



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

A total of 675 BDR jawans from 44 Rifle Battalion of Dhaka Sector were produced before the special court yesterday. The court has been set up at the Darbar Hall of BDR Headquarters, Pilkhana in the city.

BDR MUTINY TRIAL AT PILKHANA

Charges against 200 BDR jawans read out

Court resumes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mutiny at the BDR Pilkhana headquarters broke out with sepoy Kajol Ali firing three shots in the air signalling at the mutineers, the prosecutor of a mutiny case told the Special Court- 11 yesterday. Prosecutor Lt Col Kazi Aniruddha said that on February 25 last year, when the then BDR director general (DG) Shakil Ahmed was conducting the Darbar, sepoy Moin entered the Darbar Hall followed by sepoy Kajol and pointed a firearm at Shakil. Moin became nervous and fainted as senior officers came forward to disarm him. Soon Kajol went out and fired three blank shots from his rifle, said Aniruddha during the trial of 675 BDR members of 44 Rifle Battalion of the Pilkhana headquarters. Sepoy Selim Reza is also one of the

BDR jawans who played the key role when a group of mutineers entered the Darbar Hall to kill BDR high officials including the then DG. During the trial proceedings yesterday, all the accused of the case filed for killing, arson, looting and dumping bodies of army officers were produced before the Special Court- 11. The BDR members accused only of mutiny were produced in handcuffs while those who are accused of both mutiny and murder produced in shackles. Charge sheets were submitted against 120 of the accused. The three-member court headed by Col Iftekharuddin Ahmed read out specific charges against 200 accused including Selim Reza and Kajol until it adjourned proceedings at 3:30pm. The court will resume tomorrow at 10:00am. The two other members of the court are Lt Col Shahadat Hossain and Major

Alamgir while Deputy Attorney General Mohammad Ullah Kislou assisted the court. Earlier, the mutiny case was tried in the Special Court-5 but shifted to the Special Court-11 after the authorities reconstituted the special courts. On April 27, the hearing of the case was adjourned until yesterday. A total of 74 people including 57 army officials were killed during the February 25-26 mutiny at the BDR headquarters last year. The charges against the accused mutineers include leaving the Darbar Hall in violation of the orders of the then BDR DG, collecting arms, ammunition and magazines from arsenal and keeping those in their possession illegally, failing to control subordinates and intruding into the BDR DG's house known as rifle house.

567 BANGLADESHIS IN INDIAN JAILS HC asks for govt steps to bring them back

Staff Correspondent

The High Court yesterday directed the government to inform within 30 days of the steps it has taken to bring back 567 Bangladeshis languishing in different prisons in India even after completing their jail terms. In response to a writ petition, the HC ordered the government to submit the details of over 2,500 Bangladeshi nationals within 60 days, including the 567, who are reportedly detained in different jails in India. The daily Prothom Alo, a leading Bangla newspaper, on October 27 published a report stating that over 2,509 Bangladeshis including children - are currently imprisoned in various jails in West Bengal, including around 567 prisoners who are serving despite completion of their term. An HC bench yesterday also issued a rule upon the government to explain within four weeks why it should not be directed to take effective steps to bring back the imprisoned Bangladeshi nationals. The HC bench of Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice Obaidul Hasan came up with order and the rule following the writ petition filed by advocate Shahidul Islam, a Supreme Court lawyer. He filed the writ petition with the HC on October 31 following the Prothom Alo report seeking a direction from the HC to the government to bring back the Bangladeshi nationals. Secretaries to the Ministries of Foreign and Home affairs, Director General (South Asia) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, and Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Kolkata, Joint Secretary (political) to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Director General of Bangladesh Legal Aid Services were made respondents to the rule and order. Barrister Sara Hossain and barrister Arafat Hosen Khan appeared for the petitioner.

