

Tax evasion, forgery Banks customs asked to stop dealings with 49 RMG units

RAFIQ HASAN

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday asked all banks and customs offices to stop transactions with 49 readymade garment (RMG) and accessories factories for their alleged involvement in tax evasion, bond license forgery, fake export and selling of imported fabrics in the open market.

The Dhaka Custom Bond Commissionerate under the National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday sent a list of the units to all commercial banks and custom offices, requesting them not to do any business with them, according to sources.

The banks were asked not to open any letters of credit (LCs) in favour of these factories. The customs stations were asked not to clear any goods of these units.

Sources said the action was taken as these factories allegedly ignored notices to pay the 'evaded' taxes.

The factories are: Cherry Apparels (Pvt) Ltd, Central Garments Industry Ltd, Aeon Garments Ltd, Fuji Polymer Ltd, N Islam Cartoon and Packaging Ltd, Reliance Industries, MS Fashion, Stylo Apparels, Nash Fashion, Alamgir Polthynne Products, Axon Bangladesh, AB Polithine Ltd, Barin Apparels, United Garments, AB Garments, Saddle Prime Plastic, Audity Apparels, MNH Apparels, Bangladesh Engineering and Founding, Lily Garments, Alpina Ltd, FF Fashion, Sanwara Electronics, Mannan Box Accessories, Uttara Polymer, AG Packaging, New York Garments, Shim Garments, ZI Apparels, Night Electronics, Bestwear Garments, Mont Limited, Delta Complex Ltd, Mannan Washing, Kallol Garments,

Knit Fashion, Ferary Fashion, Sarwar Garments, Mohan Apparels and Textile, Siraj Garments, Shanghai Packaging, Sultana Garments, Rohila Garments, Mart Garments, JB garments Magpie Pvt Ltd and Messerr Packaging Ltd.

Campus unrest

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down by creating unrest in a planned manner," she alleged.

She urged people from all strata of life to hold back emotion and excitement over the issue and think rationally over the matter.

The prime minister made the observations while inaugurating a nationwide stipend-distribution programme for poor students, which aims at encouraging poor families to send their children to school.

Presided over by the prime minister's advisor on Primary and Mass Education Prof. Jahanara Begum, the inaugural function was also addressed by secretary of Primary and Mass Education Dr. Tahmina Hossain and director general ASM Mosaddequl Islam.

The PM opened the big scheme handing over stipend to parents of students from 150 poor families. Eight of the families, each with two children, received Tk 125 each per month under the project with effect from July.

A poor family with one school-going child will receive Tk 100 per month for the next five years under this project.

The government will have to spend Tk 663 crore annually from its own fund for this education-aid project. Its ultimate goal is to ensure education for all. Some 55 lakh students will receive stipend under the project.

Ctg JCD leader Biplob arrested

UNB, Chittagong

JCD's Chittagong Medical College Hospital unit president Rashedunnabi Biplob was arrested here yesterday in a dozen of cases.

Police said they arrested the JCD leader in 13 cases, including tender snatching and kidnapping.

They said 21 GDs were also filed by some city dwellers against Biplob, brother of JCD central committee leader Habibunnabi Sohel.

Tension heightened on the medical college campus following his arrest.

Shaheed Minar

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BNP held a series of meetings on the issue on Wednesday.

The Dhaka University authorities have meantime permitted two organisations Bangladesh Community Primary School Teachers Association and Jatityatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (JASAS), BNP's cultural front to hold programmes at the Shaheed Minar on October 1.

Kabir alleged that the DU authorities permitted pro-government organisations to hold programmes there to foil their planned programme.

The teachers' association got the permission on September 24 and JASAS the day after.

The Shaheed Minar had virtually been under siege since September 8 when heavy contingents of police were deployed there following student unrest at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

Since September 8, no public gathering was allowed there.

When contacted yesterday, Dhaka University Proctor ASM Atiqur Rahman said, many of those who are planning to defy the rule now took permission for holding programmes at the Shaheed Minar earlier.

Meanwhile, different organisations continued issuing statement to make the October 1 demonstration a success.

These include Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, left-leaning Eleven Party Alliance, Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Sammilito Samajik Andolon and Dhaka Ainjibi Samity.

2 Bangladeshis

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left some 1,000 people dead and Aceh has been beset by a separatist conflict since 1976.

