

Patron, outlaw held

FROM PAGE 1
In another incident Jhenidah police seized 17 firearms and arrested two illegal arms traders in connection with the recovery yesterday morning.

Our correspondent from Kushtia reported that the arrestees there were identified as Taslima Khan Akhi, 42, general secretary of Kushtia town Mahila Awami League, another Mahila Awami League activist Rani, 25 of Kushtia Housing Estate area, GMF cadres Abdur Razzak, 26 of Kalishankerpur of Kushtia town, and Shahin, 25 of Mahisdanga in Sadar upazila of the town.

Police said Akhi has been a political patron and a firearms transporter for armed GMF. She had also been arrested once earlier in 2006 in connection with the killing of an Awami Jubo League leader in front of her house, but was later released on bail.

Acting on a tip off, three separate police teams led by Assistant Police Super (ASP-Headquarters) Alamgir Hossain stopped a Kushtia bound microbus in Trimohoni area on the outskirts of Kushtia town around 10:45pm.

When the law enforcers wanted to search the microbus, Akhi introduced herself as a Mahila Awami League leader and got into an altercation with them.

At one stage, she tried to start up the microbus and flee, but police barricaded the road with their vehicles.

Finally the law enforcers searched the microbus and discovered an AK-47 rifle, a shot gun, and 82 rounds of different types of bullets.

Police arrested all four passengers of the vehicle, and took them to Kushtia Police Line.

A team led by Superintendent of Kushtia Police Sahabuddin Khan interrogated them.

Based on the arrestees' confessional statements, separate police teams then raided different locations in Kushtia town and Daulatpur upazila, arresting Akkas Ali, 38 of Dangmorka of Daulatpur upazila the same night.

According to police, Akhi picked up the weapons from Akkas' house around 8:30pm on instruction from top GMF bosses Shahin and Mukul who are now believed to be in India.

Akkas also informed police that Biplob, a regional leader of GMF, had given him the weapons on September 9. Later, Biplob was killed in police 'crossfire' on September 13.

After Biplob's killing, the top leaders of the outfit needed to save the weapons, and they chose Akhi as the person safe enough to be the keeper.

The GMF leaders asked their two cadres Razzak and Shahin to accompany Akhi for transporting the weapons from

Akkas' house. Shahin, who has been in the business of microbus services, is also a top cadre of GMF.

According to police, Akhi was transporting the firearms to her house in Aruapara of Kushtia town.

Akhi also told police that the GMF bosses asked her to hide the weapons in her house until the next directive, said ASP Alamgir Hossain.

AKHI'S CONNECTION WITH ARMED ACTIVITIES
Police said they learned that Akhi has been transporting firearms for the armed underground group for more than ten years. She has also been giving shelter to the outfit's cadres in her house in Kushtia town. She has been getting handsome amounts of money from the outfit for the service as well. She managed to stay out of the list of suspects by becoming a leader of Mahila Awami League.

JAMU MURDER
Mir Jamirul Islam Jamu, 36, a contractor, was killed on October 31, 2006. According to police records, Jamu went to Akhi's house on an invitation for dinner. As he was coming out of Akhi's house around 10:30pm following the dinner, a group of unidentified people sprayed automatic weapons fire on Jamu killing him on the spot.

Later, GMF claimed responsibility for the killing terming Jamu as their rival. Shimu, wife of Jamu filed a case with Sadar police station without mentioning any suspect's name.

Police then arrested Akhi from her house. The magistrate court sent Akhi to jail. But she was out on bail in seven days. The case is still pending.

2 HELD WITH 17 FIREARMS IN JHENIDAH
Our Jhenidah correspondent reported that police there seized 17 firearms and arrested two illegal arms traders from a bus at Arabpur bus stand yesterday morning.

The arrestees are Azad Hossain and Saidul Islam of Andulia village in Chowgachha upazila of Jessore.

Officer-in-charge of Jhenidah Sadar Police Station Anwar Hossain said they recovered the firearms and arrested the two from a Rajshahi bound bus around 9:40am yesterday.

Jhenidah Police Super Rezaul Karim confirmed that the arrestees were illegal arms traders.

