

DEATH OF HOUSE HELP 10-yr-old girl was beaten, then strangled to death

Say police after arresting
her employer from Jashore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 10-year-old house help, whose body was recovered from a city flat last week, was beaten with a wooden utensil before being strangled on the day she died, said police quoting her employer.

Police said Sathi Parvin, 40, frequently tortured Hena, 10.

They came up with this after arresting Sathi from Jashore yesterday morning.

Sathi had been on the run since August 26 when police recovered the body from her Central Road flat.

The arrestee gave distressing details of torture after her arrest, Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Kalabagan Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Hena's entire body had several signs of torture, said morgue sources at the Dhaka Medical College.

The OC said that Hena, hailing from Muktagacha of Mymensingh, lost her parents when she was little. She was under the care of one of her aunts who took her to Sathi's home in Dhaka three years ago.

Sathi was supposed to pay Hena's aunt Tk 2,000 a month, which she stopped paying after a few months.

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Missing boy found dead in Ctg canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

The body of a boy who went missing in Halishahar area of the port city on Friday evening was recovered from a canal last night.

The deceased is Md Abdul, 5, son of Md Kamal, a resident of the Halishahar area.

The body was recovered from a canal beside Shafiq Colony of Chotopol area under Double Mooring Police Station.

Fazlul Quader, officer-in-charge (OC) of Double Mooring Police Station, told The Daily Star, "The boy went missing from Badsha Mia Brick Field area near his house on Friday around 3:00pm under Halishahar Police Station."

Locals and family suspected that he fell into the canal while playing near it.

An unnatural death case has been filed in this connection.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina flanked by her younger sister Sheikh Rehana and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at a rally on the former trade fair ground at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar after the prime minister inaugurated the country's first elevated expressway yesterday. *Inset*, a section of the crowd at the rally.

UKRAINE COUNTEROFFENSIVE Troops ‘moving forward’, Zelenskiy says rebuffing critics

Russia says downed three drones near border, Ukrainian shelling kills 1

REUTERS

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said yesterday that Kyiv's troops were "moving forward" in their counteroffensive against Russian forces, rebuffing Western officials who say that Ukraine is gaining ground too slowly.

The much-vaunted counteroffensive, which is nearing the three-month mark, has retaken more than a dozen villages but no major settlements with soldiers hampered by vast Russian minefields and defensive lines.

This week, unnamed US officials vented frustration at the slow progress of the operation and even faulted Ukrainian strategy, according to Western reports that drew Kyiv's ire.

"Ukrainian forces are moving forward. Despite everything, and no matter what anyone says, we are advancing, and that is the most important thing. We are on the move," Zelenskiy wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defence Ministry said yesterday that it had brought down three Ukrainian drones over the

Belgorod region, while the regional governor said that one man had been killed in a Ukrainian rocket strike on a village close to the border.

Separately, the governors of the nearby frontier regions of Bryansk and Kursk said a string of border villages had come under

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—Zelenskiy

fire from Ukraine, and a woman had been wounded in Kursk region.

Some fear the West's support could begin to falter as colder and wetter weather slows progress on the battlefield later in the year. The West has poured in many billions of dollars to help the counteroffensive and Kyiv says it needs more.

Ukrainian battlefield momentum has picked up slightly in one part of the

southeastern Zaporizhzhia front where Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said on Friday that Kyiv's troops had broken through the first line of Russian defences.

The White House said there had been "notable success" by Ukraine in the area, although Maliar warned that Kyiv's troops had reached even more heavily fortified positions on the other side after breaking through.

Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian territory have picked up in recent weeks, with dozens of drones striking Russia at once on some days, reaching as far as the western city of Pskov, 400 miles (600 km) from Ukraine.

Russian-installed authorities in the Moscow-controlled part of Ukraine's Kherson region also said that Kyiv struck the village of Maslivka in a drone strike, wounding a civilian.

In its daily battlefield update, the Ukrainian military reported no new breakthroughs, but said its troops continued to advance towards Melitopol, a major Russian-occupied urban centre in Zaporizhzhia region.

Baby killed over property dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police on Friday night arrested two women on charges of killing a five-month old baby over a land dispute in Nalitabari, Sherpur.

Lovely Begum, 30, and her mother-in-law Hanufa Begum, 65, were accused of killing the baby by throwing her to the ground.

According to a case filed by the baby's father Moysor Uddin, a resident of Kandapara, he and the family of the arrestees had a property dispute for years, said Abdul Latif Miah, officer-in-charge of Nalitabari Police Station.

