

Nur Hossain now gets life term in arms case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sentenced Nur Hossain, condemned in the sensational seven-murder case, to life imprisonment in an arms case.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Sabina Yesmin delivered the verdict in presence of the convict.

Four witnesses testified against him, said Salah Uddin Sweet, additional public prosecutor of the district court.

A foreign pistol and six bullets were recovered from Nur's house in Siddhirganj on May 14, 2014.

Police filed the case against him the next day, said Asaduzzaman, inspector of Narayanganj Court Police.

Seven people, including Narayanganj City Corporation panel mayor Nazrul Islam and senior lawyer Chandan Sarker, were abducted from the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road on April 27, 2014.

Later, their bodies were found floating on the Shitalakkhya.

Nur Hossain, sacked vice-president of Siddhirganj Awami League, Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, sacked commanding officer of Rab-11, and 24 others were awarded death penalty in the seven-murder case on Jan 16, 2017.

Nine other accused were sentenced to seven to 17 years of imprisonment.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

The Science Laboratory area on the capital's Mirpur Road saw higher than usual traffic yesterday, the last working day of the week, as the BNP held a namaz-e-janaza of a student leader near its Nayapaltan office. The photo was taken around 2:00pm.

Russia must not win in Ukraine

Says Nato chief as Moscow intensifies offensive in the east; Amnesty says Ukraine forces endangering civilians

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The war in Ukraine is the most dangerous moment for Europe since World War Two, and Russia must not be allowed to win, Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg said yesterday, as Kyiv had been forced to cede some territory in the east in the face of a Russian offensive.

To prevent Moscow from succeeding, Nato and its member countries may have to support Ukraine with arms and other assistance for a long time to come, Stoltenberg said in a speech in his native Norway.

"It's in our interest that this type of aggressive policy does not succeed," he said.

Amid fears among some politicians in the West that Russia's ambitions may extend beyond Ukraine, Stoltenberg warned Putin that the response to such a move from the Western military alliance would be overwhelming.

"If President Putin even thinks of doing something similar to a Nato country as he has done to Georgia, Moldova or Ukraine, then all of Nato will be involved immediately," he said.

On the battleground, Russian forces were engaged in considerable military activity, firing from tanks, barrel and

rocket artillery in several parts of Ukraine, the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said yesterday.

President Volodymyr Zelensky this week described the pressure his armed forces were under in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine as "Hell". He spoke of fierce fighting around the town of Avdiivka and the fortified village of Pisky, where Kyiv has acknowledged its Russian foe's "partial success" in recent days.

The Ukrainian military said yesterday Russian forces had mounted at least two assaults on Pisky but that its troops had managed to repel them.

Ukraine has spent the last eight years fortifying defensive positions in Pisky, viewing it as a buffer zone against Russian-backed forces who control the city of Donetsk about 10 km to the southeast, reports Reuters.

General Oleksiy Gromov told a news conference that Ukrainian forces had recaptured two villages around the eastern city of Sloviansk, but had been pushed back to the town of Avdiivka's outskirts after being forced to abandon a coal mine regarded as a key defensive position.

Pavlo Kyrylenko, the Ukrainian governor of Donetsk, said on Telegram that three civilians had been killed by Russian shelling in Bakhmut, Maryinka and Shevchenko and five wounded in the past 24 hours.

Eight people had been killed and four wounded by Russian artillery shelling in the town of Toretsk in Donetsk, he said.



Jens Stoltenberg

Amnesty International, meanwhile, said Ukrainian forces are violating international law and endangering civilians by establishing bases in residential areas, including in schools and hospitals.

The defenders' tactics "in no way justify Russia's indiscriminate attacks", the rights group said in a new report, and some Russian "war crimes" including in the city of Kharkiv were not linked to the tactics.

Ukraine's Presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak accused Amnesty of "participating in (Russia's) disinformation and propaganda campaign".

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said he was "outraged" by the report, and urged Amnesty to "stop creating a false reality."

6 pellets were lodged in head

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both sides fired shotgun shells.

Meanwhile, 36 police personnel of Bhola Sadar Police Station and 25 unnamed others were accused in a case filed yesterday over the death of Swechhasebak Dal member secretary Abdur Rahim, 32, during the clash.

