

Mirpur arrestee remanded

His opinions found 'harmful to Islam'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man arrested from Mirpur on Sunday, after making comments and opinions that law enforcers deemed harmful to Islam and other religions, was remanded yesterday.

Ranna police produced Imamuddin Mohammad Toaha bin Habib before the Court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka yesterday with a seven-day remand petition.

But Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mujibul Haque granted only a two-day remand.

Police arrested Toaha from his house in the second colony at Major Road in Mirpur Sunday after he floated an Islamic platform, Sattiyabad Andolon, at the National Press Club the same day.

In the forwarding submitted before the court, police said Toaha's opinions and comments, written in his books and other publications, might prove harmful to Islam and other religions, creating social violence.

"He failed to give a satisfactory explanation for his confusing opinions and comments," read the forwarding.

"The posters and leaflets, as well as the books seized from Toaha's house, are creating an adverse effect and reaction among followers of Islam and other religions," it added.

Police said Toaha failed to produce government permission for the distribution of different publications and the marketing of his books.

While submitting the remand prayer, police pleaded that he needed

to be thoroughly quizzed to ascertain his objective, including whether he has any patron for the activities and whether he circulated his books and leaflets to other parts of the country.

Talking to The Daily Star, police officers said they were looking into whether Toaha has links with any militant organisations, including the recently banned Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh and Jama'atul Mujahideen.

The son of a principal of a madrasa in Pirojpur, Toaha told police during his interrogation yesterday that he floated the organisation to establish his own opinion about Islam, claiming himself to be an Islamic thinker.

Police, meanwhile, quoted Toaha's brother, Dr Bahauddin Mohammad Yusuf, as saying that his brother was a bit mentally challenged.

Meantime, a fax message from Sattiyabad Andolon sent to The Daily Star yesterday claimed that the organisation did not have any connection with militant activities.

"From the press conference (of Sunday), Sattiyabad invited all to God's true path, leaving the path of terrorist fundamentalism and the falsity of democracy-communism," reads the fax message, signed by one Shaifulah Heera.

Toaha termed as false reports linking Toaha with Dr Asadullah Al Galib and Bangla Bhai, claiming that Sattiyabad Andolon opposes national and international militancy, which are against Islam.

75 injured in clash in Tungipara

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

At least 75 people were injured, 24 of them critically, in a clash between two groups in Kushli village in Tungipara upazila yesterday.

Tungipara police said two cousins locked in an altercation over Tk 100 that precipitated into a three-hour-long clash involving two rival groups.

Police rushed to the spot and quelled the situation. The critically injured were admitted to Sheikh Sahara Khatun Red Crescent Hospital.

Ctg RMG

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Garments sector leaders said RMG production in many factories in Chittagong has dropped sharply due to unpredictable and deteriorating power supply over the last few days. "If the situation worsens further, we apprehend loss of some markets abroad because power supply crisis is hampering shipment of garments on schedule," Nurul Haque said.

"If we produce 1,000 pieces of garments in one hour of uninterrupted production, we can hardly make 50 pieces due to power supply crisis," mentioned Nurul, also senior vice president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI).

Some garments owners already failed to meet shipment deadline in the last three days and some of them now have problem with their foreign buyers. "The owners are now forced to go for overtime work, for which the cost of electricity almost doubles in peak hours," he said.

The BGMEA leader urged the government to suspend the existing tariff variation (peak and non-peak hours) and introduce a flat rate for power and other utility services for a certain period this year to help overcome the present situation.

Nurul said they (BGMEA and CCCI) would soon make an appeal to the government for this.

Rail link

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including Sylhet-bound Parabat and Joyontika, Noakhali-bound Upakul, Mymensingh-bound Egarosindhu and Isha Khan remained suspended till filing this report in the evening yesterday.

The dead, yet to be identified, is aged around 35. Apparently a passenger, he died as a bogey fell on him. The driver and his assistant of train 803 and a guard of the oil containing train were among the injured and admitted to Dhaka Railway Hospital, said railway sources.

The accident happened when train-803 from Chittagong ignored a signal to halt and let the Chittagong-bound fuel tanks change the track to make way for it, the railway sources said.

"The driver of the container train might have been sleeping at that time, and as a result, his train crashed on the oil tankers," said a railway official.

Six bogeys of container-803 and 11 bogeys of the oil tanker train derailed. The bogeys that were crumpled badly in the crash blocked the railway tracks. A salvage train reached the scene at 9:00am and started rescue operation.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Railway yesterday ran the Dhaka-Chittagong train under special arrangement via Mymensingh. Train services were likely to return to normality by last night, said a source.

