

DHANMONDI DOUBLE MURDER

Hunt on for  
househelp

Motive still unknown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers are yet to unravel the mystery of Dhanmondi double murder and still looking for the new domestic help who visited the apartment for the first time on Friday.

After scrutinising several CCTV footages, police said they believe that the new domestic help, aged between 27 and 28, got information about the double murder.

Police have so far detained six people for interrogation, said Abdul Latif, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station.

The detainees are Bachchu Mia, bodyguard of the Afroza's son-in-law Kazi Monir Uddin, Belayet, an electrician and three guards of the building.

Afroza Begum, 65, deputy managing director of Creative Group, and her domestic help Bithi, 17, were found slit-throat at a flat on the fourth floor of a building on road 28.

Police are yet to find any motive behind the murder and investigating if multiple people were involved in the murder.

Abdullahil Kafi, additional deputy commissioner (Dhanmondi zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they had got some clues and were working on it.

TERROR ATTACKS IN BANGLADESH

Pace, magnitude continue  
to decline: US report

UNB, Dhaka

The pace and magnitude of "terrorist attacks" in Bangladesh continued to decline in 2018, although a secularist writer was killed and a university professor was seriously injured in separate incidents, says a US report.

The Country Reports on Terrorism 2018 released by the US Department of State yesterday said Bangladeshi security forces continued a counterterrorism campaign that claimed to have disrupted planned attacks, captured suspected militant leaders, and seized caches of weapons, ammunition, and explosives.

However, the report in its Bangladesh part said judicial impediments to the "successful prosecution" of terrorists and allegations of "extrajudicial killings" by security forces during counterterrorism raids have inhibited broader counterterrorism successes.

The government of Bangladesh continued to articulate a "zero-tolerance" policy toward terrorism and the use of its territory as a terrorist safe haven, the report read.

The government of Bangladesh often attributed terrorist violence to local militants.

The US report said al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and ISIS have together claimed responsibility for nearly 40 attacks in Bangladesh since 2015.

It said terrorist organisations used social media to spread their ideologies and solicit followers from Bangladesh.

On June 11, 2018, suspected terrorists murdered Shajahan Bachchu, a secularist writer and political activist in Munshiganj, according to the US report.

While the investigation is ongoing, Bangladeshi security forces suspect that the perpetrators were affiliated with AQIS, says the US report.

On March 3, 2018, a man self-identifying as a member of an AQIS-affiliated group, attacked Zafar Iqbal, a professor at a university in Sylhet, claiming that Iqbal was an "enemy of Islam".

However, the Bangladeshi government's investigation determined that the attacker did not have ties to AQIS or other terrorist organisations.

On April 5, the government of Bangladesh formed the first two antiterrorism tribunals authorised by the Antiterrorism Act in Dhaka and Chattogram.

One of the Dhaka tribunal's first cases was the trial of six defendants for the December 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery attack.

The report said Bangladesh cooperated with the United States in strengthening control of its borders and ports of entry.

Bangladesh continued to participate in the US Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance programme and received counterterrorism training on building unit capacity in crisis response, evidence collection, crime scene investigation, infrastructure protection, leadership development, and train-the-trainers, as well as enhancing cyber and digital investigation capabilities.

Bangladesh also received Department of Justice prosecutorial skills training, community policing support, and technical advice on the modernisation of its Evidence Act. Bangladesh is receiving assistance from the United States in developing an Alert List of known and suspected terrorists and militants to better screen for persons of interest at its ports of entry.

Bangladesh is a member and incoming co-chair of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), a FATF-style regional body.

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) is a member of the Egmont Group.

Bangladesh Bank and the BFIU lead the government's efforts to comply with the international AML/CFT standards and international sanctions regimes.

BCL activists  
push principal  
into a pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A group of Chhatra League men dragged the principal of Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute and pushed him into a pond on the campus yesterday.

The teacher, Farid Uddin Ahmed, said the BCL men were furious as he did not "accept one of their illogical demands".

Talking to some reporters, he said the youths, led by the institute unit BCL Joint Secretary Kamal Hossain Saurav, intercepted his way near a pond when he was walking towards his office around 2:00pm.

"Saurav said he wanted to talk to me. At one point, the students started dragging me to the pond and then pushed me there," he said, adding, "I would have died if I had not known how to swim."