The police station's Inspector (investigation) Arman Hossain was made the prime accused in the murder case filed by Rahim's wife Khadiza Begum with the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Ali Haider, said the plaintiff's lawyer Amirul Islam Baset.

Seven sub-inspectors, five assistant sub-inspectors and 23 constables were also accused in the case, he added.

According to the case statement, police opened fire on the procession of BNP activists in Bhola town, and Rahim was shot. As he laid on the ground, police beat him to death with the butt of the gun, said the case statement.

The court took the case into cognisance and instructed officer-in-charge of Bhola Sadar Police Station to present all relevant documents

over Abdur Rahim's murder before the court by August 8, said the plaintiff's lawyer.

Bhola BNP General Secretary Harun-ur-Rashid said the case was filed against those police personnel who fired shots and were identified after examining footage and photos of the clash.

The victim's wife appealed to the court that Rapid Action Battalion investigate the case.

Apart from yesterday's case, police earlier filed two cases against over 400 opposition leaders and activists including the Bhola unit BNP president and secretary.

Police have so far arrested 10 activists over the cases, said Bhola Sadar Police Station OC Enayet Hossain.

As part of BNP's countrywide demonstrations against the ongoing load shedding and "mismanagement" in the power sector, local leaders and activists of the party gathered in front of the district BNP office in Bhola on Sunday.

At one stage, police intercepted their procession, triggering a clash that left Abdur Rahim dead and scores injured.

Deceased JCD leader Noor-e-

Alam's father-in-law Abdul Bashed Bachchu alleged that law enforcers shot Alam intentionally as he was a top JCD leader.

Meanwhile, the dawn-to-dusk strike in Bhola to protest the death of the JCD leader was called off after six hours.

Most shops in the town remained shut and only rickshaws were seen plying the roads during the strike. Besides, law enforcers were deployed in some areas.

A delegation of central BNP leaders visited Bhola yesterday.

At a press conference organised by the district BNP unit, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, a member of the BNP National Standing Committee, condemned the firing by police and demanded exemplary trial and fair investigation.

The central leaders of BNP also visited the houses of the two bereaved families and promised to stand by them.

Meanwhile, vowing revenge for the murders of the two, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday urged the party rank and file to take action instead of shedding tears to save the nation from the "fascist" rule of Awami League.

6 Jubo Dal activists injured in 'attack by BCL men'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least six Jubo Dal activists in Barishal's Pathorghata upazila were injured when their procession was attacked allegedly by local Chhatra League men yesterday.

The injured have been admitted to Pathorghata Upazila Health Complex, said Saiful Islam Jamal, joint convener of Pathorghata Upazila Jubo Dal.

He alleged that the procession, brought out to protest the killings of two party men in Bhola, was attacked by Chhatra League activists around 10:30am.

Pathorghata Police Station Sub-inspector Shahidul Islam said police dispersed the two sides and the situation was under control.

Mohammad Walid, president of Pathorghata Upazila Chhatra League, said they were not involved in any attack, but just went in front of Jubo Dal office and asked to stop the procession.

Two Covid patients die, positivity rate down to 5.14%

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate reported that two Covid-19 patients died in the country in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

The two deaths brought the total number of Covid fatalities in the country to 29,300, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

In the same period, at least 278 people tested positive for the highly transmissible virus against 5,404 samples tested countrywide.

The positivity rate was 5.14 percent, down from 6.53 percent the previous day.

Of the two deceased, one was a female aged between 61 and 70 and the other was a male between 51 and 60.

Both were from Sylhet division, according to the press release.

Taliban say they were not aware of slain al-Qaeda leader's presence in Kabul

REUTERS, Islamabad/Kabul

The Taliban yesterday said the government had no information about al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri "entering and living" in capital city Kabul and warned the United States to never repeat an attack on Afghan soil.

The United States killed Zawahiri with a missile fired from a drone while he stood on a balcony at his Kabul hideout on Sunday, US officials said, in the biggest blow to the militants since US Navy SEALs shot dead Osama bin Laden more than a decade ago.

"The government and the leadership wasn't aware of what is being claimed, nor any trace there," Suhail Shaheen, the designated Taliban representative to the United Nations, who is based in Doha, said in a statement.