The railway authorities formed a four-member probe committee and asked it to submit a report within next three days.

Local lawmaker Zahid Ahsan Russell and railway high officials visited the spot.

Nearly 500 accidents take place every year because of drivers' disregard for signals and the run-down railway tracks, said railway sources.

Saudi prince

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Chairman Mahmudur Rahman. He will also exchange views with the leaders of business communities, according to a diplomatic source.

The Saudi prince will arrive by a special flight.

Dhaka, Yangon

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homes on March 12, following a diplomatic negotiation between the two neighbouring countries.

Myanmar has also decided to release 75 Bangladeshi prisoners from different jails of the country.

Presently about 172 Myanmarese prisoners are in Cox's Bazar jail, transferred from different jails, awaiting repatriation to Myanmar. However the Yangon authorities have agreed to accept only 115 prisoners in the first batch.

At least 300 Myanmarese prisoners, including several Arakanese insurgents, will remain in Bangladesh, as their jail term is not yet finished.

The foreign ministry sources said the decision was taken as a gesture of warm relationship between the two countries following the visit of Myanmar Foreign Minister Nyan Win to Bangladesh.

Borders under watch

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Meanwhile cadres of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) are still roaming about freely, allegedly with cooperation from police in Rajshahi and Naogaon, despite the government ban on JMJB as of February 24, local inhabitants said.

Police sources insist that Bangla Bhai will not elude their grip. "We have no reports on the whereabouts of Bangla Bhai for the last seven months. Our five teams, including a special force, are out in the field tracing him. Bangla can't cross undetected through police vigilance in the Rajshahi division," additional DIG Aminul Islam said.

He added that police are using

Building

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the downtown yesterday morning. Leakage of gas from a cylinder at the house caused the blast, firefighters and police said.

Inmates Abdul Gafur, a teacher of Fakiuruddin School and College, and his wife Nazma Akhter sustained serious burns all over their bodies.

As soon as Gafur lit a cigarette, there was explosion with a huge bang at around 6:45am. Nazma said, adding that she had smelt gas before the incident.

Five rooms of the ground floor were badly damaged and a window grill was blown some 150 feet off the house. Afterwards the whole building collapsed.

"Lighting of the cigarette ignited the explosion in the gas-filled apartment and the vacuum created from the explosion destroyed the rooms," said Sheikh Mizanur Rahman, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Neighbours rushed the injured to Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital and as their condition deteriorated, they were shifted to Shah Garib Newaj Clinic in the city.

The doctors attending the couple stated their condition as critical. Firefighters reached the spot shortly and doused the fire.

Bigots plan to besiege Ahmadiyyas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Activists of International Khatme Nabuwat Movement, Bangladesh announced to besiege the Ahmadiyya establishment here on March 11 at a meeting held on Al-Falaha Madrasa premises yesterday.

Presided over by Mufti Mamunur Rashid, the meeting demanded declaration of the Ahmadiyya community as non-Muslim.

Central leaders of the Islamit outfit Amir Mahmudul Hasan, Naib-e-Amir Mufti Nur Hosain, Secretary General Muhammed Nazmul Huq, among others, addressed the meet.

They also brought out a procession in white clothes and paraded the thoroughfares of Gaibandha town.

Donors to adopt

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has been better as compared to many other recipients, as the country could graduate from poverty to non-poverty level status.

The minister linked the outcome with the improvement in the country's human development indicators that cover health, education, mortality rate and the rate of school enrollment.

Under the result-based aid strategy, he explained that the programmes would be designed as per the development policy of a particular country, but it would have to be accountable and transparent. The donors would then take into account the results of the aided projects, he said.

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their best tools to arrest the militant leader and that vigilance along the bordering districts has been tightened following reports of his plan to slip into India.

"Crossing the border for Bangla Bhai is not a joke. But he can do it through comparatively flexible borders like Godagari and Shaphar, where the Islamist extremists might have some base. Yet, there will be local smugglers who will challenge anyone unknown to their own business," explained a top-level source from the Bangladesh Rifles.

Several officers-in charge (OC) and sub inspectors of various police stations in Rajshahi and Naogaon have been facing pressure not to touch JMJB cadres, who have, along with Bangla Bhai, openly murdered and tortured several people since April of last year, said competent sources.

Masud Mia, the Rajshahi Superintendent of police who was ordered to be transferred to Dhaka CID on Saturday, allegedly threatened several OCs against arresting JMJB cadres or helping journalists to write reports, a senior police official said, quoting verbal complaints by some OCs.