Indonesia has recently stepped up efforts to deal with threats of terrorism amid concerns, especially in the United States, that the world's most populous Muslim country might have become a haven for militants linked to the al-Qaeda terrorist network. The Strategic Director of the Defence Ministry, Major General Sudrajat, said on Thursday that intelligence reports indicated al-Qaeda existed in Indonesia, with a limited network.

Cinema bombed

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the spot. Thirty-five others were taken to local hospitals and clinics. Thirty of them were admitted to the Satkhira Adhunik Hospital, seven to Islamia Hospital, six to Farzana Clinic and the rest to different health centres.

Among those who received serious injuries are Swapan, Zakir, Ruhul Quddus, Rafiqul, Mukto, Salahuddin, Asad, Reaz, Farid, Shahul, Bahauddin, Shahidul, Mizanur, Shamsuzzaman, Rashidul, Dr Selina Parveen, Nasima, Rashida, Asma, Tahmina, Ashia, Selina and six-year-old Munmun.

People from different parts of the town rushed to the hospitals and clinics and the spots in search of their near and dear ones.

Police have been deployed at the stadium and the cinema, and some other points of the town.

The authorities meanwhile switched off the mobile network in

Ruling alliance

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preparing audio-video documentaries and publishing booklets in Bangla and English for publicity at home and abroad, sources said.

Special supplements will be published in national dailies highlighting the government's achievements and ongoing development programmes taken up by it in last one year.

BNP is also making video documentaries on previous Awami League government's 'repression on BNP and its allies and autocratic activities' during its five-year rule.

All ministries have already submitted summaries of achievements and undertaken programmes.

BNP sources said the party will organise a massive gathering at the Paltan Maidan and make other programme successful.

Front organisations of the four parties will launch 'warm-up programmes' including holding meetings and bringing out processions in district and thana headquarters from October 1.

The parties will also launch campaigns against Awami League's 'conspiracy, terrorism and anarchy'.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, some alliance leaders alleged that AL is doing terrorism and is engaged in other conspiracies to tarnish the image of the government. All these will be

Boy freed on payment of ransom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A minor boy kidnapped earlier by a group of pirates and held for over two weeks was recently released on payment of ransom after rescue attempts by police failed.

Sources said Tapan, 9, son of Rabinranath Mondal of Kalinchi village of Shyamnagar upazila of Satkhira district, was released Wednesday by his abductors in the Patakhal area near the Bay of Bengal after the boy's father paid them Tk 2 lakh in ransom.

Armed miscreants belonging to the notorious Kalu Bahini that operates in the Sunderbans and includes pirates from both the Indian and Bangladeshi sides of the Sunderbans abducted Tapan on the night of September 10.

On the following day, the boy's father lodged an FIR (First Information Report) with the Shyamnagar Thana. On the same day, a flag meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) was held with both sides agreeing to launch a joint combing operation to rescue the abducted boy and arrest

his abductors, sources said.

Accordingly, the joint operation was launched on the early morning of September 12 on both Indian and Bangladeshi sides of the Sunderbans. Forest guards and local people on the Bangladesh side including Ramjannagar Union Parishad (UP) chairman Alamgir Haider assisted the police and BDR in their search for the kidnapped boy.

On the morning of September 14, police and BDR forces came under armed attack by the pirates at Atharobeki of the Sunderbans.

In the ensuing clash, security forces traded fire with the pirates for nearly three hours in which five people including the UP chairman received bullet injuries. Eight pirates of the Kalu Bahini were however arrested during the clash and an engine boat, a shutter-gun, nine used bullets, an Indian flag and some documents of an Indian insurance company seized from their possession. However, the combing operation had to be abandoned due to bad weather.

Meanwhile, according to the officer-in-charge of the

Shyamnagar Thana, Tapan's father received an anonymous letter that said Tapan is alive and would be handed over to his father only upon payment of Tk 2 lakh in ransom.

Accordingly, Tapan's father Rabinranath Mondal, accompanied by one Sirajul Islam of Kalinchi village, set out for Patakhal near the Bay of Bengal in an engine boat on the morning of September 25.

As the boat reached Raimongol River, a group of about 10 pirates approached Mondal for the ransom. After he made the payment, the pirates handed over the boy to him. Before leaving the spot, the pirates threatened to kill him and his entire family if he went to the police in connection with the abduction.

