

# 3 murders shock

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incident took place between 10:30am and 11:30pm at the victims' rented house on the ground floor of Hazi Shah Alam building in Buchukkya Colony. Investigators said the building's ground floor, which is almost always dark, had six rooms for tenants who are mainly from the lower-income group.

Quoting the victims' neighbours, the AC said the family was seen having breakfast together in the morning.

However, Hasina said she had already left for work at that time.

"The woman said she saw Taher's body lying on the floor and her baby's body on the bed when she came back, and started screaming," AC Kamrul said.

He added, "During primary interrogation, she provided misleading information to police."

Police seized a knife from the spot, which is believed to be used in the double murder.

The Criminal Investigation Department of police and Police Bureau of Investigation visited the spot and collected evidence.

Taher's neighbour Md Faruk Hossain said, "I was asleep during the incident and suddenly woke up after hearing Hasina's screams. I rushed to the spot and found the father and daughter in pools of blood."

"On Thursday, the couple had locked into a scuffle at home... we called the two out and solved the issue," said Faruk, a truck driver.

"They had been living here for five years after they got married," he added.

According to locals, another murder had taken place in the building around four months ago when a young man was stabbed to death over gambling issues.

AC Kamrul said police learned about the couple's fight on Thursday and were now verifying all the information. However, no case was filed in this regard till the filing of this report.

Meanwhile, the bodies of the victims were sent to Chattogram Medical College (CMC) morgue for autopsy.

## CHILD SPECIALIST SLAIN

Police on Friday recovered the body of the child specialist from Kumari Ghat area of Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila.

The dead was identified as Md Shah Alam, 61.

Shamim Sheikh, inspector (investigation) of Sitakunda police station said Alam's body was recovered around 10:00am. His relatives came to CMC morgue at night and identified him.

The victim had returned to the country after working in a hospital in Saudi Arabia for 30 years. He was the head of paediatric surgery in Madina Maternity and Children's Hospital there.

He came back two years ago and established a child clinic -- Baby Care Private Ltd -- in Sitakunda.

The inspector said that soon after Alam left his Sitakunda clinic around 9:30pm on Thursday for his home in Chattogram city's Chadgaon residential area, he went missing.

On information from locals, police recovered the body with multiple stab wounds in the hands, face and legs, Inspector Shamim said.

Mir Mohammad Helal Uddin, brother-in-law of the victim, said Alam came to Bangladesh after retirement to do something for the people of his village even though his relatives had told him not to come back. "He was so gentle and polite. I can't believe someone murdered him."

He added, "I had also discouraged

him to return, leaving the secured life and career in Saudi Arabia. But he was determined to serve people in his village.

"He founded the clinic in the village but could not serve the people for too long as his clinic began operating in January... It is very unfortunate that a brilliant mind, who returned to the country to serve his people, has been brutally killed."

Alam used to use public transport to go home from his clinic, said Izab Uddin, the receptionist at Alam's clinic.

"On Thursday night, I escorted him to a Safe Line Paribahan human haulier," he said, adding, "There was only one other passenger with the doctor when I saw him off."

Alam's niece Nasrin Akhter said that the murder seemed to be planned since valuables, like his wrist watch, were still with him. The murder could not have been carried out by muggers, she alleged.

Inspector Shamim, however, said the victim's mobile phone was missing and found switched off.

The doctor was a batch-20 student of Chattogram Medical College and completed his MBBS in 1983.

Dr Mujibul Huq Khan, president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) in Chattogram and also a class mate of the victim, said that Alam was very soft-spoken and good natured. "As far as I know, he did not have any enmity with anyone."

Such an incident will discourage brilliant minds, who are abroad, to return to the country and serve its people, Mujibul said.

Monwar-ul-Haque Shamim, vice-president of BMA in Chattogram, said, "I demand the administration arrest the criminals immediately."

Ajmeri Shikder Kanta, wife of Alam, said she called her husband several times on Thursday night but did not get any response. "At one stage, his phone was found switched-off," she said, adding, "Worried, I started contacting our relatives."

"How will I live now?" she said as she wailed in front of the CMC morgue.

The couple has two sons -- Nabil, a university student, and Ryan, an O' levels candidate.

Inspector Shamim said a case was being filed with Sitakunda police station. No one was arrested in connection with the incident till filing of this report last night.