Jamaat's dirty face unveiled

Says Jalil

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday said Jamaat-e-Islami leaders were now talking irrelevant as their 'hated and dirty faces' have been unveiled.

In a statement, Jalil strongly condemned Jamaat leaders' remarks, which they made from a rally saying all information regarding terrorism in the country will be known if Sheikh Hasina, Prof Abu Sayeed and a few editors are arrested.

Jalil said Jamaat, under the guise of their Islamic slogans, is associated with international terrorist network in one hand, and on the other hand patronising local armed militant groups.

"All these were published in national and international press. Jamaat-e-Islami is also actively associated with militant recruitment by al-Qaeda through ISI of Pakistan while al-Qaeda is associated with Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO)," he said.

The AL general secretary said apart from Jamaat's association with international terrorist networks, they are also closely associated with at least 16 armed militant fundamentalist groups.

"The suggestion of Fazlul Huq Amini to raid the Shibir offices also proved that Jamaat-Shibir are involved in armed militancy," Jalil said.

PAY COMMISSION

Body formed to implement report

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday formed a five-member body to formulate guidelines for implementing the recommendations made by the pay commission from January 1 this year.

After examining the pay commission's report, official sources said, the committee would submit its report within one month.

The committee, headed by cabinet secretary, was formed at a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair.

Other members are secretaries of finance, defence and establishment and principal secretary to the PM.

The pay commission submitted its report on February 2.

Earlier, three pay commissions were formed in 1985, 1991 and 1997.

Top outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Top outlawed leader Abdus Samad Tikka was killed in a 'crossfire' between his accomplices and police at village Dahkula in Sadar upazila in the district early yesterday.

With the incident, 'crossfire' death by Rapid Action Battalion and police since June last year rose to 241.

Tikka, 38, a leader of outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) was accused in 40 cases including 18 of murder, police said.

Lalpur police of Natore district at first arrested Tikka from a tea stall at Gopalpur Bazar on Monday last. He was sent to Natore jail under section 54 of CrP.

On information, a team of Kushtia Detective Branch police rushed to Natore and identified the arrestee as Tikka, the outlawed leader.

Kushtia police arrested him from Natore jail gate when he came out of jail on bail Saturday.

During interrogation in Kushtia, Tikka admitted his involvement with the underground party and confessed to possessing a large number of firearms hidden in different places of the region including his village Dahkula in Sadar upazila.

Accompanying Tikka, police started for village Dahkula to seize firearms as per his confession.

As the police reached Borozpara area of the village, the GMF cadres opened fire, triggering an hour-long shootout with police.

Meantime, Tikka, trying to flee from police van, got caught in the 'line of fire' and died on the spot, police said, adding that his accomplices managed to flee.

Tullow strikes

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plant for gas production from Bhangura of Debidwar in Comilla.

If the proposal is accepted, Tullow will produce 40-45 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) from the field.

Petrobranga signed a production sharing contract (PSC) with Tullow, Chevron-Tetaco and Bapex for the block on April 11, 2001.

Under the PSC, the Tullow as operator of the block had an abortive drilling at Lalmai in Comilla.

Later, it conducted drilling in Bhangura and found presence of gas.

After many tests, Tullow found six prospective zones. Gas was detected in five of the zones.

After conducting tests at D and E layers, Tullow informed that the gas reserve in Bhangura is 457 billion cubic feet (BCF).

The Tullow flowed gas at a rate of 54 MMCFD in D layer and 24MMCFD in E layer.

5yr girl

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yesterday surrendered to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, seeking bail.

Moving the bail petition, Advocate Mohammad Ali prayed to the court to take action against the IO for bringing charge of theft and trespassing against a five-year-old girl.

Accusing such a little girl in a criminal case has created mixed reaction among the lawyers, litigants and others on the court premises.

Those who accuse underage children in criminal cases should be punished, a senior lawyer told The Daily Star asking not to be identified.

On August 14, Ashik Ali of Pallabi filed a case against Akhi and nine others following an altercation over tube-well water on August 5. The IO pressed charges against seven accused on August 3 last year.

Crackdown

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operate. He said, "The two organisations have been banned on the basis of statements made by a number of hoodlums arrested by the police."

Replying to BNP lawmaker M Akbar Ali, the state minister for home said that he is not familiar with the term 'crossfire'.

"We don't use the term crossfire," he said adding that some criminals have been killed in encounter with police when their accomplices attacked the law enforcers to snatch the criminals.

He said that of the 23 top listed criminals, 9 have been arrested, and the police are hunting for the rest.