Moysor and his wife Fatema Begum were planting banana saplings on the land in the afternoon when Lovely, her husband Hamidul Islam and Hanufa went there and engaged in an argument, read the complaint.

At one stage, Lovely snatched away the five-month old baby from Fatema and threw her to the ground.

The baby died while being taken to Sherpur General Hospital. Moysor later filed the case accusing the arrestees and three others.

Two children drown while swimming in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two children drowned while taking a bath in a pond in Kalihati, Tangail yesterday.

The children were Sadi'a Akter Jeem, 8, and her aunt Jannati Akter, 11, of Narandia union.

Jakaria Hossain, an uncle of Jeem, said the girls were declared dead when taken to a hospital.

Motorcycle accident leaves 23-yr-old dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A pillion rider died in a bike accident on Postogola Bridge in the capital early yesterday.

The driver lost control of the motorcycle and the victim, Farhadul Islam Shihab, 23, was hit by a bus after he fell off the bike.

Shihab, son of Abdus Satter from Chandpur, used to live with his family in Jatrabari.

His friend, Saurav, 23, who was driving the motorcycle at the time of the accident, was also injured.

Saiful Islam, sub-inspector of Shyampur Police Station, told The Daily Star that the accident happened around 1:30am.

"Shihab, during the fall, was hit by a passing bus," he said.

Both friends were rushed by police to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's emergency unit.

At the hospital, medical personnel declared Shihab dead.

The police are investigating the incident further to determine the exact cause of the accident.

Shihab's body was sent to the morgue for an autopsy, while Saurav was taken to his residence in Jatrabari after initial medical treatment, added Saiful.

A new era in Dhaka commute

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She paid the toll at the Kawla end where Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader received Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana.

After a short ceremony there, her convoy drove the 11.5km airport-Agaragaon section and reached the old trade fair ground, where she unveiled the inaugural plaque around 4:00pm.

This section will open to traffic today.

The opening comes a decade after the government signed the deal with Italian-Thai Development Public Company to build the expressway in 2011, at a cost of Tk 8,703 crore. The agreement was revised and inked again in December 2013 with a revised cost of Tk 8,940 crore after bringing several changes to the design. According to the deal, the government will provide Tk 2,413 crore (27 percent) while the private partner will bear the rest.

The total length of the expressway is 46.73km stretching from Kawla, Kuril, Banani, Mohakhali, Tejgaon, Moghbazar, Kamalapur, Sayedabad and Jatrabari to Kutubkhali on the Dhaka Chattogram highway.

To mark the opening, Dhaka city AL organised the rally, where Awami League leaders and activists from Dhaka and other districts gathered amid much festivity, chanting various slogans.

Speaking at the rally, Hasina said nothing could be gained by threatening to oust her government through imposing sanctions or visa restrictions.

"Let me tell you clearly. This is our soil; we liberated the country under the leadership of the Father of the Nation. There is nothing to gain by threatening us. People know how to realise their rights," she said, report UNB and BSS.

She also asked her party activists not to be afraid of clouds, and said, "Every cloud has a silver lining."

"There are six seasons in Bangladesh. During these six seasons, sometimes we see rain, sometimes we have storms, sometimes we have sun, and sometimes we have cyclones. We have the experience of witnessing different things in different times. There is no point trying to intimidate us," Hasina said.

The AL chief also said BNP is now talking about a movement for revival of democracy though the party itself was established undemocratically.

"There are many who do not see democracy in the country and want to salvage democracy. How can a party that was formed undemocratically offer democracy?"

Hasina said that between 1975 and 1996 and again between 2001 and 2008, the country had plunged into darkness. "Today, the country is not in that era of darkness anymore. Bangladesh is now on a journey towards light."

She also said that since 2009, the government has ensured democracy and voting rights in the country.

Speaking at the event, Obaidul Quader said many development projects including elevated expressway, metro rail, Padma Bridge and Bangabandhu Tunnel have been implemented during the AL government's tenure, while the BNP gave the country nothing.

Hundreds of leaders and activists of various associated bodies of AL started thronging the rally venue since 12:00pm with colourful banners and festoons praising the government and the PM.

Within hours, the rally venue was packed with thousands of activists.

Jasim Uddin, 60, came from Jamalpur to attend the rally.

"This [the expressway] is our pride. I have come from so far to listen to the prime minister and other party leaders," he said.

Mega projects alone

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are being set up across the country without ensuring quality of education.

