

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

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**Questions**

**1. Please advise if there are any reports of the deaths of Shamsul Haque and Sheikh Russell?**

**RESPONSE**

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Numerous media reports of the March 2004 murders of Old Dhaka businessman Shamsul Haque (also rendered as Haq and Huq), his son Russell Sheikh (also rendered as Sheikh Russell and Russel Sheikh), and their driver, Moazzem Hossain, were found. In particular, extensive coverage of the murders, and the trial of the main suspect Rafiqul Islam Kajal (or Kajol), was located in Bangladesh news source *The Daily Star* (<http://www.thedailystar.net/>).

A report published by *The Daily Star* on 27 March 2004 indicated that Shamsul Haq and his son Russell had gone missing on Friday, 26 March 2004, and that the body of their driver had been found in their car. The article indicated that the discovery of unidentified human body parts had prompted fears that Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh had been killed. The article provided an account of early speculation made by the family of Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh to the effect that their disappearance may have been connected to a recent property deal with former Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader Kajal. The article described Shamsul Haque as an “old Dhaka business leader”, who was “the president of Sadarghat Cloth Association, member of Bangladesh Shop-Owners’ Association, vice-president of Sadarghat Santrash Protirodh Committee and was the chairman of Bechagaon union in Munshiganj” (“Trader, son feared killed in capital’ 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.4, No. 295, 28 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/28/d4032801011.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2008 – Attachment 1).

An article published in *The Daily Star* on 29 March 2004 indicated that body parts found by the police in different locations around Dhaka had been positively identified as belonging to Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh. The same article indicates that more than 1000 local businessmen from Sadarghat had participated in a protest march against the killings; it may be of interest that this article indicates that this protest was led by Awami League Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, and by Sayeed Khokon, son of former Mayor Mohammed Hanif, and also that Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka visited the family of Shamsul Haque to offer his condolences. This article also features photographs of Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh ('Shredded bodies of trader, son found' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 296, 29 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/29/d4032901011.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008 – Attachment 3).

Information was found to indicate that the Old Dhaka business community engaged in further protests over the killings, and demanded that the government take action to ensure their security. An article published in *The Daily Star* indicated that thousands of Old Dhaka business people went on strike on 30 March 2004 to protest against the killings ('Businesses in Old Dhaka stop, protest killings' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.34, No. 298, 31 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/31/d4033101066.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008 – Attachment 8). Another article provides information on the prevalence of violent crimes committed against business people in the Old Dhaka quarter ('Horror haunts business people' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 298, 31 March <http://thedailystar.net/2004/03/31/d403312501114.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008 – Attachment 9).

An article published in *The Daily Star* on 29 March 2004 indicated that the prime suspect in the murders was Rafiqul Islam Kajal, a member of the Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal (the youth-wing of the ruling BNP). Kajal had also been previously charged with the murder of a police officer during a internecine clash between rival factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal at Jagganath University College ('Shredded bodies of trader, son found' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 296, 29 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/29/d4032901011.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008 – Attachment 3; for information on the prior murder charge against Kajal see 'All accused acquitted of bomb blast charges' 2005, *The Daily Star*, Vol.5, No. 459, 9 September <http://thedailystar.net/2005/09/09/d50909060562.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2008 – Attachment 4).

Differing accounts of the background to the murders of Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh were located. Information contained in an article published in *The Daily Star* on 30 March 2004 indicated that Rafiqul Islam Kajal was a family friend and business associate of Shamsul Haque, and that they co-owned the SH Mansion in Sadarghat. The same article also reported that "Kajal allegedly led an armed gang that unleashed a reign of terror in Sadarghat area by running extortion rackets and carrying out murders and other crimes", and that when Shamsul Haque had left home to meet Kajal on Friday 26 March 2004, he had taken with him Tk 200,000, which was to assist with Kajal's defense against a murder charge he was facing (Businesspeople strike today in outrage' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.4, No. 297, 30 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/30/d4033001033.htm> – Accessed 28 March 2008 – Attachment 5).

A later article published on the *News From Bangladesh* website on 6 October 2004 provides a conflicting account of the business deal between Shamsul Haque and Rafiqul Islam Kajal. The article indicates that the Sufiania Market had been built and co-owned by Shamsul

Haque and Rafiqul Islam Kajal's father. After the death of Kajal's father, Kajal inherited his share in the property, which he subsequently arranged for Haque to buy. The article indicates that Haque had paid Kajal Tk 3,100,000 for the property, but that Kajal had delayed handing over the title deed, and that on the day of their murder, Haque and Russell Sheikh had arranged to meet Kajal and make a payment of Tk 200,000 to finalise the deal. The article quotes Bangladesh police sources as attributing a financial motive to the killings, indicating that Kajal had arranged the murders for the Tk 3,300,000 involved in the deal ('CID submits charge sheet in father-son murder case' 2004, *News From Bangladesh*, 6 October <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidDate=2004-10-06&hidType=LOC&hidRecord=0000000000000000024029> – Accessed 27 March 2008 – Attachment 6; another slightly different account of the business deal was located in earlier report 'Trader, son feared killed in capital' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.4, No. 295, 28 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/28/d4032801011.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2008 – Attachment 1).

