

Still carrying a bullet

Barishal musician recounts horror of Aug 15 massacre at Serniabat residence

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

"This is one of the bullets that came out of my body," Lalit Das offered the rusty object for this correspondent to inspect. "I was hit with 11 bullets -- six on my left leg, two on the right, two on the right arm, while my abdomen took the other."

"It took three surgeries to get 10 of them out, but the other one still remains inside my knee."

Seventy-five-year-old Lalit Das of Falpatti in Barishal city was recounting his memories from August 15. As part of their band "Credece", the singer happened to be at the Serniabat family house at Dhaka's Minto Road on the night the family was massacred.

At least four other members of the Barishal-based band were seriously injured on the night. Along with Abdur Rab Serniabat, Bangabandhu's brother-in-law and a minister, and his family members, a member of the singers' collective also perished.

They were invited to Dhaka by Barishal's own Serniabat to perform at the then industry minister's home. "As we rehearsed at the Serniabat residence on the prior day, we saw Begum Mujib visit her brother's house with Sheikh Russell," Lalit recalled. On the fateful day, they performed



Lalit Das still carries with him one of the bullets he was hit with 46 years ago.

at the cultural event from 9pm to 11pm and returned to Minto Road.

"We were very happy with our performance. But it all changed around 3am in the morning," Lalit's voice grew dark. This is when the first noise of gunfire broke, and it woke all of them up.

"We were in a room on the ground floor, beside the staircase. Suddenly, there was fierce knocking on the door. As (band member) Zillur opened the door, the black-wearing assailants descended upon us with ferocity. They started striking us down with rifle butts."

"We cried, 'we are from Barishal, we are artists'. They still dragged us to a room on the ground floor with members of the Serniabat family," Lalit continued.

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Where are the five fugitive killers?

Little progress in bringing them back; govt says efforts are ongoing

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and MOHAMMED JAMIL KHAN

Twelve years have gone by since the trial of our history's most tragic assassination has been completed, but the five self-confessed killers could not be brought back to the country for execution.

The government sent letters to multiple Interpol member countries on August 10, directing them to take steps to bring back the five killers of Bangabandhu, but they are yet to receive any positive response.

The five fugitives are Khandaker Abdur Rashid, Shariful Haque Dalim, Nur Chowdhury, Rashed Chowdhury and Moslehuddin Khan.

According to National Central Bureau (Interpol) of the Police Headquarters, whereabouts of two of the five convicted killers have been confirmed.

It is known that Nur Chowdhury is in Canada and Rashed Chowdhury in the US, while the authorities have a hunch about the whereabouts of the other three, but it is not yet confirmed.

The Interpol issued a red notice regarding Nur Chowdhury on August 31, 2009, which was extended for five years on March 25, 2019. Similarly, a red notice is issued about Rashed Chowdhury



Abdur Rashid Shariful Haque Dalim Nur Chowdhury Rashed Chowdhury Moslehuddin Khan

on January 7, 2009, which was extended on July 26, 2018 for five years.

The officials at National Central Bureau told The Daily Star that Interpol thinks Dalim is probably hiding either in Pakistan or Libya. A red notice issued for him was extended on January 27, 2019.

Meanwhile, they said it is suspected that Khandaker Abdur Rashid is perhaps in Libya or Zimbabwe and there is an ongoing red notice about him, which was extended on March 25, 2019 for five years.

Mosleh Uddin might also be in Pakistan, authorities think. Interpol extended an ongoing red notice about him on December 4, 2018.

Contacted, assistant inspector-general Mohiul Islam of NCB told The Daily Star that they are in constant communication with the

Interpol headquarters and Interpol Canada regarding the extradition of Nur and Rashed. Upon extradition, they will be executed.

AIG Islam said they are also in close communication with the other countries where they suspect the three other killers are hiding.

A highly-placed source said a committee tasked with extraditing the convicted killers held its first meeting in September 10 last year.

Bangladesh has activated its missions abroad in countries where the killers are presumed to have been hidden, Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said on Friday, reported Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha.

"Particular Bangladesh missions abroad, where they (fugitives) are assumed to be hiding, have been asked to keep close contacts with security and intelligence agencies

of the host countries to track them down on the basis of our lead information," he told BSS.

According to BSS, Momen told the Bangladeshi communities in the US and Canada to launch pressure on the authorities of those countries to deport the killers.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led government had taken a crucial step in ensuring justice by executing convicted killer Abdul Majed within Mujib Borsho.

Abdul Majed, who had long been hiding abroad, was hanged on April 12 last year while five other convicts -- Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Bazlul Huda, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed -- were executed on January 28, 2010.

Convicted killer Aziz Pasha died in Zimbabwe in 2001.

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Some from Bangladesh trying to join Taliban in Afghanistan: DMP chief

Says no security threat around Mourning Day events, but law enforcers on alert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There has been a recent trend in Bangladesh in which the Taliban has appealed to people all over for joining the war in Afghanistan, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam said yesterday.

He said some people from Bangladesh have already been motivated to join the war with the militant group.

"We think some people have been caught in India, and some are trying to reach Afghanistan on foot in various ways," he said while talking to reporters after checking the overall security at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32.