He said the seized firearms are modified air guns that were used in different crimes. Those were being taken to Rajshahi zero point from Jessore BRTC counter, he added.

Police arrested the two during a drive they were conducting following up on information that a large supply of firearms would be transported to Rajshahi illegally through the district.

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Patuakhali MP

FROM PAGE 16
Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, its Editor and Publisher Mahbuba Chowdhury, two reporters Abu Zafar and Zia Shaheen, Jugantor Editor and Publisher Salma Islam, its Executive Editor Saiful Islam and Barisal Bureau Chief Akhter Faruque Shaheen, Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar, its Publisher AK Azad and Patuakhali district correspondent Mufti Salahuddin, and Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman.

The plaintiff said he was hurt and defamed by a series of defamatory news and editorials published in the four dailies on different dates.

On a petition filed by the lawmaker the same day, the court asked the defendants to explain within three weeks why they should not be restrained from publishing all kinds of defamatory news and editorials against the plaintiff and his family members in future.

In response to the defamation suit, Judge SM Saiful Islam ordered the defendants to appear before the court, and submit written statements on January 6 next.

During the hearing, Rony was present in the court.

In his plaint, Rony said defendants had run false, fabricated, concocted, derogatory and frivolous news items and editorials in their dailies on different dates this year. And these were published to harass and humiliate him in the eyes of right thinking people of the society.

The plaintiff also said he had earlier sent legal notices on October 27 asking the defendants to apologise unconditionally within 48 hours from the day of receipt of those. But they did not respond to the notices.

IGP gets 48hrs

FROM PAGE 1
HRPB lawyer and its President Manzil Murshed told The Daily Star that they had submitted to HC the video footage, and some government officials submitted reports stating that earth filling and encroachments at some points of the rivers continued.

Manzil said the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner in his report said he cannot take action against those violating the HC directives since they are doing the illegal work in Savar area, which is beyond his jurisdiction.

On October 8, upon the petition filed by the HRPB, the HC directed the director general of the Directorate of Environment, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Chairman and Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka to visit the Turag and Buriganga rivers and submit to it a report within seven days. They complied with the court order, Manzil said.

Earlier this year, the HC in separate orders had asked the government to demarcate the Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakha through a survey to restore the original condition of the rivers.

The court also ordered stopping encroachments, earth filling and construction of illegal structures on those.

As per the directives, the authorities are now conducting cadastral survey for demarcating the rivers.

Tender-mongers

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And Monir entered his office room on the third floor of administrative building around 10:20am. The attackers beat him up, damaged valuables in the room and left the scene after disconnecting his telephone.

In the guise of patients' attendants, the criminals entered the floor, said a security guard of the director's office.

A peon said the cadres also beat him up when he was trying to resist them from entering the director's room, and they were equipped with firearms and sharp weapons.

Seeking anonymity several staffs of NICVD said some ruling party men, who are also local contractors, are behind the attack as the director barred them from manipulating the hospital tenders.

However, the director claimed he had been trying to prevent a gang of criminals from doing illegal activities in his institute for the last two and a half years and that might have caused the attack.

Officer-in-Charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station Mohammad Riad Hossain told The Daily Star that the director filed a case with the police station accusing Titu, Fazlu, Monir and unidentified eight to ten attackers.

Politicians, outlaws

FROM PAGE 1
the ruling party leaders. We do it to save our skin from the law enforcers from being killed in crossfire," says a Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) leader on the understanding of anonymity.

The law-enforcement agencies cracking down on outlaws have also unearthed names of some local leaders of ruling Awami League (AL), main opposition BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Jatiya Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) who provide support as patrons to the outlaws.

An intelligence agency has already prepared a list of such bigwig patrons that includes four AL lawmakers, one law-maker from the AL-led 14-party alliance and seven former BNP legislators.

Sources say an eminent lawyer and a central AL leader have secured their place on the list.

The ongoing crackdown on the outlaws began on August 22 following a serious slide in law and order in the region.

In Kushtia, Gono Bahini has recently killed seven cadres of rival GMF and dumped their severed heads near Islami University and the R&H Department and the bodies a few kilometres away.