An article published by *Agence France-Presse* on 29 March 2004 indicated that police had stated that they believed the killings were connected to a business dispute "but added the killings were exceptional for their brutality". The article provided information on the prevalence of kidnappings and violence directed towards the Bangladesh business community, and also quoted Bangladesh State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, who commented on the brutality of the killings, and speculated that they were calculated to terrorise the community (Qadir, Nadeem 2004, 'Bangladesh in shock over beheading of businessmen, police arrest suspect', *Agence France-Presse*, 29 March – Attachment 2).

An article published in *The Daily Star* on 29 March 2004 indicated that Shamsul Haque was an active member of the Awami League, serving as an advisor to the party's Louhojang upazila unit in Munshiganj. The article also published a statement by Awami League Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, expressing a lack of confidence in the prospects for justice in the case, given that the main accused was a member of the ruling BNP ('Shredded bodies of trader, son found' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 296, 29 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/29/d4032901011.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008 – Attachment 3).

An article published in *The Daily Star* on 30 March 2004 indicated that the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party and opposition Awami League had blamed each other for the killings. The same article also provided further reports of politicization of the killings, and referred to an intelligence report which indicated the killings were part of attempts by an unnamed party to compromise law and order for political reasons ('Politics clouds road to justice' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.4 No. 297, 30 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/30/d4033001066.htm> – Accessed 27 March 2008 – Attachment 7).

Information was found to indicate that the killings attracted significant high-level political attention in Bangladesh:

- An article from *Agence France-Presse* indicated that Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed had visited the family of Shamsul Haque on Sunday 28 March, and made a statement regarding the killings (Qadir, Nadeem 2004, 'Bangladesh in shock

over beheading of businessmen, police arrest suspect’, *Agence France-Presse*, 29 March – Attachment 2).

- An article from 8 April 2004 indicates that the family members of Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh had met Prime Minister Zia in early April, and that she had made undertakings to ensure their safety, and assurances that the killers would be tried through the Speedy Trial Court (‘Shamsul Huq’s family members call on Khaleda’ 2004, *The New Nation*, (Internet Archive, 29 April 2004), 8 April [http://web.archive.org/web/20040429233635/http://nation.ittefaq.com/artman/publish/article\\_8159.shtml](http://web.archive.org/web/20040429233635/http://nation.ittefaq.com/artman/publish/article_8159.shtml) – Accessed 27 March 2008 – Attachment 10).

An article published in *The Daily Star* on 31 March 2004 indicated that the family of Shamsul Haque had received anonymous telephone threats since registering a case against Rafiqul Islam Kajal for the murders of Haque and Russell Sheikh (‘Businesses in Old Dhaka stop, protest killings’ 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.34, No. 298, 31 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/31/d4033101066.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008 – Attachment 8).

An article published in *The Daily Star* on 1 April 2004 indicated police were hunting for Kajal, and reported suggestions that the killings of Shamsul Haque and his son and driver were connected with other recent murders (‘Same killers out to wipe out witnesses’ 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 300, 1 April <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/04/01/d4040101055.htm> – Accessed 27 March 2008 – Attachment 11).

Coverage of the legal proceedings against those accused of the killings was found in the Bangladesh media:

- An article published in *The Daily Star* indicated that on 5 October 2004, police pressed charges for the murders of Shamsul Haque, Russell Sheikh, and Moazzem Hossain against Rafiqul Islam Kajal and eight other persons. The article indicated that of those charged, only one person, Md Rahim had been arrested; the rest, including Kajal, were still at large (‘Charges pressed against Kajal, 8 others in triple murder case’ 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 5, No. 133, 6 October <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/10/06/d41006012625.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2008 – Attachment 12).
- An article published in *The Daily Star* indicated that the trial for the murders of Shamsul Haque, Russell Sheikh and Moazzem Hossain had commenced on 5 May 2005 in the “Speedy Trial Tribunal-1”, and that eight of the accused, including Rafiqul Islam Kajal, had still not been apprehended (‘Trial begins’ 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 5, No. 333, 6 May 2005 <http://www.thedailystar.net/2005/05/06/d50506060979.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2008 – Attachment 13).
- An article published in *The Daily Star* on 29 November 2005 indicated that Rafiqul Islam Kajal and eight accomplices had been sentenced to death *in absentia* for the murders of Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh, and gives a summary of the case. The article reports that the motive for the killings was financial (‘Jubo Dal leader, 8 others to die’ 2005, *The Daily Star*, Vol.5, No. 536, 29 November

<http://www.thedailystar.net/2005/11/29/d5112901043.htm> – Accessed 28 March 2008 – Attachment 14).

