

Cops’ FIR

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Following the incident, 21 policemen, including Liaqat Ali, were closed. The government also formed a committee which is investigating the incident.

Nandadul named Shahedul Islam alias Shifat, who was accompanying Sinha, as the lone accused. Shifat, a student of a private university, was charged with obstructing government activities and drawing firearms in an attempt to kill, it said.

Besides, police also filed a case against Sinha and Shifat under the 2018 Narcotics Control Act, showing 50 pieces of yaba and 250 grams of cannabis in the seizure list.

Sinha, along with Shifat, was going back to Cox’s Bazar from Teknaf by his private vehicle.

Sinha who was from Jashore took early retirement from the army in 2018 and had been making travel documentaries for a Youtube channel called “Just Go.”

He took three students of a private university with him to Cox’s Bazar from the capital on July 3 and had been staying at Nilima Resort in Himchhari area. They went to different mountainous areas of Teknaf for shooting, according to his family members.

But ever since the killing, multiple versions of the incident continued to circulate.

In the FIR, police claimed that Sinha had aimed his pistol at the law enforcers and that they fired shots in self-defence.

They had taken position at the checkpoint at 9:15pm, and Sinha’s car arrived there approximately 20 minutes later, the FIR mentioned.

They gave a signal to stop the car approaching the check point. But the car tried to cross the checkpoint, defying the signal. At one stage, Liaqat used a block in the chock post to stop the car and asked the people inside it to come out with their hands up.

Liaqat asked the person in the driving seat to come out of the car and put his hands up. Then the policemen wanted to know about his identity.

The FIR stated, “Sinha began arguing with the policemen for a little while, and then suddenly took out a gun from the right side of his body.” He was then shot by Liaqat.

The police claimed that they

immediately took him to Cox’s Bazar Sadar Hospital.

But the arrival records of the hospital show that the body was brought in at 11:55pm, meaning there was a delay in taking him to hospital after he was critically wounded.

The scene of the incident in Shamlapur area is 48 kilometres from Cox’s Bazar Sadar and it takes less than an hour to reach that place.

Hospital sources said Sinha was in army combat T-shirt and trousers when he was taken to the hospital. His body was later brought to the Combined Military Hospital in the capital where his family members were allowed to see only his face for a few minutes on Sunday.

He was buried at Banani Graveyard on Monday. The autopsy report is yet to be prepared.

The FIR said one Nurul Amin, 22, of Marishbunia village of Baharchhara Union Parishad is a witness to the incident.

However, when a correspondent of this newspaper visited his house, it was found locked.

Nurul’s neighbours said he along with his family left the house around 3:00pm on Monday but they did not know where he went. Nurul, a farmer, is involved with the community police.

Similarly, Md Aiyas (40), listed as a witness in the FIR, also left his house, the locals told our correspondent.

The locals also told our correspondent that the muezzin of Baitun Noor Jame Masjid was a witness to the incident. The mosque is about 10 yards away from the scene of the incident. However, the muezzin has been missing since August 1 afternoon. He has not been listed as a witness in the FIR.

PROBE COMMITTEE

The committee, formed by the home ministry, went to Cox’s Bazar yesterday to investigate the incident.

The team members had a long meeting at the circuit house and drew up an action plan, Chattogram Additional Divisional Commissioner Mizanur Rahman told reporters after the meeting.

“The members will go wherever they need to go... The investigation team will talk to witnesses,” he said, adding that efforts would be made to submit the report in the seven working days.



A Dhaka-bound bus from Mawa crashes into the central reservation of Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway after losing control in front of Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj yesterday afternoon. The accident left several people injured.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Why was my son killed?

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“When I asked the officer to hand the phone to Sinha, he said my son was a little far away and cut the call. I was feeling uneasy so I kept calling the number, but nobody picked up my calls.”

Nasima then informed a friend of the deceased army official and asked him to look into it. “I thought Sinha might have been under arrest or something, so I asked him to find out.”

The next day was Eid. Nasima kept calling both her son and his friend, but nobody responded. “Around 11:00am, policemen from Uttara (west) police station came to my house. I greeted them, invited them to eat and told them that I am worried about my son. I thought he was under arrest in Teknaf and if I tell them how good my son is, they will release him.”

Later in the day, Sinha’s friend called back. “He made an excuse for not picking up my calls and asked for the mobile number of my daughter. When I asked why, he said he wanted

to exchange Eid greetings with her. By that time, he already knew what had happened and he did not want me to know it first.”

“Around 7:30 in the evening, his colleague’s sister came to visit. She started saying she understands the pain of losing a child. That is when I realised Sinha is no longer alive,” narrated the mother in excruciating detail.

Sinha, 36, was killed in police firing at a check-post in Teknaf on Friday night. He was returning after shooting for a travel documentary. The home ministry has formed a high-powered committee to investigate the incident.

The retired army official was born on July 26, 1984. He served at the Special Security Force (SSF) as the prime minister’s bodyguard between 2009 and 2012.