Since the beginning of the drive, 61 suspected outlaws were killed in 'crossfire' during 'encounters' between their cohorts and law enforcers. However, the victims are cadres of the lowest tier as the top outlaws have already gone into hiding, sources say.

Allegations are rife that AL district unit General Secretary Azgor Ali and Vice-president Haji Rabiul bribed the law enforcers a huge amount of money to save the outlaw-turned AL leaders from 'extra-judicial' execution.

Both Azgor and Rabiul denied the allegations but admitted that "they only interfere when their party leaders are held and implicated in pending cases".

EU vows

FROM PAGE 16
The statement came following the October 31-November 1 visit of the eight-member delegation to Bangladesh.

During the time, the group met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ministers for environment and disaster management, parliamentarians, NGOs and civil society representatives.

The delegation has not made any financial commitment but said it would submit an official report to the European Parliament that looks after budgetary allocations.

Bangladesh must make specific projects for effective use of the new money, Deva said, adding that politicians must have a consensus on national issues like climate change to work together. The opposition must debate on the crucial issues to frame flawless laws, he noted.

He said they were impressed by the efforts of Bangladesh government. He stressed that the ultra-poor will be the first victims of climate change and so it is essential to do everything to promote their fundamental rights to a decent life.

"Bangladesh is not responsible for the imminent disasters. So, we expect the best possible deal [for Bangladesh] at Copenhagen," the British Conservative parliamentarian told newsmen.

Asked about Bangladesh's demand for \$500 million as compensation from the developed world, Deva said a total agreement is needed for this. The amount may be even greater than that, he noted.

"Regional cooperation is very crucial, especially, for the issues of water sharing of the cross border rivers. Unless addressed efficiently, these

conflicts will create even greater risks," said Jean Lambert, another member of the delegation.

Asked about extra-judicial killings in Bangladesh, Nirj Deva said the rule of law must be paramount. "A functional democracy is not possible without keeping rule of law above all. Anyone violating laws must be brought to book," he added.

On the opposition's parliament boycott, he said the opposition must join parliament and debate to frame flawless laws. "Catastrophe is obvious if party interest goes above national interests."

Head of the European Commission delegation to Dhaka Stefan Frowen, Swedish Ambassador Frit F Hagstrom, delegation members Maltese Socialist John Attard Montalto, German Green Franziska Keller and Italian Liberal Niccolò Rinaldi were present at the press conference.

Hasina wants

FROM PAGE 16
Bangladesh government's development initiatives hoping that the living standard of its people would improve under the able leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

He congratulated Hasina for the Awami League-led grand alliance's landslide victory in the December 29, 2008 parliamentary polls.

The OIC secretary general thanked Hasina as her cabinet on Monday ratified the protocol on the preferential tariff scheme.

They allege there are some loyalists of the four-party alliance in the administration who are arresting their party leaders and activists following a list prepared during the caretaker and four-party rules.

"How do you expect we won't award tenders to our party men who were deprived for long?" asked Rabiul who was earlier vice-president of district unit Gono Forum and Islami Shashantantra Andolan.

MEETING WITH AN OUTLAW LEADER

The meeting with a GMF leader, who is in charge of a certain area, was arranged in West Madanpur on the outskirts of Kushtia town.

But soon after this correspondent started for the meeting venue with a mediator, the outlaw leader changed the spot three times in a span of seven minutes as part of precaution.

Several men were seen observing the situation as the mediator rode his motorcycle into an alley with every lamp-post turned off. A man was waiting at a certain spot who disappeared and then the expected outlaw leader turned up.

The local mediator left this correspondent alone for the talks after giving a reminder about the allocated time for the meeting.

The outlaw leader began the talks about their patrons in the region and did not hesitate to say the names of AL district unit General Secretary Azgor Ali and Vice-president Haji Rabiul.

"Now we're a bit tormented as the crossfire thing has begun again," he said, adding they are trying to arrange their surrender through their political patrons.

During the conversation, the man suddenly said, "I'm not able to stay here any further," and quickly disappeared into the dark.

Religion

FROM PAGE 16
Shushashoner Janney, Nagorik (Shujan) organised the roundtable styled "Considering the education policy of Bangladesh" at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

In the keynote paper, Shujan president Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said it is not rational to say that religion and moral education are neglected in the policy as the subjects are made mandatory in the general education from class III to class VIII.