The footage of a CCTV in the area shows some nine to 10 youths dragging the teacher by his hands and neck and then pushing him into the waterbody.

The principal said the BCL men in the university often go to him with "illogical demands".

He said the institute authorities had recently decided not to allow two students to take examinations as their

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Brazil arrests

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from around the world.

He has been indicted on US charges. According to the United States Department of Justice, Al-Mamun is alleged to have housed people coming from Southeast Asia in São Paulo and arranged for their travel through a network of smugglers operating in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico.

According to Brazilian police, he and his group were smuggling into Brazil, and then to the United States, people from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

They were sent to Brazil's northern Acre state to start a long and dangerous trip through Central America all the way to the Mexican border, to cross into the United States.

Reuters was not able to confirm whether Al-Mamun had a lawyer in Sao Paulo who could be contacted for comment.

Brazilian police said the group charged people coming from Asia around 50,000 reais (\$12,524) for the attempt to reach the United States. Some would also stay illegally in Brazil, where they were given fraudulent documentation.

Police said people suffered violence while waiting in Sao Paulo to start the trip north. It said a group of eight Bengali people fell into the hands of a Mexican drug cartel while traveling toward the Mexico-US border.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina holds a shirt displayed at an event held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on the occasion of National Cooperatives Day yesterday.

PHOTO: PTI

This city doesn't care about them

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of these challenged persons.

In recent years, the city authorities in Dhaka have started making footpaths accessible to visually and physically challenged persons with tactile tracks and smooth surface.

But hawkers occupy many footpaths while poles have been installed to prevent bikers from plying the walkways.

"I have to remain very cautious. Sometimes, I bump into street stores. Motorcycles get on the footpath without caring about pedestrians," said Abdul Matin, a person with visual disability, a history graduate from Jahangirnagar University.

"On several occasions, rickshaws pushed me down while I was walking," he said.

"In most cases, footpaths end without ramps. Our accessibility has not been ensured although there is law for this," said Ali Hossain, another person with a visual impairment, who has completed masters in political science from the Dhaka University.

He said persons with disabilities are highly neglected in this country.

"Not all the halls at our university have ramps, and not even the administrative building has it. Everything is designed and developed in a way that reminds me that I have some limitations."

Take the case of railway. Stairs of compartments and platforms are made in a way that no wheelchair-user would be able to get in and out of the train without the help of others.

Even if anyone can manage to get in, they encounter more difficulties as there is no dedicated place for wheelchairs. Toilets are not easily accessible either.

Railway authorities have recently bought new compartments but getting on those is difficult for persons with physical disabilities, said Salma Mahbub, general secretary of the Bangladesh Society for the Change and

Advocacy Nexus (B-SCAN).

Salma, herself a wheelchair user, said the BRTC bought 600 buses in recent years. None of these has any ramp.

Khandker Moinuddin Ahmed, another wheelchair user, said he visited Malaysia and commuted alone from one place to another by bus.

"In Malaysia, there are elevators in the buses to pick us. I could get in a bus alone. Even the footpaths are also friendly to persons with disabilities," he said.

In the face of difficulty and harassment in commuting, Moinuddin, an accountant at the Directorate of Accounts at Dhaka University, bought a motorbike in November 2016 and added two wheels on both sides of the bike so that he can drive it easily.

The government has framed the Disability Right & Protection Act 2013 to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and ensure their accessibility in common infrastructure, markets, hospitals, educational institutes, and other buildings.

The law, however, is not without loopholes. It makes mandatory for buses to dedicate 5 percent of total seats for persons with disabilities. But, it has not made putting facilities in place compulsory in vehicles to allow physically challenged, blind and persons with the disabilities to get in and get off easily.

The Dhaka Building Construction Rules 2008 has also been framed with provisions of accessibility issue of challenged people. But it is not complied with fully.

"We have seen many modern buildings since the formulation of the code. These are not accessible even though they have been built after the formulation of the rules," said Salma of the B-SCAN.

Moinuddin, who lost his ability to move alone because of polio attack in

his childhood, said he has to face a lot of troubles using toilets at home and in office.

"It appears that the society is always ignoring me, denying my presence. Otherwise, why can't I enter shopping malls without any difficulty? We face barriers at every step," he said.