“Following that he worked in many other cantonments, including in Cox’s Bazaar’s Ramu which was his favourite,” Nasima said. He also went to a UN mission in Ivory Coast. In 2018, while he was posted in Rangpur cantonment,

he decided to take voluntary retirement.

“He wanted to travel the world and an army position left him rooted to one spot. He wanted to explore the Everest base camp and cycle around China. He wanted to begin his world tour this year, but the pandemic stood in his way,” she said.

The family reminisced how he had prepared for the tour by buying a trekking backpack and putting up a whiteboard to map out his plans.

“He was different. He had gone to some villages on a tour and brought home two praying mantis insects. He named them Nontey and Fontey. They used to live in a plant in the balcony as his pets,” remembered Sinha’s sister Sharmen Shahria Ferdush.

His mother added, “Just the other day I was telling him that I can no longer see Fontey in the tree, but that Nontey is waiting for him to come back from Cox’s.”

But pet insects, dreams of travel, a house to grow old in and broken hearts are all that’s left now.

Tax cheats can whiten money until Nov 30

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land, building and flat, by paying tax at a particular rate on per square metre.

Individual taxpayers will also be able to make any disclosure of undisclosed cash, bank deposits, savings certificates, bonds or any other securities on paying taxes at a rate of 10 per cent.

No authority, including the NBR and the Anti-Corruption Commission, would be able to raise any question on such declarations.

Until last fiscal year, tax cheats were able to whiten their assets by investing in residential buildings by paying a tax of 10 per cent on the amount invested, which for regular taxpayers is between 10 and 30 per cent. They will also not face any questions about the sources of their income if they invest in economic zones and hi-tech parks.

In the upcoming weeks, the tax administration would run ads in newspapers and televisions, commission TV programmes and publish leaflets and brochures to inform of the added privileges this fiscal year and also encourage people to bring their untaxed money to the mainstream economy.

The NBR would particularly highlight the opportunities introduced in the current budget that no questions would be asked about the sources of the money disclosed, said an official of the government agency.

In fiscals 2007-08 and 2008-09, Tk 9,682.99 crore was legalised during the regime of the Army-backed caretaker government, which was the highest in the country’s history, NBR data showed.

In the previous two governments of the Awami League, Tk 1,805 crore and Tk 4,856 crore were respectively legalised.

Meanwhile, in a curious development, deposits at different banks are increasing significantly, which many bankers construed as people parking their untaxed money with lenders after the widened amnesty for black money was declared in June.

The correspondents learned of the rudimentary correlation after speaking with several bank officials from different branches.

“We can easily tell that they are not ‘running money’. They have a damp smell and look,” said an official of a private bank’s Shantinagar branch requesting anonymity.

Bangladesh likely to allow

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The vaccine had its phase one and two clinical trials done in China “without showing any side effects,” he said, adding that the Chinese company wanted to conduct a trial in Bangladesh as coronavirus infection has decreased in China.

“There are still many coronavirus patients in Bangladesh. The Chinese company needs 4,200 people for the trial,” Mannan said.

An official present in the meeting told this correspondent that the health ministry officials were convinced after a detailed discussion with the icddr,b scientists about the vaccine trial.

He said there was a misconception that people are used as guinea pigs for drug trials -- which is not true.

Now there are globally-recognised rules and regulations for clinical trials and those would be rigorously maintained in Bangladesh, he said.

Scientists say if the vaccine goes through successful trial in Bangladesh, the country’s pharmaceutical companies would be able to go for its production.

In that case, the people will get the vaccine quickly and at an affordable price and the country’s capacity for vaccine research will be developed, scientists also said.

Earlier in mid-July, Mannan said the decision of vaccine trial was a matter of the two governments.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque on

July 22 said the government would decide on the trial upon consultation with the National Technical Advisory Committee for tackling Covid-19.

Mannan yesterday said it would take at least six months to conduct the phase three trial in Bangladesh.

“Therefore, we will not only depend on the Chinese company vaccine. We will also try to get supplies of vaccines from the US, the UK and the European Union countries if they find effective vaccines earlier,” he said.

Globally, about 150 research firms are conducting trials of the Covid-19 vaccines. Oxford University in the UK, Moderna in the US and two Chinese companies are at an advanced stage of their trial.

Developed countries are already signing deals with vaccine producers for getting vaccines at the earliest. Vaccine alliance GAVI is also working to ensure that the least developed countries get vaccine supplies free of cost. Bangladesh will also get free vaccines.

“Therefore, Bangladesh government must make the best efforts to establish effective contacts with GAVI and other actors concerned,” said a medical scientist who worked with the World Health Organization.

At the same time, Bangladesh should also invite vaccine companies for trial in Bangladesh as it would help the country develop the capacity in medical research, he said.

Govt extends restrictions

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e-commerce platforms to purchase goods and food items.

During this period, none will be allowed to go outside of home between 10:00pm and 5:00am except for urgent activities (works for burying bodies or last rituals, necessary purchasing or selling, including medicines, medical services and movement towards workplaces), the notification said.