Rabinranath Mondal returned to his village with his son in the early hours of Thursday. Tapan, who has fallen ill following the ordeal of abduction, is undergoing medical treatment.

Police recorded the statement of Tapan and his father, who was quoted by the police as saying that he would no longer pursue the case.

Simi's family

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think of such a light judgement," she said in the packed courtroom.

She said she was very frustrated as accused Enayet Chowdhury was acquitted. "Enayet is the person who, during a salish (arbitration meeting) at our house, asked Simi to commit suicide. After Enayet's comments, Simi ran to her room and locked it from inside," Zarina lamented.

"When we were trying to break the door of Simi's room fearing that she might commit suicide, Enayet told us that the matter would end if she takes the path (of committing suicide)," she alleged.

Zarina further alleged that the brothers and sons of Enayet have been threatening to kill her husband and sons since filing of the case.

"They also threatened that my elder daughter Shaba would be abducted after the judgement because she had handed over Simi's letter to journalists."

Simi's father Mohammad Ali Emdad said, "Only one-year imprisonment is not a punishment for those who forced my daughter to

commit suicide.

"How can I be happy when a person like Enayet is acquitted?"

Emdad said his family is has been passing days in insecurity as the family members of the accused are constantly threatening them of 'dire consequences'.

He alleged that Enayet's son Ricky had threatened him saying, "Quit the area as soon as possible, otherwise you and your family will be given a lesson for filing the case. Ricky told me few days ago that he would shoot me dead after the judgement."

Advocate of the complainant, Zead-Al-Malum, refused to make any comment before going through copy of the judgement.

Many people who crowded the court premises to hear the verdict also expressed their disappointed over it.

A painter

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evident in his paintings like 'Fight for Liberation in Bangladesh, 1971', 'Flood in a Suburb', or 'The Proud Cultivator of Bengal'. Like other rickshaw painters, the use of dazzling colours or exaggeration of the topic are found in his paintings too. "We use such colours to attract people," Ali Noor noted.

However, the painter notes that sometimes he feels his own creativity is hindered when he has to paint something asked by a rickshaw owner. "Even then I try to do something more than I'm asked to and the owners appreciate that later on."

He does not like to reproduce any paintings done by others although he had to do that on few occasions. "It may bring me money but it hurts my feelings as an artist," he explained.

Ali Noor holds a dual view of success in his own life. He feels there is nothing but failure in his life when it comes to financial stability. But he thinks he is a success when prominent artists and critics appreciate his work.

The painter feels disheartened at the fact that boards done by computer screen print have turned out to be a threat to the profession. Undaunted though, one of his daughters and two sons are following his footsteps.

His aspiration! Well, Ali Noor says there is nothing more from life he could ask for. "I am fit only for this job and I respect my job," he said. "I don't want to do anything else," he adds.

However, there's one more thing he wants to do - to hold an exhibition at the National Museum.

4 cops jailed

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The two policemen demanded Tk 1000 from the plaintiff and his friend. When they refused to pay, the policemen threatened to arrest them and take them to the Motiheel Thana.

At this point, two other policemen dragged Khan and Palash to an isolated place nearby and snatched Tk 800 from Khan.

Following the incident, Khan informed the higher authorities of police, who recovered the money from the four policemen involved in the incident. Later, on the same day, Iqbal Khan filed a case accusing the four police personnel.

The four accused were arrested on the same day of the incident and later released on bail.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case submitted a chargesheet against the four on February 13. The court framed charges against the accused on June 6.

After cross-examination of all the six prosecution witnesses, the judge pronounced the verdict yesterday.

Assistant public prosecutors Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman Patwary and Sohel Mallik appeared for the state while advocate Abdul Gani appeared for the accused.

The convicted policemen were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail following the judgement.

Shady, Shoddy deals

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then stood at Tk 829.46 crore. Insiders and central bank officials link the Al-Baraka predicament to a few defaulters.

According to bank documents, collected by The Daily Star, despite its ill health, the bank management continues to invest jute and water transport, sectors from which even public-sector banks shy away.

The documents reveal that Al-Baraka even concealed information on classified loans from the central bank while financing the sister concern of a defaulting company in violation of central bank regulations.

Moreover, crores of taka were sanctioned within days of application against accounts opened with only Tk 10,000 deposits. Normal procedures such as risk analysis and document scrutiny were also bypassed.