## It was

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after being attacked by BSF along the Rajshahi border that led to the death of a BSF man.

The BGB said the BSF members intruded into Bangladesh territory and tried to snatch an Indian fisherman who was detained while illegally fishing in the Padma river.

The incident took place 650 yards inside Bangladesh territory in Shahariaghat Balughat area in Rajshahi's Charghat upazila.

Responding to a question on water-sharing issues, Momen said Bangladesh is giving only 1.82 cusec water out of 126 cusec from the Feni river for a town in Tripura, having only 6,000 people.

Asked about the perception that only India wins in negotiations between the two countries, the foreign minister said this was a blatant lie.

He said both sides win, and both Bangladesh and India got back stability due to the current friendly relations.

intervenes.

Johnson earlier warned a third Brexit delay was "pointless", adding: "Now is the time to get this thing done."

He said he would introduce legislation next week to implement his Brexit deal, expressing hope that if it passes, Britain could still leave on October 31.

The first vote could come as soon as Tuesday.

Outside parliament, tens thousands of people marching to demand a new referendum that might reverse Brexit erupted into cheers at the result.

"The first referendum was jumping on a train without a destination. Now that we have a destination, we need to have a second referendum," said Douglas Hill, 35, on the march with his Estonian wife.

The leader of the main opposition Labour party, which opposed the Brexit deal, echoed this.

"We will not back this sell-out deal," Jeremy Corbyn said.

He added: "Voting for a deal today won't end Brexit. It won't deliver certainty and the people should have the final say."

An online Survation poll of 1,025 adults on Thursday and Friday for the Daily Mail found that 50 percent said MPs should vote for the deal, while 38 percent said not.

EU leaders in Brussels this week urged lawmakers to back the deal to allow both sides to move on to discussing their future relationship.

The deal covers Britain's financial settlement, protects the rights of EU citizens and sets out a post-Brexit transition period potentially until 2022 to allow both sides to agree new trade terms.



Villagers catching fish in Thakurgaon's Burir Badth area yesterday morning, hours after the authorities opened the sluice gates of a barrage on the Shuk river. Locals celebrate this as an annual ceremony.

PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

# More trains, longer delay

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phenomenon for the last few years.

Abdullah Al Mamun, divisional transportation officer (Pakshi) of the BR, mentioned three major reasons behind the delay.

He said 22 trains can run smoothly through Joydebpur-Ishwardi section per day but 42 trains now run through it.

"Most of the trains, except for a few, have to wait at nearby stations to make way for other trains, leading to delay in schedules," Mamun told this newspaper over the phone recently.

Besides, the length of the "block section" -- the distance from one station to another -- between Joydebpur and Bangabandhu Bridge (East) Station is relatively long, meaning each train has to wait longer to make way for the other.

Another reason for the delay is Bangabandhu Bridge.

Trains have to run at the "restricted speed" of 20 kilometres per hour while crossing the bridge. It takes about half an hour to cross the seven-km stretch between the bridge's east and west stations, he added.

The pressure intensifies during the Eid rush as the BR operates special trains to carry additional passengers. The train schedules collapsed during the last Eid-ul-Azha, forcing people to wait for up to 16 hours at Kamalapur and Dhaka airport rail stations to catch trains bound for western districts.

Earlier in January 2016, the government took up a Tk 9,734-crore project to construct Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rail Bridge over the Jamuna. Physical work of the 4.8-km bridge will start in January next year and end by 2023, the railways minister said recently.

At a press briefing on September 17, the minister said the problems regarding train schedules on the western routes cannot be resolved until the construction of the rail

bridge and the dual-gauge double line from Joydebpur to Ishwardi.

The demand for more trains has gone up drastically but it's not possible now to add more than one or two trains on the western routes, he mentioned.

"More trains will result in more delay in train schedules," he added.

The government took up a Tk 14,250.61 crore project in January this year to turn Joydebpur-Ishwardi section into a dual-gauge double line. It is scheduled to be completed by December 2024. Physical work of the project is yet to start.

## WHY NEW TRAINS?

The authorities launched "Banalata Express", a nonstop intercity train service, on Dhaka-Rajshahi route in April -- the first train to have been introduced after Sujon took office as railways minister in January this year. Later, the train service was extended up to Chapainawabganj.

Launching a nonstop intercity train on Dhaka-Rajshahi route was one of the election pledges of Rajshahi city Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton.