The economist observed that the country should set up a lot of polytechnic and nursing education institutes. He said a lot of nurses are recruited by Singapore hospitals from Kerala of India, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

Wahiduddin said a few mistakes in the economic management have caused the current troubles in the macroeconomic management and the ordinary people are suffering the most due to this.

High inflation, depleting forex reserves and current account deficit are the major crises the economy is faced with now, he said, adding that the severe fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war only worsened the crises.

According to him, Bangladesh's economy was performing well

before the start of the crises and the government was suffering from complacency. For instance, the inflation was 6 percent and the US dollar exchange rate was fixed at almost the same rate for many years.

He said taka would not have depreciated so much against the US dollar if its gradual devaluation was allowed.

Wahiduddin said many influential borrowers are not repaying loans to local banks.

He said money laundering increased not only through under-invoicing or over-invoicing, but also through "hundi" and the money launderers hunt homes abroad with the laundered money.

They built homes at "Begumpara" in Canada and Malaysia. Many of them secured dual citizenship in Singapore, and owned hotel chains and real estate business in Singapore, the expert said.

The economist said the government could not check borrowers not repaying although banking transactions leave behind evidence.

The Hallmark Group took money from banks. There are paper and digital trails of the transactions, he said, adding, "What is the point of such digitalisation?"

All these bad incidents caused instability in Bangladesh's macroeconomy, he said.

The authorities made another mistake by keeping the loan interest rate unchanged for many years. As a result, an uncertainty was created regarding the economy, he added.

He said the government should adopt an integrated economic policy in a transparent way.

Maintaining a balanced relationship with both China and India is important for Bangladesh as they are major sources for importing

industrial raw materials, said the expert.

Also, maintaining warm ties with the Western countries is important as they are major export destinations for Bangladesh, he said.

The former DU teacher said it doesn't matter whether Bangladesh became a BRICS member.

Payment for exports and imports without US dollars is not possible for Bangladesh as the balance of trade with the importing nations is not adequate to settle payments, he said.

In such a difficult time, the government should think about improving living standards of the low-income people. It should now take up projects which are least harmful to the economy, he observed.

ERF President Mohammad Refayet Ullah Mirdha and General Secretary Abul Kashem also spoke at the event.

Must-win clash for Tigers

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Except for Najmul Hossain Shanto's 89-run knock, none of Bangladesh batters had an impact as the wheels fell off at the innings' back end, resulting in a paltry 164-run total.

After debutant Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Naim Sheikh failed to provide a stable start, the opening position came under criticism.

The top-order batting thus remains the biggest headache for head coach Chandika Hathursingha, who may make a few changes to the playing eleven.

A lot will be riding on Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, and the seasoned

Shakib and Mushfiquur Rahim to shoulder a lion's share of responsibility against a tough Afghan bowling outfit.

Starleggie Rashid Khan and miserly off-spinner Mubeen Ur Rahman are anticipated to play crucial roles, as is left-arm seamer Fazalhaq Farooqi — who was instrumental in their recent 2-1 ODI series triumph over hosts Bangladesh.

The iconic Gaddafi Stadium remains an unfamiliar territory for both teams. Bangladesh last played here in 2008, while Afghanistan will be making their debut.

National polls

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29. According to the constitution, national elections must be held within 90 days before the expiry of the five-year term of parliament. The 90-day countdown starts on November 1.

Speaking at the event, CEC Kazi Habibul Awal said holding a free and fair election will be an accomplishment for the Commission, and that the EC wants the election to be not only free, fair and peaceful, but also credible.

He said that although determining credibility can be difficult, people's perception following an election is important.

The CEC said conducting an election is not easy in a country where the culture of election, politics and democracy has yet to reach its highest level.

He cited the example of Europe where elections are peaceful because of the level of maturity of their democracies.

"But we are still moving forward with the trial-and-error process," he added.

If people can truly exercise their

right to vote freely, then that election can be called a true election, he noted, adding, "And the government will be formed on the basis of the opinion of the people."

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) Ahsan Habib Khan said elections are a teamwork and for having a neutral, free and fair election, all-out support from everyone is necessary.

EC Rashida Sultana said everyone should remain careful so that no questions arise regarding the election.

How to get

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There are exits on Kemal Ataturk Avenue at Banani and near Mohakhali Bus Terminal.

Two- and three-wheelers are not allowed on the expressway.

Cars, SUVs, minibuses with fewer than 16 seats, and trucks with a capacity of less than 3 tonnes will pay Tk 80 for using the expressway.

Trucks with six wheels will pay Tk 320, those with more than six wheels Tk 400, and buses with 16 or more seats Tk 160.