

# Law and order slide in S-W dists worries police

## New PBCP faction kills 9 in a month: Khulna DIG vows tough measures

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Law enforcers apprehend further deterioration in law and order in outlawed Kushtia, Meherpur, Jhenidah and Chuadanga districts following the spate of murders by the break-away faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

With the split in PBCP and floating of 'PBCP-ML, Communist War' last month, the number of outlawed parties active in the region is now 11.

Since its creation, PBCP-ML, Communist War killed at least nine people, branding them as its 'rivals' and 'class enemies'. Its cadres also made some bomb attacks in several places in the districts during the period.

Sources claimed that cadres of the outlawed outfit are also spreading to other districts in the region.

According to police, the nine people killed by its activists include three ruling BNP men and one Awami League (AL) activist. The rest five are its "rivals" belonging to PBCP-ML and PBCP-Janajuddho. Of the nine,

five were killed in Chuadanga, two in Meherpur and one each in Kushtia and Jhenidah.

The new outlawed faction made at least 20 bomb attacks in different areas in the four south-western districts, injuring at least 20 people.

There may be more killings and bomb blasts as it has vowed to "eliminate" its "rivals" and "class enemies", police and other sources said.

Policemen, rival party cadres and political leaders are their main targets, they said. The latest killings by PBCP-ML, Communist War took place on Thursday in Meherpur and Chuadanga. The victims were BNP activist Sawpan and two Janajuddho cadres, killed at Chadpur in Gangni upazila in Meherpur and at Bhogaibogail in Alamdanga upazila in Chuadanga.

According to police, the new faction of outlaws is led by one Rony Biswas. Hailing from a village in Alamdanga in Chuadanga, Rony was a top leader of PBCP-ML. Rony left PBCP-ML and joined Tapan alias Dada Tapan when PBCP-

Janajuddho was formed in 2000. It was led by Tapan. Rony was made the 'regional leader' of Janajuddho.

He left Janajuddho following a dispute with Tapan and formed another fraction of the party last month.

Sources said a good number of cadres of Janajuddho and other outlawed parties have joined Rony. The other outlawed outfits in the region are Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML), PBCP-Janajuddho, Biplobi Communist Party (BCP), New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP), Banglar Communist Party (BCP-Laltu), Gono Mukti Foj (GME) and Jashod Gono Bahini (JGB), Socialist Party (SP), Biplobi Anuragi and Chhinomul Communist Party (CCP).

"Now the ML War is a powerful outfit in the region," Awlad Hossain, Acting Police Superintendent of Chuadanga said while talking to this correspondent. "It is spreading its activities in adjacent districts also", he added.

Police however, caught two cadres of the outfit last month.

They were killed in a 'crossfire'.

"Police have taken all out measures to curb criminal activities (by outlaws) in the region and peace will be maintained at any cost", Noor Mohammad, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police of Khulna Range said over phone.

"All police chiefs in the districts have been asked not to spare any criminal, particularly outlaws", the DIG told this correspondent when contacted.

Top police officials in other districts in the region shared the same views and said they are determined to check outlaws' activities.

This correspondent also talked to Rony Biswas who responded to a cell phone call from his hideout.

"Peace loving innocent people are not our target. We did not kill any innocent man. We killed those who were involved in misdeed in the name of establishing a classless society and traitors", Rony said. "Our struggle is to establish a society where the poor and labourers will get food".

## Top criminal Tutul of Dhaka held in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) here has arrested Tutul, one of the 23 listed top criminals in Dhaka and accused in many cases including one for a double murder.

He was arrested at about 3.30 am Monday night from room no. 101 at Chhayabithi Chhatrabash, a students' mess at Kharki Paschimpara in the town. He is the son of Fakhruddin of Bamun Para in Jessore town.

Police said Tutul, his brother-in-law Eomon and brother Titon, three top terrorists in Dhaka, killed Tipu and Khokon in 1998. Since then Tutul was absconding.

He returned Jessore recently and was staying at the mess. Emon, Tutul and Titon are among the 23 listed top terrorists in Dhaka city, Rab sources said.

## Cattle truck looted in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Armed highwaymen hurled bombs on a cattle-carrying truck and looted about Tk 4 lakh from traders in Barondali Palbari in Keshobpur upazila in Jessore district on the Jessore Kolaroa road Monday night.

Police said, some cattle traders were going to Kalaroa cattle market in Satkhira district to buy cattle. When their truck reached Barondali Palbariah at about 9.45 pm, highwaymen hurled five bombs on the truck, hit the traders with lethal weapons and looted the money.