A month later, a semi-nonstop intercity train service -- "Panchagarh Express" -- was launched between Dhaka and Panchagarh, the home district of the railways minister.

Besides, "Benapole Express" was launched in July on Dhaka-Benapole route to facilitate passengers going to India via Benapole.

On October 16, the government introduced an intercity train on Dhaka-Kurigram route. It also plans to increase the frequency of Maitree Express on Dhaka-Kolkata route. The trans-border train could run five or six days a week instead of four.

However, a BR official, who earlier worked as divisional manager (Pakshi), said they had urged the higher authorities not to launch any more train in the western zone. They suggested replacing the outdated coaches of existing trains with new

ones and also increasing the number of coaches.

"But the authorities didn't pay heed to our suggestions," said the official on condition of anonymity.

Prominent transport expert Prof Shamsul Haque said that in the railway, "politics" often gets priority over technical issues and service.

The government is introducing express trains only to show off its development work despite a lack of required infrastructure, he said.

Prof Shamsul, also former director of Accident Research Institute at Buet, said no new train should be launched without putting in place necessary infrastructure including multiple railway tracks.

"Schedules of many trains get delayed for hours in the absence of alternative railway lines, leading to an increase in operational costs of the trains," he mentioned.

Atiqur Rahman, project officer of Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust, said the railway usually does not carry out any assessment before launching a train on a route.

"The authorities choose routes for new trains under influence from local politicians," alleged Atiqur, who has experience of more than eight years in the sector.

He suggested that the authorities should add new coaches, instead of new trains, until they can increase the capacity of the railway tracks in the western zone.

The railways secretary admitted that the launching of Kurigram Express would create "some problems" in the schedules of trains in the western zone.

"The authorities will try to manage it as the intercity trains run six days a week," he told this correspondent on October 16.

He also said the schedule problems would largely be solved once the construction of the rail bridge on the Jamuna is completed.

# DNCC

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there since October 13," said Rab-1 Commanding Officer Lt Col Sarwar Bin Kashem, who led the drive.

While briefing reporters at the house, he said Rajib was involved in several crimes, including extortion, land grabbing and tender manipulation.

Rab Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam, who was present during the drive, told the newspaper that they were interrogating Rajib about his alleged involvement in the crimes.

Recently, several media outlets have run reports saying the councillor is involved in various illegal activities.

About six years ago, Rajib used to live in a small room on the ground floor of an apartment in Mohammadpur. He worked as an assistant of his carpenter father and ran a small tea stall in the area, according to the reports.

But his days changed after he joined the politics of Jubo League, the youth wing of the ruling Awami League. He was elected the ward councillor in 2014.

Currently, he owns a duplex apartment in the same area, owns several cars and assets worth crores, according to media reports.

The reports also said he faces multiple cases filed with different police stations.

# US court convicts Honduran president's brother of drug trafficking

AFP, New York

A New York court convicted the Honduran president's brother of drug trafficking Friday, a verdict immediately rejected by the Central American leader while opponents called for his resignation.

Tony Hernandez was found guilty on all four counts following a trial in Manhattan that lasted almost two weeks.

President Juan Orlando Hernandez said his brother had been convicted with "testimony from confessed murderers."

"On behalf of my family, and personally, it is with great sadness that I received word of the verdict in New York," the president wrote on Twitter.

Tony Hernandez was arrested at a Miami airport in November 2018 on charges including conspiring to import cocaine into the United States, possessing machine guns and making false statements.

The former Honduran congressman, 41, is due to be sentenced on January 17. He faces between five years and life in prison.

Following the verdict, opposition parties in Honduras called for street protests to demand that the president step down.

Manuel Zelaya, the former president of Honduras who was overthrown in a coup in 2009, tweeted that the verdict had "unmasked the drug and corruption network run by the government of Honduras."

Although he wasn't on trial himself, the court proceedings featured compromising allegations against the president.

Prosecutors said the Honduran leader took millions of dollars in bribes from drug lords including jailed Mexican kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

President Hernandez, an ally of US President Donald Trump, dismissed the accusation as "absurd" and "less serious than Alice in Wonderland," in a tweet.

# UK MPs

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"The Prime Minister will not ask for a delay."

Brussels urged Britain to explain its plan as soon as possible while Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, whose party opposed the deal, said: "The prime minister must now comply with the law."