Mohammad Sarower Hossen Khan, an assistant librarian of the central library of Dhaka University, who also has a visual impairment, said there would be no extra cost for making ramps at the end of footpaths.

He observed that there was carelessness at the policy level regarding problems of accessibility and mobility of the challenged persons, the elderly people, pregnant women and kids.

BRTC Technical Director Md Mahbubur Rahman said the state transport agency has got portable ramps for some recently purchased double-decker buses.

"But hydraulic ramps would be good. We will include the issue of hydraulic ramps in our future projects," he said.

Sk Hamim Hassan, director for administration and finance and information officer of the National Disability Development Foundation (NDDF), said they have prepared an action plan for implementation of the law on rights of persons with disabilities till 2023.

The cabinet approved the plan earlier this year, he added.

For Arshedul, this is a good news.

But he and Moinuddin and Sarower had one thing in common: raising social awareness through continuous campaign about problems of persons with disabilities.

"This along with television and radio programmes is necessary apart from implementation of the law to sensitise the society to our issues," said Arshedul.

Working for

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improve the sanitation and communications system in villages, she added.

She mentioned that the government has already ensured internet facility across the country and the rural people can now enjoy its benefits.

Turning to the cooperatives movement, the PM said the government wants more crops to be produced on the existing arable land and the cooperatives movement is very much appropriate to achieve the target. "The people of the country will never extend their hands to anyone for food."

She also said the government would be able to develop the country through cooperatives by building an IT-based management system.

The theme of this year's Cooperatives Day is "Development through Cooperatives: The philosophy of Bangabandhu". The Department of Cooperatives under the LGRD and cooperatives ministry organised the event.

Describing various steps and programmes to develop the cooperatives system in the country, Hasina said there are around 174,000 cooperatives in the country and they have 109,00,000 members.

LRGD and Cooperatives Minister Tazul Islam, Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the LGRD and cooperatives ministry Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, and State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Swapan Bhattacharjee also spoke at the event, among others.

Earlier, the PM handed over the National Cooperatives Award to different cooperative societies and individuals for their contributions to the sector.

She visited some stalls set up on the venue premises by various cooperative societies on the occasion.

The premier also enjoyed a colourful cultural programme.

RECENT DEALS WITH INDIA

BNP to write to  
PM for details

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will write to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to know the details of the treaties she had signed with India during her recent visit to the country.

In a standing committee meeting at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office last night, the party took the decision, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

"Under the Right to Information Act, we'll also write to the Information Commission for details of the deals. We think people have many queries whether the agreements have effects on their welfare," he said.

The BNP does not have any objection in sharing the Feni river water with India. However, the party is concerned about the government's delay in solving the problems related to the Teesta river water, said Fakhrul.

In the meeting, the party leaders opposed the government's decision of appointing administrators for Grameenphone and Robi as it might send negative messages to foreign investors, he said while talking to the reporters.

The leaders also condemned the Awami League's decision to relocate Rohingya to Noakhali's Bashan Char, he said.

About the recent anti-corruption drives across the country, Fakhrul said the government was just keeping the "big corruptions" out of the limelight through taking actions against some small ones.

GANG RAPE OF WOMAN

Student arrested,  
sent to jail

Another accused on the run

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A court in Rajshahi on Friday sent a student of the Medical Assistant Training School (MATS) to jail in a case filed over the gang rape of a woman.

Police arrested Sajib Raihan, 22, of Tanore upazila in Rajshahi, in the city's Notun Bilsimla area on Thursday.

The other accused Polash, 22, also a MATS student, is still on the run, said police.

Shahadat Hossain Khan, officer-in-charge of Rajpara Police Station, said they arrested Sajib after getting a call from the victim through the national emergency helpline 999.

The victim alleged that she came to the city from Tanore on October 30, as Sajib and Polash promised her a job as a domestic worker, said the police.

As she had no place to stay, Sajib insisted her to stay at his room in a private dormitory in Notun Bilsimla area, and took her there, he said.

Later around 12:13am on Thursday, the duo broke into the room and raped her several times throughout the night, said the OC.

Police received the victim's call through the helpline in the morning and rescued her within an hour. Sajib was present at the room during the drive, he added.

The woman was sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. Police at the One-Stop Crisis Centre in the hospital helped her lodge the case.