The subjects like the Quran, Tajbid, Akayid and Fiqah were included in the proposed curriculum for madrasa apart from the religion and moral education from class III to class VIII there, he said.

"Those who are saying that the policy ignored religion and moral education have not read it properly as it emphasised religious education," he headed.

Prof Muzaffer said, "Why is there so much talking about the matter? There might be a political motive behind it."

"I do not think the report has any insufficiency regarding teaching of religion and morality from educational point of view. The committee fully approved religious and moral education," he headed.

However, the policy does not have direction about infrastructure and measures while extending the primary level, he said, suggesting its quick implementation.

Former education minister Sheikh Shahidul Islam said the subjects which were made mandatory for all would be an extra burden for the madrasa students as usually "less" meritorious students study there.

He also said the proposal to extend primary level up to class VIII is "irrational" and "quite impossible" to implement as it needs huge infrastructure and resources.

He suggested that the education policy be reviewed and the government take more time before going for its implementation.

Dr Kazi Saleh Ahmed, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, said there would be difficulties in extending primary level as most of the teachers of this level in the rural areas are not capable of teaching subjects like English and mathematics.

He suggested implementation of the policy on a pilot basis before going for its full implementation.

Prof Syed Anwar Husain of Dhaka University said the policy is not considered as a policy as it cannot be done in only four months.

The people who never think, speak or write about education were involved in the process of formulating the policy, he said, adding though it was a start, the government should take more time before its implementation.

Dr Manzoor Ahmed of BRAC University said the new education policy is entirely acceptable if we consider it from the perspective of directions as the policy gives directions. A policy never gives solution to all problems, he added.

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud moderated the roundtable, while Badiul Alam Majumder, secretary of Shujan, Dr Anwarul Haque, former director general of National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), Mahmudur Rahman Manna and Biren Shikder, MP also spoke.

UN chief

FROM PAGE 16
"At the same time, realistically speaking, we may not be able to have all the words on detailed matters."

He added: "We need the political will, if there is a political will I'm sure there is a way we can conclude a binding agreement."

Brown said he thought a deal was possible and restated his pledge to attend the talks in person.

"We will leave no stone unturned in the next few weeks," he said.

"We believe it's possible to get an agreement on long-term targets and intermediate targets."

Hopes for a legally binding agreement on slashing carbon pollution by the United Nations conference in Copenhagen in December are fading, and diplomats have instead set their sights on a political deal, sources say.

Negotiators from more than 190 countries are meeting in Barcelona this week for a final round of talks before the December 7-18 conference in Denmark.

The aim is to craft a new pact on climate change beyond 2012 but the negotiations are mired in discord over how to apportion carbon emission cuts and finance a switch to lower-pollution technology.

PM pledges

FROM PAGE 1

Centre in the capital marking the jail Killing Day.

Earlier she paid rich tributes to the four leaders by placing wreaths on the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi to commemorate the day.

She also offered special prayers for the salvation of the departed souls of the leaders as well as victims of August 15, 1975 massacre while visiting Banani graveyard.

The four liberation war heroes -- Syed Nazrul Islam, acting president of 1971 Bangladesh government in exile, Tajuddin Ahmed, prime minister of the same government, M Mansoor Ali, finance minister, and A H M Quamruzzaman, minister for home affairs, relief and rehabilitation -- were killed brutally inside the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3 in 1975 within less than three months after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

AL organised the discussion with party presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair.

The High Court (HC) last year awarded death sentence to Risaldar (ret'd) Muslemuddin, still on the run, and acquitted six former military men including Syed Farook Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Bazul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed of charges in the jail killing case.

The government on September 14 filed five separate leave-to-appeal petitions with the Supreme Court (SC) against the HC verdict.

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam yesterday said the government will seek hearing on leave-to-appeal in the case as the trial court earlier gave death sentences to three accused and life imprisonment to six others, but the HC upheld death sentence of one accused.

Addressing the discussion, the prime minister said the

defeated liberation war forces killed the four leaders after the assassination of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a bid to jeopardise the independence and sovereignty of the country.

