

VoIP BUSINESS
Bail of arrestee triggers mixed reaction

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to a person arrested for running an unauthorised voice over internet protocol (VoIP) business, even though he gave a confessional statement to a magistrate.

Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court granted bail to owner of the business Mainul Islam triggering a mixed reaction among the lawyers and others on the court premises.

The court passed the order following a criminal appeal against the rejection order of a lower court on February 20.

On January 28, Mainul gave a confessional statement to a metropolitan magistrate admitting his guilt.

Earlier on January 22, the government has warned all against clandestine overseas phoning through VoIP that deprives the exchequer of a huge amount of revenue.

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested Mainul and three others and seized a huge quantity of equipment used to run unauthorised VoIP business from an office at Purana Paltan in the city on January 22.

Members of Rab-2 arrested Mainul and three of his staff -- Abdul Kuddus, Mosharraf Hossain and Shohag Sikder -- during an eight-hour raid.

The seized equipment includes computers, 228 SIM (subscriber identity module) cards of different cellular phone service operators, 42 teller devices and many coils of internet cables. Rab officials said the estimated price of the equipment is over Tk 10 lakh.

Mainul, schooled in madrasa, admitted that he learnt about the business from a Pakistani citizen in Kuwait. He also admitted that he was running the business despite knowing that such a business is illegal in the country.

Following the incident, deputy assistant director (DAD) of Rab-2 Yunus Ali filed a case against Mainul and three others with Paltan Police Station on January 23.

The case was filed under Section 15(A) of the Special Powers Act and Sections 61/78 of Tele Communications Act.

Take steps to check dumping of toxic waste into rivers

Environmentalists urge caretaker govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday urged the caretaker government to launch a drive to check dumping of untreated industrial effluents into rivers and water bodies in order to avert environmental disasters.

Some 25 rivers, out of about 230, are now almost dead and the remaining are also facing the same fate because of mindless dumping of untreated toxic waste, they said.

"All the major water bodies, including four rivers surrounding the capital -- Buriganga, Shitalakhya, Turag and Bali -- are virtually biologically dead, posing a serious threat to the water supply for the city dwellers," said Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), at a programme marking the International Day of Action for River.

Bapa and Jatiya Nadi Rakha Andolon organised the programme at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) where environmentalists placed a 38-recommendation for saving the rivers.

Lack of coordination among the ministries, especially land, communication, environment and water ministries, is a major reason behind the rise of anti-environmental activities, Prof Muzaffer said.

He said the quality of water in rivers, lakes and other water bodies in Dhaka deteriorates alarmingly during seven months of a year from November to May.

He also urged the caretaker govt



PHOTO: STAR

Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a programme marking the International Day of Action for River at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the city yesterday.

ment to relocate the industries from the capital to some other places far away from the capital and rivers.

"Sayedabad Water Treatment Plant is unable to treat water from Shitalakhya river due to severe contamination of its water. WASA will now have to collect water from Meghna, which will be costlier," he said.

Mihir Biswas, joint secretary of

Bapa, said the caretaker government should take stern action against encroachers of the rivers.

Dr Matin, coordinator of Jatiya Nadi Rakha Andolon, urged the government to make a map of river basins to raise awareness about rivers.

Bapa General Secretary Mahidul Haq Khan and Joint Secretary GK Baral were also present at the programme.

Ethiopia keen to recruit Bangladeshi teachers

UNB, Dhaka

Ethiopia has shown interest in recruiting teachers from Bangladesh, as the African country wants expansion of the bilateral relations.

"Ethiopia may dispatch a recruiting mission to Bangladesh in August or September this year for the purpose," the newly appointed Ambassador of the African country, Genet Zewide, said when she met Foreign

Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at the ministry yesterday.

The Adviser noted that Bangladesh and Ethiopia have great potential for economic cooperation. "And we both intend to follow up on it," she said.

The Foreign Adviser apprised the Ambassador of Bangladesh's desire to establish an Honorary Consulate in Addis Ababa and sought Ethiopian Government's assistance in this regard.

PHOTO: STAR

"Bangladesh has a great interest in Africa, not just as a peacekeeper but also as a peace-builder", remarked the Adviser, speaking to the media afterwards.

The possibilities of sending Bangladeshi professors to Ethiopian universities came up for discussion.

They also discussed the current situation in the Horn of Africa and hoped for an early return to stability.



Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt General (Retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury talks to journalists at his office in the city yesterday.

2 get 14 years' RI for carrying Phensidyl

BSS, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday sentenced two persons to 14 years' rigorous imprisonment for carrying Phensidyl bottles.

Special Sessions Judge Mazedul Karim handed down the verdict to Shafique alias Rajel, 30, and Rashidul Haque alias Milon, 32. The court also fined them Tk 10,000 each. If they fail to pay, they would have to suffer another one year's imprison-

ment.

According to the prosecution, a team of highway police arrested Shafique and Rashidul along with 92 bottles of Phensidyl at Baneshwar Bazar under Puthia upazila on April 26, 2005.

Special public prosecutor Mizanul Islam conducted the case on behalf of the state while Advocate Mozaffar Hossain defended the accused.