

Swechchhasebak Dal man hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

An activist of Swechchhasebak Dal was hacked to death in Bogura early yesterday.

The deceased, identified as local sand trader Abu Sayeed, 33, came under attack at Paschim Para Nishindhara area of the town after 12:00am, according to the police.

Locals rescued and rushed him to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where he died during treatment, said police.

Sayeed's brother Md Ripon said unknown people called Sayeed over the phone after midnight and later hacked him with sharp weapons.

His father Yusuf Ali filed a case against unidentified people over the incident later in the day, said SM Mouin Uddin, officer-in-charge of Bogura Sadar Police Station.

"We have not found any motive behind the murderer yet," said the police officer. "No one has been arrested, but police are working to identify those involved in the murder."

Hossain Ali, member secretary of Bogura Town Swechchhasebak Dal, confirmed that Sayeed was an activist of the BNP-affiliated organisation.

Police extorting bribes from their own

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The Daily Star has learnt seven such incidents where policemen and others were extorted allegedly by police and local leaders of BNP.

Along with 179 other people, including 36 other police officers, Anup is accused of attempted murder of Ahdul Islam, 25, who was shot and injured during the protests.

Prominent Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna was also accused in the case, but his name was later dropped in the face of intense criticism.

Complainant Mohammad Baker, 52, father of victim Ahdul, used to sell vegetables in Banasree. When the controversy over Panna's name in the case arose, Baker had told this newspaper over the phone that he did not know any of the accused.

"A lawyer named Jashim and some other people drafted the list. I just signed the first information report [FIR]. I wanted justice for my son. So, I sought their help to file the case," he had said.

Baker had added he had no details of lawyer Jashim. Several attempts by this newspaper to reach the lawyer failed at that time.

Several other police officers accused in the case alleged that a section of their colleagues, in collusion with local BNP men, were running rackets to extort vulnerable policemen.

Requesting anonymity, the officers said their colleagues involved in these rackets had been very active in subduing the student-led mass uprising. Now these rogue officers have ganged up with local BNP men only to cover up their misdeeds during the Awami League regime.

With the tables turned, explained police officers, a section of their colleagues have also seized the opportunity for retribution and personal gain.

They explained that these rackets are threatening them with more murder cases if they do not comply and pay.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the accused police officers alleged that these extortions were demanding Tk 2 lakh from inspectors, Tk 1 lakh from sub-inspectors and Tk 50,000 from assistant sub-inspectors.

Some officers who had actually fired



Touhid Hossain, adviser to the foreign ministry, addresses a session on the second day of the two-day National Dialogue 2024 titled "Unity, Reform, and Elections" organised by the Forum for Bangladesh Studies at the Krishibid Institution Auditorium in the capital's Khamarbari area yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

People believe govt delaying polls

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reforms. We can't allow an unelected government to remain in power for long under the pretext of completing reforms."

The event was organised by a faction of the Jatiya Gonantantrik Party at the Jatiya Press Club.

Fakhrul alleged that Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus sparked controversy by suggesting that the minimum voter age be lowered to 17, which has raised concerns about further delays in the election process.

"This means a new voter list will have to be prepared. People will now fear that more time will be wasted, and further delays will occur due to this [preparation of voter list]."

He criticised Yunus for making such a statement without consulting the stakeholders.

"You are the chief executive, and you suggested that 17 years is a more suitable age. When you say this, it becomes binding on the Election Commission."

The BNP leader said the government should allow the EC to make this decision independently.

Fakhrul emphasised that the current minimum voter age of 18 is widely accepted.

He said the BNP has no objection to reform initiatives. However, when an elected government takes office through a national election, the country's instability is reduced.

Refuting claims that the BNP seeks early elections to go to power, he said, "There is a misconception that the BNP

weapons during the incident on July 19, as documented in a previous case, were not named in the attempted murder case, raising concerns about selective accusations. The Daily Star has copies of both the initial FIR and the revised one over the July 19 incident.

He also told this newspaper recently that such extortion rackets were running rampant within the police force.

Contacted for this report, a Dhaka Metropolitan Police spokesman said they did not receive any specific allegations of policemen extorting their colleagues.

"We'll take action if someone brings specific allegations," said Talebir Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

Contacted for comments on the alleged involvement of local BNP men in the extortionist gangs, a senior leader of the party said they had clarified their stance against extortion on many occasions in the past.

Wishing not to be named, he mentioned that the party had also taken action like expulsion against activists accused of extortion.

The Daily Star's attempts to reach several other BNP leaders failed.

Several key officials of the government and police have publicly acknowledged such extortions are taking place.

Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said that since August 5, many cases have been being filed against political rivals and victims, causing embarrassment for the government. "During the fascist regime, ghost cases were common, and the government itself filed such cases. Our government does not do this," he said.

Home Affairs Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said that action would be taken against those filing cases to harass others.

"Currently, many cases are being filed, and many innocent people are being dragged into these. I am instructing the heads of law enforcement agencies to take action against those who are filing such cases," he said.

DMP Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali recently vowed action against such complainants and police personnel, saying he had already ordered officers-in-charge to sue complainants for extortions to avoid being named as accused in cases.

Some officers alleged that the group

demanded money from 16 officers

named in the case, threatening to name them in more cases if they did not pay.

People close to many of these officers, who requested anonymity, have confirmed that they agreed to pay their colleagues.

They said extortions mention "Tk 2" for inspectors and "Tk 1" for sub-inspectors. The officers later explained "Tk 1" in such extortion parlance means Tk 1 lakh. A former officer-in-charge of a police station in Dhaka told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity that he had personally mediated at least seven cases where his colleagues paid extortions to avoid being named as accused in cases.

Speaking at the same session, ICT

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said, "The

tribunal cannot bring to justice every

single officer or individual involved in

crimes against humanity [within the

time frame of the interim government].

But we'll bring the 'top commanders' to justice."

He added that this will include Sheikh Hasina and those who acted as deputies in the chain of command. "Let the criminal courts deal with the rest."

The chief prosecutor further said the

tribunal, with 17 investigation officers

and 10 prosecutors, are being realistic

with their ambitions.

Attorney General Asaduzzaman said,

"One of our challenges is making sure this tribunal can never be called a 'kangaroo court' and verdicts be questioned."

"We're faced with the reality that many criminal cases are being filed under questionable circumstances and people are being victimised. But we want to assure you that those cases will not impact the processes of the ICT, which will not focus on one or two incidents,

but rather attempt to prove that crimes against humanity were committed in the

past."

Mentioning that the BNP has no

objection to the formation of new

political parties, he said the nation will

assess whether this truly benefits the

country and listen to what they want."

Fakhrul criticised some advisers of

the interim government for failing to

address the price spirals of essentials and

getting involved in politics."

"Prices of essentials like rice, lentils,

oil, salt, eggs, fish, and chicken have

gone up. People's lives have become

unbearable. Yet, they [advisers] are not

paying attention."

"We haven't seen any adviser or

official visit the markets to identify the

problems behind the price hike. Instead

of addressing the issue, many of them are

getting involved in politics."

Fakhrul urged the advisers not

to make comments that undermine

political parties and their leaders."

"You must remember that you are

an interim government. Your primary

responsibility is to implement reforms

and hold an election that is acceptable to all."

Your main task is to transfer power to an elected government."

He said political parties are not

opponents of the interim government.

"There is a misconception that the BNP

is prioritising in a democratic society,

safeguarding the interests of the state

becomes easier."

While discussing the Rohingya

crisis, he referred to a recent meeting

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"We need to rethink our approach to

Myanmar and review our policies. Our

army should be equipped and prepared

for the 21st century battlefield."

Obaidul Haque, associate professor

Another Bangladeshi shot dead by 'Indian Khasias'

STAR REPORT

Another Bangladeshi has been shot dead allegedly by a member of India's Khasia community along the Bangladesh-India border near Gowainghat upazila of Sylhet.

The victim was identified as Sabuj Mia, 22, son of Abul Hossain, a resident of the upazila's Bhitorulgol village.

The incident took place on Friday, a day after a Bangladeshi teenager was similarly gunned down along the Minatila border in Sylhet's Jaintiapur upazila.

According to a BGB press release, Sabuj, along with several others, crossed into a betel nut garden inside Indian territory Friday evening. He was shot there by a member of the Khasia community. He died on the spot, and his associates brought the body back at midnight, the release added.

BGB has officially protested the killing to the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and demanded legal action against the Indian national who opened fire, the press release reads.

Just a day earlier, a 16-year-old Bangladeshi teenager died after being shot allegedly by members of India's Khasia community along the Bangladesh-India border near Jaintiapur upazila of Sylhet.

The incident occurred around 12:30pm on Thursday near the upazila's Minatila area.

The victim was identified as Md Maruf Mia, son of Md Shahabuddin of Jhingbari village in Jaintiapur upazila.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) 48th Sylhet Battalion confirmed the matter at a press brief following the incident, reported Prothom Alo.

According to the BGB, Maruf was shot by the Khasia people while he, along with several others, attempted to cross the border illegally into India in the afternoon.

He was later rescued and taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, where he died from his injuries around 3:00pm, reported UNB.

The youth have right to form political party

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