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NGOs cut Meherpur poverty

JAMMUL ALAM NOBIN, back from Meherpur

Just before the War of Liberation in the year 1970, some young boys of Gangni Upazilla under Meherpur district stepped forward to enhance the living standard of the area's people. They frequently faced obstacles from the social structure and people's superstition but those could not turn them down. They started their journey with only Tk 500 on February 15 of 1970 at Palashipara in Gangni but now have an annual budget of around Tk 10 crore to run around 11 projects. The journey of Palashipara Shamaj Kalyan Samity (PSKS) started out with educating the elderly of the area and later went on to family planning. Initially they found superstition blocking their path but they did not lose heart and went on to turn the small organisation into one that acts as a role model. Local non-government organisations grew up like the PSKS, bringing qualitative changes to the lives of the people of Meherpur, the country's southwestern district. These smaller NGOs are providing education, health, alternative dispute resolution, micro credit and other services to the doorsteps of the area's needy population. Visiting an alternative dispute resolution project of PSKS at Gangni, this correspondent talked with Surovi Begum, a 22-year-old divorcee, of

Bashbari village of the upazilla. Her in-laws were demanding dowry for her marriage. She said, "My parents gave them the money within a year. But they kept pressing me for more. My family is poor and could not afford more money. "My ex-husband and his family members started torturing me for the money. "At one stage, I went to the police station and filed a case but that did not help. Then I came here for mediation and now the matter is settled." Like Surovi, 96 people with 254 cases came for service under this project last year. Out of them, 195 have been settled, 47 are waiting to be settled, six went to court and six was dismissed. Shandhani Shangstha, one of these NGOs, is running a school and a clinic successfully. The school provides a unique financial help for its students. The school authorities give a cow to the student when he or she is at class three. Md Abu Zafar, executive director of Shandhani Shangstha, said, "The student bears his or her educational expenses by selling the milk. It also meets up the need of his or her nutrition. When the student passes SSC, he or she gives back a calf to the school authorities. "Around 160 to 165 students are now getting the financial assistance." Two Japanese organisations are financially assisting Shandhani Shangstha to run the school and the clinic.

Clarification

Awami League lawmaker Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj has given a clarification on a news item titled "Correct me if I am wrong: Sohel Taj" published in The Daily Star on Sunday. In a clarification letter, he mentioned that the quote attributed to him "I will rule the constituency based on the reports," was wrongly worded. The wording he had used was "I [Sohel Taj] will manage the affairs of the constituency based on the reports." "I am well aware that an elected Member of Parliament does not rule over his constituents but manages the affairs of a constituency and therefore it is absolutely unimaginable that I would utter this word," added Sohel Taj, the only son of country's first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed.

Nab killers, looters of 1971: Sajeda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury yesterday urged the country's people to trace out and nab those involved in killing, looting and crimes against humanity. "Trial of those who wanted to turn the country into a part of Pakistan, the killers and looters has already started. Trace them out from your respective places and help to nab them," she said while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion. Shaheed M Mansoor Ali Smriti Sangsad organised the discussion at National Museum auditorium in the city to mark the Jail Killing Day, observing the brutal killing of the four liberation war heroes. The four are Syed Nazrul Islam, acting president of the 1971 Bangladesh government in exile; Tajuddin Ahmed, prime minister of that government; M Mansoor Ali, finance minister; and AHM Quamruzzaman, minister for home affairs, relief and rehabilitation. Sajeda, also the presidium member of Awami League (AL), said the evil force killed the four national leaders to create a vacuum in AL leadership as Bangabandhu and those four national leaders shattered their Pakistan. She said the blood of Bangabandhu, the four leaders and the Jail Killing Day encourages us to move forward. "You [the four leaders] can never die as there is no death to ideals and principles," said Sajeda, adding that their sacrifice proves that AL leaders can never bow down to killers and never will. Trial of all killings will have to be carried out to make free the country from the evil forces, she added. Former minister and AL leader Mohammad Nasim, also the son of M Mansoor Ali, presided over the discussion, while AL presidium member Matia Chowdhury; Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim; Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu; Dhaka City AL General Secretary Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya; Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman Anwar Hossain Manju; and Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

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