No information was found to indicate that Rafiqul Islam Kajal, or any of the other persons convicted *in absentia* of the murders of Shamsul Haque and Russell Sheikh, had been captured since the conclusion of the trial. Information was found to indicate that Rafiqul Islam Kajal remained wanted by Bangladesh police:

- An article published in the Bangladesh *New Age* in April 2006 indicated police had announced a bounty for Rafiqul Islam Kajal (Mission, Moneruzzaman 2006, ‘Speedy trial tribunals have sentenced 400 to death’, *New Age*, 2 April <http://www.newagebd.com/2006/apr/02/nat.html> – Accessed 31 March 2008 – Attachment 15).
- A webpage of “Most Wanted” criminals on the Bangladesh Police website, dated 2008, includes Rafiqul Islam Kajol (‘Most Wanted’ 2008, Bangladesh Police Website, <http://www.police.gov.bd/index5.php?category=93> – Accessed 2 April 2008 – Attachment 16).

## List of Sources Consulted

### Internet Sources:

#### **Search Engines**

Google <http://www.google.com/>

Internet Archive Wayback Machine <http://www.archive.org/index.php>

All the Web <http://www.alltheweb.com/>

Google News <http://news.google.com/nwshp?hl=en&tab=wn>

Altavista <http://www.altavista.com/>

#### **Region Specific Links**

*The Daily Star* website <http://www.thedailystar.net/>

*News from Bangladesh* website <http://www.newsfrombangladesh.net/index.php>

*The Independent* website <http://www.theindependent-bd.com/>

*South Asian Media Net* website

[http://www.southasianmedia.net/News\\_today.cfm?category=frontend&country=Bangladesh](http://www.southasianmedia.net/News_today.cfm?category=frontend&country=Bangladesh)

*Weekly Holiday* website <http://www.weeklyholiday.net/>

*The New Age* website <http://www.newagebd.com/>

*The New Nation* <http://nation.ittefaq.com/>

*The Bangladesh Journal* website <http://www.bangladeshjournal.com/>

*The News Today* website <http://www.newstoday-bd.com/>

*Weekly Blitz* website <http://www.weeklyblitz.net/>

*Independent Bangladesh* website <http://www.independent-bangladesh.com/>

*The Bangladesh Today* website <http://www.thebangladeshtoday.com/>

#### **Non-Government Organisations**

Odhikar website <http://www.odhikar.org/>

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad website <http://www.bhbcop.org/>

Asian Centre for Human Rights website <http://www.achrweb.org/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information Service Database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information Database)

**List of Attachments**

1. 'Trader, son feared killed in capital' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.4, No. 295, 28 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/28/d4032801011.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2008.
2. Qadir, Nadeem 2004, 'Bangladesh in shock over beheading of businessmen, police arrest suspect', *Agence France-Presse*, 29 March. (FACTIVA)
3. 'Shredded bodies of trader, son found' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 296, 29 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/29/d4032901011.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008.
4. 'All accused acquitted of bomb blast charges' 2005, *The Daily Star*, Vol.5, No. 459 9 September <http://thedailystar.net/2005/09/09/d50909060562.htm> – Accessed 2 April 2008.
5. 'Businesspeople strike today in outrage' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.4, No. 297, 30 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/30/d4033001033.htm> – Accessed 28 March 2008.
6. 'CID submits charge sheet in father-son murder case' 2004, *News From Bangladesh*, 6 October <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidDate=2004-10-06&hidType=LOC&hidRecord=0000000000000000024029> – Accessed 27 March 2008.
7. 'Politics clouds road to justice' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.4 No. 297, 30 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/30/d4033001066.htm> – Accessed 27 March 2008.
8. 'Businesses in Old Dhaka stop, protest killings' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol.34, No. 298, 31 March <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/03/31/d4033101066.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008.
9. 'Horror haunts business people' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 298, 31 March <http://thedailystar.net/2004/03/31/d403312501114.htm> – Accessed 31 March 2008.
10. 'Shamsul Huq's family members call on Khaleda' 2004, *The New Nation*, (Internet Archive, 29 April 2004), 8 April [http://web.archive.org/web/20040429233635/http://nation.ittefaq.com/artman/publish/article\\_8159.shtml](http://web.archive.org/web/20040429233635/http://nation.ittefaq.com/artman/publish/article_8159.shtml) – Accessed 27 March 2008.

11. 'Same killers out to wipe out witnesses' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 4, No. 300, 1 April <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/04/01/d4040101055.htm> – Accessed 27 March 2008.
12. 'Charges pressed against Kajal, 8 others in triple murder case' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 5, No. 133, 6 October <http://www.thedailystar.net/2004/10/06/d41006012625.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2008.
13. 'Trial begins' 2004, *The Daily Star*, Vol. 5, No. 333, 6 May 2005 <http://www.thedailystar.net/2005/05/06/d50506060979.htm> – Accessed 1 April 2008.
14. 'Jubo Dal leader, 8 others to die' 2005, *The Daily Star*, Vol.5, No. 536, 29 November <http://www.thedailystar.net/2005/11/29/d5112901043.htm> – Accessed 28 March 2008.
15. Mission, Moneruzzaman 2006, 'Speedy trial tribunals have sentenced 400 to death', *New Age*, 2 April <http://www.newagebd.com/2006/apr/02/nat.html> – Accessed 31 March 2008.
16. 'Most Wanted' 2008, Bangladesh Police Website,