Babar told the House that the government plans to strengthen the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

Replying to M Mozammel Huq of BNP, he said that the government equipped Rab with modern arms and ammunition, transportation, and sophisticated equipment for intelligence, bomb disposal and communication.

He said 5,521 people are now working in Rab while 40 in Cheetah and 123 in Cobra.

SEC wants issue

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public offering (IPO), to send particulars of four officials of the company and its brokerage house.

In a letter, the SEC instructed EPL Managing Director Saiful Islam to

Missions asked to boost trade

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry has directed Bangladesh missions abroad to boost trade, investment and manpower export in line with the government's policy emphasising economic diplomacy.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday in parliament said that the government has taken measures to recast some of its foreign missions to focus the changing political and economic scenario in global context.

He told the House that the present four-party alliance government has initiated steps to strengthen the diplomatic and economic relations with the Islamic countries.

Responding to a query, Morshed said the Organisation of Islamic Conference plans to hold an emergency meeting to discuss different issues relating to world situations.

"The OIC is considering holding the emergency conference shortly. But the date has yet to be finalised," he said adding, "Bangladesh will attend the conference."

Referring to the 13th Saarc summit, the foreign minister said, "We hope the summit would be held in an appropriate time this year."

Responding to a query of the ruling BNP lawmaker, the foreign minister said a section of newspapers and some political leaders are running anti-Bangladesh propaganda abroad.

"We should develop a national-level awareness to combat such propaganda," said the foreign minister.

He informed the House that 64 heads of state and 41 heads of government visited Bangladesh from 1972 to December 2004.

Morshed said some countries including Japan and UK have invited Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to visit there this year.

Arrested Khulna Addl SP accused in trader's killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Former additional superintendent of Khulna police Mofazzel Hossain has been named prime accused in a case filed with the Cognisable Court of Dakop upazila of the district today for the murder of prominent businessman and shrimp trader Abdur Rob Azad.

The complainant in the case, Rob's wife Mosammat Rexona Azad, has also named 26 others as co-accused.

Meanwhile, a Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday rejected the bail prayer of Mofazzel and a co-accused in the case for bomb attack on journalist Dip Azad.

The co-accused in Rob murder case include police sub-inspectors Abu Taher and Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman, constables Mujbar Rahman, Jonaib Abedin, Abdul Alim, Abu Nasser, Mohammod Alamgir, Nazrul Islam and Majidul Islam of Khulna district detective branch, Ajmol Hossain of special branch and Touhidur Rahman and Kanti Marma.

She also named 21 eyewitnesses to the murder.

In the case, the complainant stated that the accused led by Mofazzel killed her husband on the road in front of Dakop UNO office at about 2:00pm on January 3 in presence of the eyewitnesses she named.

"The accused beat my husband to death on the spot. They also looted his licensed revolver, Tk 1,92,000, some business-related papers and his cell phone," she added.

She also mentioned that her father-in-law had lodged a case with Dakop Police Station on January 6 naming Mofazzel as the main accused for murdering his son. But the case had to be withdrawn in the face of death threats from Mofazzel and other accused.

15 killed

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of Baghdad, where insurgents launched a series of apparently coordinated attacks that killed seven soldiers and five police, said Tariq Ibrahim, a medic at Baquba's main hospital. He said at least 26 people were wounded, including one civilian caught in the crossfire.

The assaults included a car bomb, three roadside bombs and small arms attacks three checkpoints, one of them just south of Baquba in Muradiyah, said police Col. Mudhafar al-Jubburi.

Insurgents also fired a mortar around near the blue-domed governor's office, causing no casualties, a spokesman for the US 42nd Infantry Division, Maj. Richard Goldenberg. He said Iraqi police came under small arms fire shortly afterward on a highway south of the city.

In Baghdad, gunmen killed two police and wounded a third in a drive-by shooting in the eastern slum of Sadr City, said Dr. Abdul Jabar Solan, director of a hospital where the casualties were brought.

Two civilians were also killed when a roadside bomb targeting a joint US-Iraqi military convoy exploded in the south-eastern New Baghdad suburb. The explosion missed the convoy, damaging two passing cars and wounding four people, including two girls, said 1st Lt. Ali Hussein Hamdani.

An investigation into the shooting death of a Bulgarian soldier last week in Iraq showed that US troops were probably responsible, the Balkan state's Defense Minister Nikolai Svinarov told a news conference in Sofia on Monday.

The minister confirmed an anonymous claim posted on a Bulgarian army website earlier on Monday, which said the soldier had been killed by US military fire.

furnish the capital market regulator with the father's name, joining date, present and permanent addresses, photographs and other particulars of the four officials by tomorrow.