Since the government assumed office and took initiative to hold trial of war criminals and conduct appeal hearing on the Bangabandhu murder case, among others, the conspirators started fresh plot against the government to save the killers.

Directing her party men to remain alert against any kind of conspiracy and foil it to keep democracy unharmed, Hasina firmly said there would be no place for the criminals and militants in the country and her government would establish Bangladesh as a most peaceful country in the Southeast Asia.

The prime minister also directed the party leaders to work towards fulfilling party's commitment that it gave to the people before the ninth parliamentary election.

Awami League general secretary Syed Ashraful Islam, party leaders Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Abdul Latif Siddiqui, Satis Chandra Roy, Mohammad Nasim, Mahbubul Alam Hanif and Dipu Moni, among others, spoke at the discussion.

Earlier in the morning Home Minister Sahara Khatun, State Minister Shamsul Haque Tuku, Qamrul Islam and AL lawmaker Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin placed the wreaths at cell no. 1 in the jail commemorating the killing of four national leaders.

Sahara said Bangabandhu memorial museum and four national leaders' memorial museum will be built beside their cell to commemorate Bangabandhu and the killing of the four national leaders.

AL and its front organisations and other socio-cultural political organisations also organised various programmes to mark the day.

Aug 21 suspects

FROM PAGE 16
Senior ASP Abdul Kahar Akand of CID, the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case, summoned the then chiefs of the National Security Intelligence (NSI), Special Branch (SB) and CID for appearing at the CID headquarters, sources said.

According to sources, the IO also sought internal reports of the three intelligence agencies on the grenade attack incident to review it.

CID sources said they would also bring Huji founder Salam and Huji Chief Mufti Abdul Hannan and two other detained leaders--Jewel and Tamim Hossain--face to face within this week to cross check their statements.

Sources said the CID already has issued letters to the CID, SB and NSI authorities seeking their internal reports on the incident as well as to the then chiefs of the three agencies. But the CID could not send letter to the then NSI boss as he remains detained in connection with the Chittagong arms haul case.

Talking to The Daily Star, IO Abdul Kahar Akand said, "We have been quizzing Lutfuzzaman Babar, Mufti Abdul Hannan and Abdus Salam spontaneously and bringing them face to face gradually."

Replying to a query, the IO said, "We may ask any person to appear at the CID office for the sake of investigation."

Special Superintendent (SS-Metro) Meer Shahidul Islam of the CID told The Daily Star, "The CID is going to pray before the court tomorrow (Wednesday) for a fresh remand for Babar for further grilling."

Sources said the CID needs further remand for Babar as names of some influential persons were disclosed by Babar, Salam and Hannan. The influential persons would also be summoned for quizzing and brought face to face.

According to sources, among the detained Huji leaders, CID sorted out Hannan, Jewel and Tamim as the important persons and, therefore, the CID decided to bring them in front of Salam for justifying their statements.

Meanwhile, IO of the August 21 grenade attack investigation misleadingly case ASP Rownakul Huq Chowdhury on Monday cross-checked the statements of detained BNP leader Babar and former ASP Ruhul Amin of CID, who was an IO during the BNP-led four-party alliance government.

ASP Rownakul Huq told The Daily Star, "Former SS Ruhul Amin and ASP Abdur Rashid came to the CID office to face grilling while

Ruhul Amin was brought in front of Babar for cross checking their statements."

Former ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman could not come to the CID office due to his sickness but he would come on next Sunday, ASP Rownak said.

Salam

FROM PAGE 1
The government however could not do much to arrest the extremist group's advancement.

That it was alive and kicking despite the crackdown was manifest in its attempt to launch an attack on the prime minister in 2000.

After the botched attempt, Huji went into hiding and opted for covert operation and network building.

Beginning in the late 90s, it had been involved in many major terror strikes in the country.

Under growing pressure at home and abroad, the BNP-led four-party alliance government banned the group and arrested a few of its leaders in October 2005.

However, less than a year into the ban, Huji leaders held a public rally in the Baitul Mukarram mosque area under the banner of Sachetan Islami Janata (conscious Islamic people) on August 18, 2006.