Motorcyclist Akram Hossain, 35, who was passing through the area was also seriously injured in the bomb attack.



A procession in Nilphamari yesterday demanding arrest and trial of the rapist of the minor daughter of late freedom fighter Mujibur Rahman.

## RAPE OF LATE FREEDOM FIGHTER'S MINOR DAUGHTER

# Agitation in Nilphamari for arrest of rapist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Freedom fighters, joined by people, brought out a procession in Nilphamari town, held a rally in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office and handed over memorandums yesterday demanding arrest and punishment to the rapist of a minor daughter of a late freedom fighter.

At the rally, the freedom fighters threatened a 'mass hunger strike' and other tough agitation programmes if the rapist is not arrested within 15 days.

The victim's mother, Banu Bewa, told the rally that she and her daughter would take their life in front of DC's office if the culprit is not arrested and punished.

The 11-year-old minor daughter (name not mentioned) of late freedom fighter Mujibur Rahman was violated on the night of December 21, allegedly by Abdul Khalek, 47, a BNP leader in Tupamari union in

Sadar upazila.

The victim filed a case with Sadar thana police next day. Medical test of the victim done on the same day also proved that she was violated, sources said earlier.

The victim, a student of class six, earlier told newsmen that on the night of December 21, her mother went to visit her ailing sister in another village. She (victim) was sleeping with her nephew. At about midnight, Abdul Khalek, accompanied by an unidentified man, entered her room and raped her. As she cried for help, the rapist and his accomplice fled away, leaving behind his cell phone, jacket, sandal and a muffler at the spot, she added. Police seized the cell phone, jacket, sandal and muffler as evidence. Freedom fighters and women's rights activists including Bangladesh Mohila Parishad and Nari Andolon also brought out processions and held meetings

earlier protesting the incident and demanding punishment to the culprit. But the alleged rapist has not been arrested 15 days after the incident.

At yesterday's protest rally, victim's mother Banu Bewa alleged that the rapist is moving freely in the area.

Freedom fighters' leader Zoinal Abedin declared at rally that all freedom fighters in Nilphamari will begin a fast unto death if the rapist is not arrested.

The rally over, president of Nilphamari Sadar upazila unit of Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad submitted memorandums to the Deputy Commissioner and the Police Superintendent.

Accepting the memorandum on behalf of the DC, ADC (General) Alef Uddin Ahmed said the rapist would be caught and punished.

SP Shoeb Ahmed also assured freedom fighters that police would do everything to arrest the criminal.

## Diarrhoea kills 3 in Sirajganj

### 500 attacked in a week

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Three people died and over 500 others were attacked with diarrhoea, pneumonia and cold related diseases in the district in last one week.

The dead are Nur Mahol Begum, 35, wife of Amir Ali of Hamdunia village in Tarash Upazila, Rehana Khatun, 7, daughter of Ekhlas Ali of Deuzi village in Raiganj Upazila and Merina Pervin, 13, daughter of Esrab Ali of Sorachandi village in Sadar Upazila.

At least 10 diarrhoea patients took admission in the hospital every day last week.

During a visit to Sirajganj General Hospital yesterday, this correspondent found a large

number of diarrhoea patients were taking treatment on the floors of the hospital due to lack of accommodation.

Two diarrhoea patients, Shamim 14, son of Abdul Hakim of Jankigati in Raiganj upazila and Faridul Islam, 16, son of Akhtar Hossain complained to this correspondent that both of them got cold as they were flooring in the hospital for several days due to lack of bed.

Their guardians complained that supply of saline was not sufficient in the hospital. Patients had to purchase saline from open markets at higher prices, they said.

According to physicians, diarrhoea and pneumonia broke out due to prevailing cold wave in the area.

## Withdrawal of Satkhira forest official demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Local government leaders in Shyamnagar upazila have demanded withdrawal of Satkhira Range Officer of the Sundarbans, alleging that he has filed false cases to harass innocent people for protesting his 'corruption and misuse of power'.

At a press conference at Satkhira Reporters Club, they said they, along local people, will besiege the Divisional Forest Office if Range Officer Rezaul Karim is not withdrawn by January 15.

Addressing the press confer-

ence, Shafiqul Azam Lenin, Chairman of Gabura Union Parishad in Shyamnagar upazila adjacent to the Sundarbans, alleged that a group of miscreants allegedly sheltered by Rezaul Karim attacked the house of Afsar Molla at Sora village, beat inmates and violated a woman on the night of December 26. They also demanded Tk 50,000, he claimed.