"Investigation is underway now to find out about the veracity of the claim," he said, adding that the results of the investigation would be shared publicly.

A chilling tale of a highway robbery

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"Then they took the mobile phones, cash, jewellery and other valuables. Five or six of them raped a female passenger," said Kaiser.

Helal Miah, a guard in Raktibazar area of Madhupur, said he saw a bus slowing down on the highway and men jumping off it around 3:00am.

The bus then went off the road and became stationary with its right wheels in the air after hitting an electric pole.

"Then I walked towards the bus and heard someone screaming 'robbers'. The robbers [men who jumped off the vehicle] started running away. I saw a white microbus and I think they got on it and fled. Then I went near the bus and screamed for the locals to come and help," he told reporters.

"A woman in torn clothes was among the passengers. The other women passengers' dupattas were given to her so that she could cover herself. The travellers said there was a robbery in the bus.

"But the passengers could not

come out of the vehicle as the door was blocked. Many of them came out through the windows using a ladder brought from a nearby mosque."

SP Kaiser said detectives in Tangail caught one of the suspects named Raja Miah, 32. He drove the hijacked bus and was arrested at his home in Deola area of Tangail around 5:00am, he said.

The suspect, who is originally from Balla area of Kalihati, used to be a bus driver on Dhaka-Tangail route.

A court placed him on a five-day remand.

The SP said the arrestee had told police the names and addresses of the other suspects.

A case was filed with Madhupur Police Station under the penal code and Women and Children Repression (prevention) Act, he added.

Fruit trader Hekmat Ali who was in the bus filed the case. He said he was travelling to Dhaka with his wife, two children, and mother-in-law.

"One of the robbers slapped me hard on the ear. They took away Tk 22,000,

two mobile phones, and my wife and mother-in-law's jewellery.

"I could hear that they were torturing a woman behind us, but there was nothing I could do about it. I also heard screams of another woman from the front, but I couldn't see anything in the dark," he said.

"Hearing everything from us, police asked us to file a case. I just wanted to be a witness of the case. But they asked me to be the complainant, so I agreed."

"The police put us on a BRTC bus at 9:00am [on Wednesday] to go home," Hekmat added.

Contacted, Solaiman Hossain, owner of the bus, said the driver and the two crew members have worked for him "for a long time".

Asked whether the robbers got on the bus from the highway, he said, "When a bus is on the road, the drivers, helpers, conductors control the bus," Solaiman said.

"I want the punishment of the culprits," Solaiman added.

Tk 117cr lost

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situation. The information in the audit report is not true. Meanwhile, I am yet to be paid a huge amount of the bill."

Yesterday, he claimed he was paid only 30 percent of his Tk 31.90 crore bill.

During the audit, officials involved in the project dismissed any financial anomalies.

The audit report, however, recommended actions against the people responsible and realising the money spent without due process.

Contacted, project officials said there had been a few "official document gaps" when the audit was done.

Asked, the current Project Director Shah Golam Nabi told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "We have taken the report seriously. We will sit with the officials concerned at the health ministry, audit office and the World Banksoon and I will execute the decisions."

China stages

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Taiwan officials said the drills violated United Nations rules, invaded its space and threatened free air and sea navigation. Beijing, which considers Taiwan a part of its territory to one day be reclaimed, by force if necessary, has defended the drills as "necessary and just", pinning the blame for the escalation on the United States and its allies.

Taiwan said that websites of its defence ministry, foreign ministry and the presidential office were attacked by hackers, and warned of coming "psychological warfare".

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called Pelosi's visit to Taiwan a "manic, irresponsible and highly irrational" act, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Wang, speaking at a meeting of Southeast Asian foreign ministers in Cambodia, said China had tried to avert crisis by diplomatic means but

would never let its core interests be hurt.

In the meeting, ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) warned against "provocative action". The situation "could lead to miscalculation, serious confrontation, open conflicts and unpredictable consequences among major powers", the ministers said in a joint statement published yesterday.

Wang Yi is attending the talks along with his US counterpart Antony Blinken, though they are not expected to hold a one-on-one meeting.

Blinken said the United States had contacted China "at every level of government" in recent days to call for calm and stability.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, also in Phnom Penh, condemned the Chinese response saying a visit can't be "a pretext for aggressive military activity".