In one instance, six loans were sanctioned to one individual client against the security of a cargo vessel. Neither was there any inspection of the vessel nor did the bank obtain its insurance policy.

Interestingly, when the board approved the loan proposals in presence of a central bank observer, as required in case of a problem bank, leading to questions about his role.

Managing director of Al-Baraka Shawkat Ali Chowdhury resigned on June 23 for, many believe, the bank's current status. Chowdhury, however, denies any link.

"I have resigned totally on personal grounds. I have always had a cordial relationship with the board and the management. My resignation has no link with the bank's affairs," Chowdhury, who joined the bank only on March last year, said.

He also brushed aside allegations of irregularities during his tenure. "In fact, I have not noticed any irregularities... if anything went wrong, it was beyond my knowledge."

Bengal Group

The reason for Al-Baraka's misery is aptly summed up by its transactions with the Bengal Group and its owner Abul Khair Litu.

In between 1987 and 1990, its VIP road branch at Naya Paltan sanctioned loans to 15 organisations owned by Litu without any loan risk analysis. As there was virtually no monitoring, all these loans went bad.

In 1996, the bank negotiated a deal with Litu, adjusted all his loans and shifted them to the Bengal Group's account. The agreement gave Litu the option of paying back in instalments only Tk 58.21 crore against a liability of Tk 146.85 crore.

However, it made little difference, as Litu did not keep his end of the deal. Each of the 13 advanced

cheques he had deposited with the bank bounced.

As a result, the bank filed 13 criminal cases against him, for which the court ordered his arrest. However, Litu avoided arrest by managing an ad interim bail.

Then, the bank signed another agreement with Litu in August 1998, which required him to pay the bank Tk 69.95 crore in instalments against a liability of Tk 146.85 crore by September last year.

Between August 1998 and April 2000, Litu paid only Tk 12.65 crore and requested the bank for further loan rescheduling.

On August 2000, the bank again rescheduled his loans, without the Bangladesh Bank's approval. A bank is required to seek approval from the central bank when a loan amount crosses 15 per cent of its paid-up capital.

The latest debt adjustment gave Litu four years more to repay the loans.

Since then, he has paid Tk 10 crore, making total amount repaid Tk 22.65 crore.

Meanwhile, his liability has reached Tk 159.22 crore. However, he will have to pay only Tk 47.30 crore as per the latest agreement with Al-Baraka, which means it will have to count Tk 111.92 crore in income erosion for different facilities it has extended to the Bengal Group.

Litu denies having defaulted on loan repayment.

"I have never defaulted on my instalments and paid my dues as per the arrangement with the bank. I have even sold my properties to pay the bank's money," he told The Daily Star.

