

ARMS RECOVERY, GUNFIGHT NEAR KOMOLGANJ BORDER

Trial of two Indians begins in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Trial of the two sensational cases filed in connection with the recovery of a huge quantity of arms and explosives and death of six unidentified persons near the Komolganj border in Sylhet on May 26 last year began in the Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal yesterday.

Two injured Indians— Rajkanta Dev Varma and Hashir Dev Varma—arrested from the spot after a gunfight involving terrorists, BDR and Rab members, were accused in the cases. Charges were framed against them on January 30. They are in custody.

Statements of four prosecution

witnesses out of 62 were recorded yesterday. Hearing will continue today.

However, the defence lawyers claimed the two arrestees were not Indians. They are tribal people, not involved in the incident. They are small traders and on the night of the incident they were going to hills to collect lemon. They have been implicated in the cases.

But, the prosecution lawyer argued that the two Indians were caught and firearms were recovered from their possession. They were linked with arms smuggling and other border crimes, the lawyer argued.

On a tip-off that a group of

Indians had gathered on a hillock in Kiomolganj border, a 60-member Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) team from Dhaka and BDR troops raided the area on the night of May 26 last year.

In one and a half hours' gunfight, six persons were killed. The law enforcers recovered one SMG, six live grenades, four wireless sets, one country-made LG, 134 bullets, three cell phones, 8500 Indian rupees and Tk 1394 and arrested the two injured Indians. Eight suspects were also caught from nearby areas, according to reports published earlier.

Sonali bank swindled of Tk 42.7 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

An amount of Tk 42.7 lakh has allegedly been misappropriated from the corporate branch of Sonali Bank, Khulna by producing forged demand drafts.

Assistant General Manager of the corporate branch, Mohammad Abdur Rob Mia, lodged an FIR with Khulna thana in this connection on Tuesday accusing two persons.

They are Ratan Kumar Roy, proprietor of 'Dola Saree Bitan' and Mir Masudur Rahman, both of Khulna city.

In the FIR, the complainant alleged that the accused misappropriated the money through 88 forged demand drafts, produced on different dates in last one and a half months.

The misappropriation was detected at 2:30 pm on Monday

when accused Ratan Kumar Roy went to the Khan Jahan Ali Road branch of United Commercial Bank (UCBL) to draw money.

The complainant further mentioned in the FIR that the demand drafts were issued in the names of the accused by Al Razi Investment Corporation and later the money was drawn from Uttara Bank at Sir Iqbal Road, UCBL at Khan Jahan Ali Road, Standard Bank at Khan A Sabur Road, National Bank at KDA road and Janata Bank at Shiromoni in the city.

Police arrested accused Ratan Kumar Roy on Tuesday from his house at Sonadanga and recovered from him two forged demand drafts, some deposit books of five banks and photocopies of some passport books.

The other accused is absconding.

Cop closed for rape attempt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

A constable of Jamuna Bridge police station was closed to Sirajganj police lines yesterday for allegedly attempting to rape to a schoolgirl of Saydabad village in Sirajganj Sadar upazila.

According to police sources, Shahidul Islam, a constable at the police station on the western side of the bridge, lured a 12 year-old student (her name not mentioned) of Gonoshwastho School to a nearby bush and tried to violate her.

As she cried for help, people nearby came and rescued her. They also nabbed the constable and took him to the police station complained to the Officer-in-charge.

As Sraiganj Police Superintendent Shahadat Hossain was informed, he closed the constable to the police lines.

Case against 42 JMB men in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jessore*

Jessore police lodged a case against 42 JMB activists including its chief Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai for the serial bomb blasts in Jessore town on August 17 last year and acts of militancy earlier.

Fifteen of them are now in custody.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Jessore Kotwali thana Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal lodged the case on Tuesday under Sections 19/20 of

the Special Powers Act of 1974.

The accused include JMB 'divisional commander' Sabbir, Habib, Matiar Rahman Masud, Raki alias Nuruddin, Aslam, Nayeem, Liton, Lutfur, Ibrahim, Bakhtiar, Talha, Sayeed, Ismail, Mahfuz, Abdullah, Musa, Mahbub, Mostafa, Hamidur, Hasan, Mintu, Amin, Taher, Zahid, Shafi, Imran, Khaleque, Kausar, Kashem, Nazmul, Alauddin, Akramuzzaman, Mostafa Kamal, Mizanur, Shamsur Rahman, Solaiman, Nurul Islam, Raj, Abdul

Haque, Anwarul and JMB chief Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai.

Of them, 15 were arrested at different times. Most of the accused hail from Abhoynagar, Keshabpur, Jhikargachha and Sarsha upazilas and a few hail from Meherpur and Rajshahi districts, police sources added.

Police claimed that the militants were involved in violence used since 2004. They conducted their activities from a rented house at Barandipara in Jessore town.



PHOTO: STAR

The 14-party opposition alliance brought out a procession in Nilphamari town yesterday protesting crisis of fuel in northern districts, load shedding and high prices of fertiliser.

AUGUST 17 SERIAL BOMB BLATS IN NILPHAMARI

4 out of 9 JMB militants confess to involvement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Nilphamari*

Four out of the nine JMB leaders, arrested from a house in Kazi Para in Saidpur town on Tuesday, in their confessional statements yesterday admitted their involvement in the August 17 serial bomb blasts in Nilphamari.