Wearing face mask, keeping social distancing and maintaining health guidelines are a must for everyone while staying outside of home. Otherwise, the rule violators will face legal actions.

The government, autonomous, and private offices, banks and financial institutions, trade and commerce, industries and factories and service-providing institutions would remain open maintaining health guidelines issued by the Health Services Division (HSD) of the health ministry.

All employees and expectant mothers would refrain from being present at workplaces.

All kinds of transportation services, including public transport, will remain open maintaining health guidelines issued by the HSD.

The ministries and divisions concerned would issue necessary directives to keep educational

institutions and coaching centres shut during the restriction period.

All kind of rallies, meetings, mass gatherings and functions would remain stopped during the restriction while arrangement of programmes in virtual platforms should be given priority.

Devotees can offer prayers at mosques and other places of worship following the directives issued by the religious affairs ministry.

Movements in severely infected areas should be controlled following the guidelines and strategy of zone-wise containment system formulated by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Supply and availability of daily essentials should be ensured for the people while city corporations and district administrations will make overall coordination of such activities in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

The Local Government Division, information ministry, religious affairs ministry, Health Services Division, and the district and upazila administrations will carry out massive awareness campaigns to check the spread of Covid-19.

Ministries and divisions concerned have been requested to take necessary measures in line with the directives.

Padma eats up bridge-making equipment

STAR REPORT

At least 192 railway stingers and 220 roadway decks, supposed to be used for construction of Padma Bridge, fell into the Padma in between 2:00pm and 8:00pm on Friday as erosion hit a part of the bridge project’s construction yard.

Experts, however, said the erosion will not affect the main Padma bridge site as it occurred in Kumarbhog area of Munshiganj’s Louhajang upazila, nearly two kilometres off the bridge site.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Bridges Division Secretary Belayet Hossain said no erosion was reported after July 31.

He along with Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam, also the immediate past Bridges Division secretary, and some experts has already visited the erosion site.

Replying to a question, he said, “No damage was done to the main structure of the Padma Bridge due to the erosion.”

He said as the construction yard is situated outside the river training area of the Padma Bridge project, the Water Development Board will take up a separate project to protect the areas vulnerable to erosion.

Asked about losses caused by erosion, Belayet said the contractor primarily estimated the losses at around Tk 90 crore.

“However, the losses will be less if the railway stingers can be salvaged as expected by the project authorities.”

Speaking about the recovery of the roadway decks and railway stingers, an independent expert said most of those are too heavy to be swept away by river currents.

“The decks and stingers are likely to be piled up on the riverbed near the erosion site. Those will be covered with sediment. It is possible to salvage those from the riverbed by using cranes. The salvaged decks and stingers can be used in the bridge if those do not lose strength,” he said.

An official of the Padma Bridge project said the government will conduct a survey on more than 20 km area on both sides of the bridge site to predict the possibility of any further erosion of the river bank.

The survey may begin next week, the official added.

The Padma had devoured a part of the construction yard in August and September in 2015 when erosion hit the area.

Construction of the Padma Bridge started in November 2014 to connect the country’s southwestern region with the capital through road and rail links.

The current deadline of the project is June 2021. The project cost rose to Tk 30,193 crore following several revisions of the deadline.

According to the road transport and bridges ministry, the current deadline is going to be deferred further due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The overall progress of the project was around 80 per cent till June this year.

Once opened, the 6.15km-long bridge will connect the capital with 21 southern districts. It is expected to boost the country’s gross domestic product by 1.2 per cent.

PM assures

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for enquiring about their family.

Rashed, who also served as a Special Security Force (SSF) member, was killed reportedly in police firing at Baharchhara police check-post in Cox’s Bazar’s Teknaf on Friday night.

Immediately after the incident, authorities withdrew 16 policemen, including the check-post in-charge, who were on duty at the scene in Teknaf’s Marine Drive.

The home ministry has formed a high-level community that launched an investigation into the killing.

Tests reduce

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The number of positive cases in the country reached 2,44,020.

Of the 49 Asian countries, Bangladesh ranks fifth in terms of total Covid-19 cases, according to worldometers.info.

But it ranks 36th in testing coverage.

Data shows the number of tests per million people stands below 7,500 in Bangladesh.

The number of tests per million people in Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka is respectively 24,375, 14,627, 9,085, and 7,567.

Conducting 5,24,173 tests per million, the UAE is the top in Asia.

BRIEFING

Fifty more people died from coronavirus infections in the 24 hours, said Dr Nasima during the online briefing.

The death toll now stands at 3,234, and the death rate is now 1.33 per cent.

Among the victims, 44 were male and six female. They were aged between 31 and 90, Dr Nasima added.

Meanwhile, 1,955 Covid-19 patients recovered in the 24 hours, bringing the number of recoveries to 1,39,860.

Around 374 people were put under isolation during the period, Dr Nasima added.