hasan Munna, Moniruzzaman Monir and Muntasir Alam.