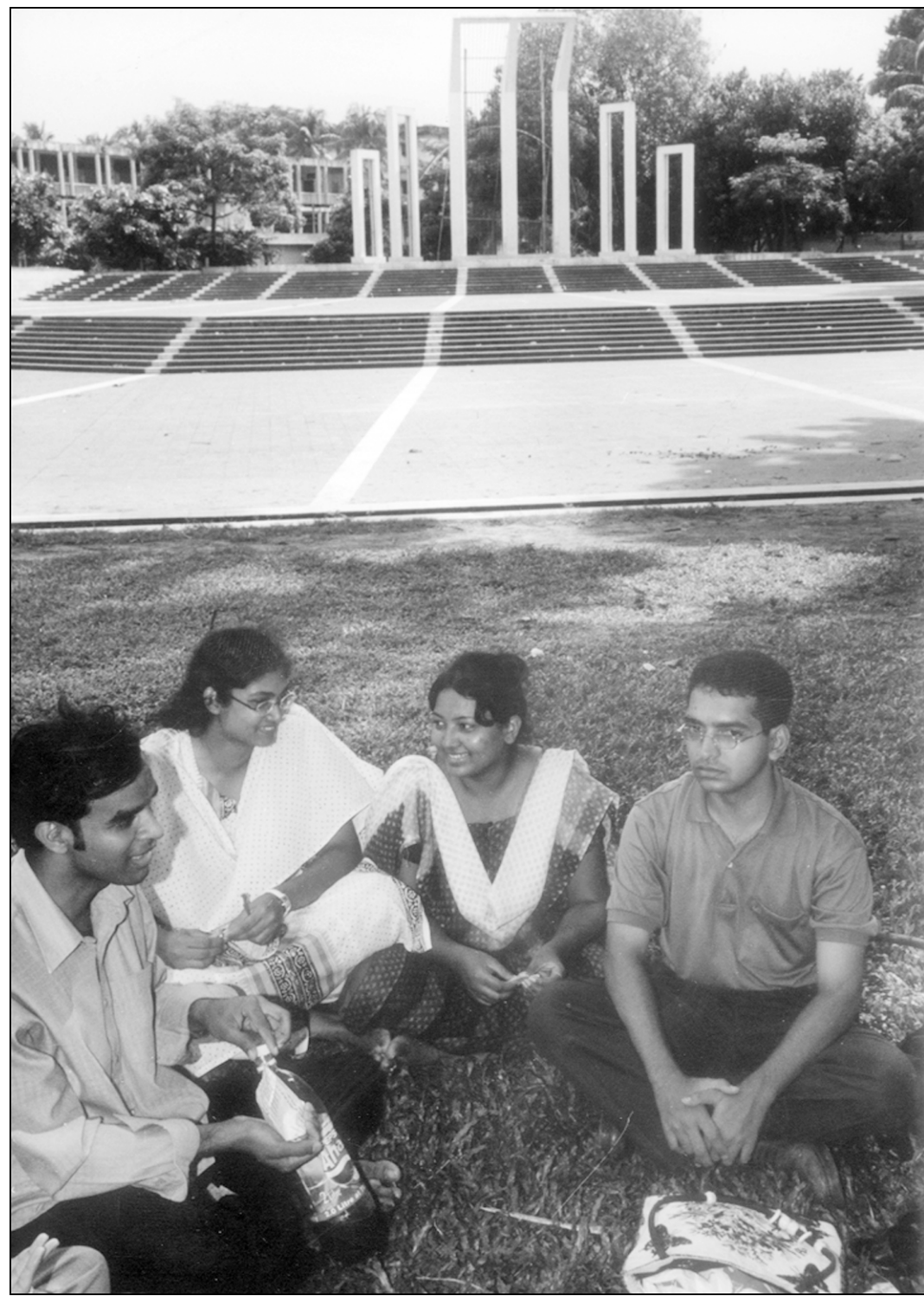
He claims he has paid about Tk 45 crore to the bank against the loans till July this year.

Litu says he has never got any special favour from the bank. "On many occasions my loan proposals were refused by the bank board and the management, especially in the early 1990s, which forced me to suffer huge losses."

Due to the bank board and the management's refusal to sanction working capital, his Desh Beverage has incurred huge loss, Litu claims.

Also, the bank did not release machinery for Protein Foods Limited and Dattapara Krishna Prokopa, which resulted in non-implementation of the projects, he says.

"Despite all these, I have tried to be in close touch with the management and the board of directors just to find out ways and means to adjust my liabilities with the bank."



With the police cordon lifted from around the Central Shaheed Minar, a group of students get a chance to relax on the lawn in front yesterday.

Simi suicide case

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December 23 last year at their Khilgoan residence of the city after being harassed by some local hoodlums.

In the verdict given yesterday, said the prosecution side completely failed to prove the charges against the accused.

So, he found Khalil, Ripon, Mofazzal and Doel guilty under Section 76 of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Act for teasing the girl and gave the verdict. The court found Bashir guilty under Section 166 of Bangladesh Penal Code for negligence of duty.

So the verdict was given as per provisions of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Act, which does not provide for stringent punishment for such crimes.

Charges were brought against Enayet Chowdhury on the basis of the note left by Simi. But in her note she did not mention Enayet's name, the magistrate said in his observation.

She had left a note saying Khalil, Doel, Ripon, Mofazzal and SI Bashir were responsible for her death.

Police arrested SI Abul Bashir on December 29 last year following a directive from Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury.

He was arrested on charge of negligence of duty, which led to the suicide.

SI Abdur Razzak, the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet against SI Abul Bashir and five others on February 11.

In the verdict, the magistrate observed that there were 'defects' in filing the case. Instead of police, the victim's family should have filed the case.

Moreover, the case should have been filed after submission of the final report by police on the 'unnatural death case'.

In his observation he said the charges brought against the accused except Abul Bashir are not covered by the Bangladesh Penal Code (BPC), under which the case was filed.

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