All the nine are on a five-day remand. The four made confessions before a First Class Magistrate under Section 164, police sources said.

They are 'divisional commander' Abdur Rashid Asif, 'commander' Faruk Hossen Amzad, and suicide squad members (ehsars) Md Rabiul Islam alias Kamal and Ehsanul Haq Mesbah.

Detective Branch police have shown the four militants arrested in the case filed earlier in connection with the August 17 blasts.

Police sources said all the nine are being interrogated.

During their arrest, Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) also recovered a huge quantity of bomb-making materials from their rented house in Kazi Para, Rab officials told newsmen on Tuesday.

Two cases have been filed, one under the Explosives Act and the other under the Arms Act in this connection with Saidpur thana, police said yesterday.

Meanwhile a controversy has arisen as to when the militants were

arrested.

Some sources claimed that unknown and suspicious people used to visit the militants' rented house at Kazi Para.

House owner Abdul Gani Mridha on Tuesday morning in presence of Rab and police admitted before newsmen that Rab-10 members arrested six people including his tenant Abdur Rashid Asif while they were holding a meeting at his house.

He (Abdul Gani) also said that the Rab members recovered explosives and other bomb-making materials from his tenants' house.

But after departure of Rab men, he (Abdul Gani) told newsmen that on Monday midnight, some Rab members came to his house and gave him a piece of paper with some writings. "They (Rab) asked me to give statement as per the writings on the paper before any visitor. I did so out of fear", he added.

Some people raised the question why the house owner was not arrested after recovery of explosives from his house.

Rezia Aktar, mother of Faruk Hossen alias Amzad of Titpara village in Dirla upazila, told newsmen yesterday and the day before that Rab arrested his son, their neighbour Rabiul Islam and Kamal on January 30.

The news of their arrest was published in different daily newspapers on January 31 and February 1.

JOURNO HAROON MURDER

Retrial demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Minu Begum, wife of slain journalist Harun-ar-Rashid, has demanded reinvestigation and retrial of the murder of her husband.

She is feeling insecure with her son Iqbal chowdhury Shagor, 14 and daughter Shailatuzzaman, 18, after hearing the verdict of the murder case in which the three chargesheeted 'terrorists' have been acquitted.

"Terrorist Moktar Hossain Baby, acquitted in the case, had threatened several times to kill my son for not withdrawing the case. But I did not submit to his threat", said Minu Begum who has sought security of her son and daughter, fearing reprisal by the acquitted terrorists.

"Moktar Hossain Baby was the man who

fired shots at Haroon while others gave security cover to the killer", she claimed while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

Minu Begum accused CID police of damaging merit of the case after receiving a huge amount of bribe from masterminds behind the murder. An ASP of CID damaged the merit of the case by week investigation, Minu Begum alleged.

She alleged that ASP Mawla Bux Submitted a weak chargesheet without including evidences he had collected during investigation.

"I gave a lot of clues for investigation but the IO did not investigate the case following the clues", she said.

There are sufficient reasons to demand reinvestigation of Haroon murder case, prominent lawyer Enayet Ali told this correspondent.

7X2

UDICHI BLAST CASE

Hearing date now Feb 23

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jessore*

The date for hearing in Udichi Bomb Blast Case has been shifted to February 23.

The Special Judge of Jossore, Abul Hossain Bepari yesterday refixed the date following submission of a petition by the defence lawyer.

Earlier, the date of hearing was shifted to February 8 from January 26.

4X3

5X3

25 hurt as cops swoop on 14-Party procession

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Manikganj*

At least 25 leaders and activists of the 14-Party Opposition were injured here when police swooped on a procession yesterday.

The opposition brought out the procession as part of their ongoing countrywide protest programme.

The injured included Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD Inu) central joint secretary Iqbal Hossain Khan, Awami League (AL) district unit secretary Gazi Kamrul Huda Selim, AL leaders Sakawat Hossain Khan, Engineer ABM Anwarul Hque, Sadar AL secretary Hasib Uddin Ahmed Selim, Sadar Jubo League secretary Jahangir Alam and BCL leader Shawkat.

CORRUPTION ALLEGED

Appointments stopped in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kagrachhari*

Appointments of teachers in primary schools and peons in Social Welfare Department have been cancelled due to alleged corruption in Khagrachhari Zila Parishad.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Ministry on Tuesday issued an order to Khagrachhari Zila Parishad chairman Nakhatralai Deva Barman asking to stop the appointment procedures.

It has been alleged that the Zila Parishad authorities sent appointment letters to candidates of their choice by showing back date.

For appointments, five top Zila Parishad officials and a powerful clerk took Tk 1 lakh 50 thousand from each candidate intending to be peons and Tk 2 to 3 lakh from each candidate intending to be primary school head-master or assistant teacher, sources said.

The result of written tests were published three days ago.

This correspondent repeatedly tried to contact the Zila Parishad chairman for his comments but failed to reach him.

However, Harun-or-Rashid, a member of Zila Parishad termed the allegations 'politically motivated'.

Meanwhile, about 25 youths were seen demonstrating in the town yesterday demanding return of money.

9X4