Securing the deal at Thursday's Brussels summit was a personal victory for Johnson, a figurehead in the 2016 Leave campaign who has vowed to deliver Brexit on October 31 come what may.

He has spent the last 48 hours frantically trying to persuade MPs to back it, and won support from many of the eurosceptic Conservative MPs who rejected a previous divorce agreement.

But parliament -- like the frustrated public -- is still bitterly divided over how and even if Britain should end four decades of integration with its closest neighbours.

Opposition parties and Johnson's own Northern Irish allies rejected the text, and joined together to back an amendment brought by former Conservative minister Oliver Letwin.

This amendment made approval of the deal contingent on parliament passing legislation to ratify the text before Britain leaves the EU.

Johnson needed a clear vote in favour of the deal to avoid triggering a law passed against his will last month, requiring him to send a letter asking for a delay of three months to Brexit.

If he refuses, he is likely to face a court challenge forcing him to send it.

If EU leaders agree, he must accept, or if they offer an alternative deal, he must also accept unless parliament

# Day of reckoning for Jubo League?

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began a drive against illegal gambling and casinos, with the first one being carried on Fakirerpool Sporting Club in the capital on September 18.

After the drive, the organisation's chairman, Omar Faruk, became the talk of the town and a section of Jubo League leaders brought myriad allegations against him.

The allegations include running the organisation at will, patronising the corrupt and giving different posts of the youth front in exchange for money.

"Jubo League never operated in line with its charter under the existing chairman. Rather, it was being run according to his own rules," Fazlul Haque Atique, organising secretary of the organisation, told The Daily Star.

He also alleged that corrupt people from different parts of the country needed the ruling party's shelter to continue their illegal business, committing corruption, including tender manipulation, and establishing supremacy in their areas.

They used Jubo League as a shield, he said, adding, "The Jubo League chairman patronised them for money."

Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will sit with top Jubo League leaders -- presidium members, joint secretaries and organising secretaries -- at 5:00pm today at the Gono Bhaban.

Jubo League sources said the meeting would discuss various issues, including ways of rebuilding the image of the organisation.

Talking to The Daily Star, Jubo League presidium member Shaheed Serniabat alleged that the chairman and the general secretary of the organisation did not evaluate the dedication of leaders during the formation of different committees.

"Jubo League is a two-man show organisation, and the chairman and the general secretary will have to shoulder responsibilities for the current situation. We will seek decision from our leader [Sheikh Hasina] about their removal from the posts," he said.

Besides, the leaders will seek the Awami League president's guideline on holding Jubo Congress, scheduled to take place on November 23, he added.

Sources said the PM asked Faruk and presidium member Nurunabi Chowdhury Shawon not to join the meeting today.

While talking to The Daily Star, several leaders of Jubo League said they will raise various allegations at the meeting against the chairman and his associates who they said engaged in various misdeeds and corruptions.

They said they would also demand the chairman's punishment over the issues.

This correspondent contacted Faruk several times for comments, but he did not receive the calls.

According to Jubo League insiders, Faruk, who was considered to be the most powerful chairman of the organisation, is now passing lonely days at his Dhanmondi residence. Most of those who used to surround

him all the time have deserted him.

The Jubo League boss was also barred from leaving the country as the immigration police imposed the ban on October 6. Bangladesh Bank has also ordered freezing the bank accounts of Omar Faruk and his wife.

On October 6, Jubo League leaders for the first time brought several allegations against Faruk at the front's presidium meeting.

The allegations included that he misbehaves with party leaders, does not attend office regularly and run the organisation at will staying at his Dhanmondi residence.

Jubo League insiders said in his early age, Omar Faruk was the general secretary of 'Biri Sramik League' of Chattogram in the 70s. He started importing 'Tendu leaf' (alternative of tobacco) from Myanmar. In the following years, he started garments business.

Later, Faruk started his political career with Sramik League's politics. When late HM Ershad assumed power and late Najir Rahman Manju became a minister, Faruk joined Jubo Sanghati, the youth wing of the Jatiya Party. Manju is a brother-in-law of Faruk.

After the fall of autocratic ruler Ershad in 1990, Omar Faruk joined AL's politics in Chattogram and was elected a treasurer of Chattogram (North) unit in 1997. He became the presidium member of Jubo League at its congress in 2003.

Nine years later, he became the chairman of the Jubo League, the first youth organisation of the country.