He said militants have been continuing their activities online to recruit and motivate members.

He said all intelligence agencies of the government, including DMP, are active in this regard.

"Cyber technology has captivated the world, and militants are recruiting and encouraging people to use it. Recently, the Taliban has urged people to join the war in Afghanistan and some people, responding to their call, have left home. We just want to say the militants are active," said Shafiqul.

On Thursday, a team of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime

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Mosquitoes are on the rise in Khulna city during this monsoon, and stagnant water that pools in nooks and crannies of the city's streets are largely to blame for it. This photo was taken yesterday from Zero Point area.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

257 more dengue patients end up in hospital in 24hrs

UNB, DHAKA

Some 257 new patients were admitted to different hospitals, in the 24 hours till Saturday morning with dengue. Among the new patients, 219 were admitted to government and private hospitals in Dhaka.

In addition, some 1,040 patients diagnosed with dengue are receiving treatment at hospitals as of Saturday morning, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of them, 954 patients are receiving treatment at hospitals in the capital while the rest were listed outside Dhaka.

So far, 24 suspected dengue deaths have been reported to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, but it is yet to confirm any dengue-related death, according to the DGHS.

Most of the cases have been reported in the capital so far, said the health authorities.

Bangladesh started seeing an uptrend in dengue cases from June. Since August 1, over 200 new cases were recorded every day.

Some 5,902 patients have been admitted to different hospitals with dengue since January, of whom, 4,838 have been released after they recovered from the disease.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

None can use 'Dr' in title without MBBS, BDS degree

Says HC in full verdict on writ petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court in a full verdict has declared the government's decision of allowing homeopathy, unani and ayurvedic healthcare professionals to use "Dr" before their names "illegal".

"None other than the people qualifying for the MBBS and BDS degrees can use the prefix 'Dr' under the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council Act, 2010.

"But, unfortunately the Health Services department, under the health ministry, has allowed homeopathy, unani and ayurvedic officials of the operational plan titled 'Alternative Medical Care' to use 'Dr' before

their names, which is illegal," the HC bench of Justice Md Ashraf Kamal and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil observed.

The 71-page full text of verdict was released yesterday.

The HC also said the professionals under the alternative medical services can use the prefixes "Integrated Physician", "Complementary Physician", "Integrated Medicine Practitioner", and "Complementary Medicine Practitioner" before their names.

The HC bench had delivered a short verdict on November 19 last year following a writ petition seeking necessary directives on this issue.

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No vaccine crisis in the country: Quader

Says inoculation drive a success

UNB, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday trashed criticism against the recent mass vaccination campaign, terming it effective and successful.

Quader, who is also general secretary of Awami League, said this while addressing a discussion organised by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on the occasion of National Mourning Day.

He asserted that there is no crisis of Covid jobs in the country and there won't be in future.

"All that is being said about the implementation and delivery of the mass vaccination programme is unacceptable. Vaccines are currently coming from different countries and sources and it will continue to come in the next six months," he assured.

Quader said the spontaneous response of people in the mass vaccination drive is very promising, even though some people do not see it as a positive development.

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BARISHAL CITY CORPORATION

12 staffers fired for graft

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barishal City Corporation has terminated 12 of its employees on charges of corruption and irregularities.

However, they alleged that they have been sacked without following proper rules and laws.

According to BCC sources, 32 employees were sent for OSD (officer on special duty) on January 29, 2019. Later on different dates, several of them were terminated.

The 12 employees were the latest to be sacked, and letters were issued to them on Thursday.

The termination order came as per decision taken at a meeting on August 23, 2020. BCC Chief Executive Officer Syed Mohammad Farooque Ahmed signed the letters.

The sacked employees are: Assistant Engineer (electricity) Kazi Monirul Islam, Chief Health Officer Dr Abdul Matin,

Executive Engineer Humayun Kabir, mechanical engineers Kamal and Zahirul Islam, Chief Assessor Mohammad Azam, Public Relations Officer Mohammad Rumen, Estate Officer Mahbubur Rahman Shakil, Accountant Md Moinuddin, Law Assistant Rafiqul Islam, office assistants Abdus Salam and Mohammad Hayatul.

When asked about it, BCC CEO Farooque said he is on leave and advised to talk to the administrative officer.

Administrative and acting Public Relations Officer Swapan Kumar Das confirmed the matter, and said a statement will be issued for the media later.

Sacked employee Monirul Islam said, "The allegation of corruption brought against me is not correct. I've been terminated unlawfully." He also alleged, "This is not legal as I am sacked without any show-cause notice and no committee was formed to investigate the allegations."



Joydul Abedin's wife contracted Covid and was admitted to CMCH some two weeks ago. Without relatives in the city or the means to afford a hotel room, the Cumilla native and his family are forced to stay at the hospital's balcony like this, as are other families with similar circumstances. As CMCH's wards overflow with Covid patients, it's hard as it is for patients and attendants. But what makes it worse is the blatant mismanagement the hospital is plagued with, like staffers parking their motorbikes inside the ward area. These photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTOS: RAJIB RAIHAN