Molla said he filed a case with a Magistrate court at Satkhira on December 27 accusing Rezaul Karim and three others as Shyamnagar thana OC declined to record the case.

## Sylhet region at high AIDS risk

### Most of estimated 200 patients worked abroad

RAJAT KANTI GOSWAMI, Moulvibazar

Greater Sylhet region including Moulvibazar faces the risk of large scale HIV/AIDS prevalence, according to doctors and experts.

The risk is high as the region has the largest number of expatriates in the country and is surrounded by vulnerable areas in India, accounted for about one fourth of the world's AIDS patients. Tea garden labourers and indigenous Monipuri and Khasia tribesmen in Sylhet have good links with their relations in India. They may be easily infected and the disease may spread in Bangladesh, the experts said.

According to sources at Moulvibazar Civil Surgeon's office, four AIDS patients have been detected the district so far. They were infected during blood transmission at hospitals while they were working in the Middle East. Two of them including a woman are from Moulvibazar Sadar upazila and three from Kamalganj upazila. The women were infected by her husband who worked in the Middle East.

The sources named of the four persons but those have not been

published.

Unofficial estimates however put the figure much higher. APPIC, a Dhaka-based NGO, held a workshop at Kamalganj recently, where it was disclosed that the number of AIDS patients in Sylhet region is over 200. The figure was compiled from records of suspected AIDS patients who visited doctors between 1991 and 2005. Most of these suspected AIDS patients worked in the Middle East. But different NGOs say the number has already exceeded 500, according to sources.

Thirteen people died from AIDS in greater Sylhet region so far, it was disclosed at the workshop.

It was attended by Imams of mosques, politicians, local public representatives and journalists.

Speakers there said the disease is spreading fast due to lack of awareness and superstitions among people and inappropriate government programmes to combat the disease. If precautionary steps are not taken immediately, the number of patients may at double within a short time, they said.

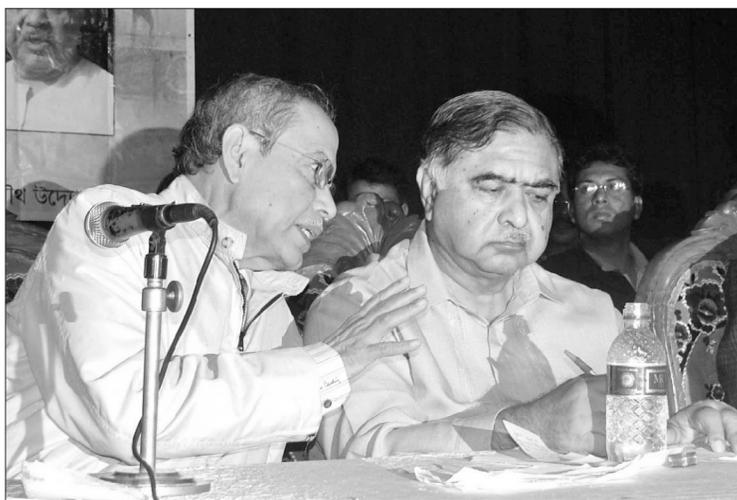
Most of the AIDS patients are in Sylhet Sadar, Fenchuganj, Beanibazar and Kanaighat

upazilas of Sylhet district and Baralekha, Kamalganj and Kulaura upazilas of Moulvibazar. Different NGOs including USS, SEDA, APPIC, PIACT, HEEED, Ashar-Alo Society and SSKS are providing treatment and other support to AIDS infected people in Sylhet region. But their service are not adequate.

According to local doctors and NGOs, the disease is spreading in the region through people who are returning home from Middle Eastern countries.

According to them, at least 10 lakh people of four districts in Sylhet division live abroad. Besides, businessmen of the region are regularly visiting India cities like Mumbai, Madras, Assam, Tripura and Monipur where AIDS is alarming. Indian truck drivers entering Bangladesh might be carrying HIV/AIDS virus.

Talking to this correspondent, Moulvibazar Civil Surgeon Dr Afaz Uddin said it is difficult to estimate the actual number HIV infected people because they normally feel shy to test blood for the virus. Health officials are working and giving technical and other support to different NGOs in this regard, he said.



Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh chief Badruddoza Chowdhury makes point to Gono Forum President Dr. Kamal Hossain during an 'open dialogue' held at Muslim Hall in Chittagong yesterday. (story on page 3)

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