

TORTURE OF 3 CHILDREN IN CUSTODY HC asks govt to explain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the government to explain within four weeks why the torture of three children in the custody of Lalbagh Police Station should not be declared illegal.

A Bangla daily on September 11 reported that Lalbagh police allegedly tortured three children -- Pakhi Aktar,8, her brother Barek,10, and her cousin Mirajul, 7, seriously by detaining them for six days.

A vacation bench of HC yesterday issued a suo moto rule also asking the government to explain why punitive action should not be taken against the police personnel responsible for torturing the children.

The bench of Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and Justice Md Anwarul Haque came up with the rule following the newspaper report headlined "Torture against 3 children by detaining them for six days in the Thana".

Supreme Court lawyer ABM Bayezid yesterday placed the Bangla daily before the HC bench, praying for action against the police personnel responsible for torturing the children.

He told the court that torture against the children is inhuman and also against the Children Act 1974.

According to the newspaper report, the police detained the three in connection with looting 80 tolas of gold jewellery from the house of garments businessman Mahbubur Rahman at Nawabganj in the city's Lalbagh area on September 3.

The children were sent to National Juvenile Development Centre in Gazipur on September 11 after police produced them before a juvenile court in connection with the incident of looting.

Home secretary, inspector general of police, commissioner of Dhaka metropolitan police, director general of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station, and other officials concerned have been made respondents to the rule.



A labourer demolishes the roof of a building built on Kalyanpur Gha Khal (canal) stretching from Shewrapara to Janata Housing in West Agargaon in the city yesterday during an eviction drive to free the canal from grabbers. Dhaka District Administration and Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority conducted the drive. PHOTO: STAR

182 BDR jawans jailed for mutiny

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) court yesterday sentenced 182 jawans of signal sector of erstwhile BDR to rigorous imprisonment ranging from four months to seven years and fined each of the convicts Tk 100 in a mutiny case.

The Special Court-8 tried the jawans for their involvement in the 2009 mutiny at the Pilkhana headquarters of the border force. During the mutiny on February 25-26, the BDR jawans mowed down 57 top and mid-ranking army officers along with 17 other people.

The special court also acquitted five accused, as allegations against them were not proved. Interestingly among the five acquitted, two pleaded themselves guilty earlier.

Deputy Director General of BGB Brig Gen Abu Sayeed Khan who led the court told the two acquitted,

"You pleaded yourself guilty. Since allegations against you are not proved, you are exonerated".

Prosecutor of the case Maj Mohammad Ahsan Habib said he will give order to the jail authority to release the acquitted persons immediately and ensure their joining in the force soon.

As the president of the three-member judges' panel started announcing the verdict one after another, security personnel took the convicts out of the courtroom and picked them up at prison vans waiting outside.

Earlier, the jawans in bare foot were produced at the makeshift dock setup at the Darbar Hall in Pilkhana.

Abu Sayeed Khan started delivering the judgment around 9:55am,

which continued for more than one hour. This is the fifth such verdict by special courts set up in BGB head-

quarters.

"The court is neutral. All related rules and laws were followed. The accused were given option for self-defence and to produce defence witness", said the BGB DDG before pronouncing the verdict.

He also said they (jawans) were given summary of witnesses' depositions, and a friend of the accused was also appointed for their assistance. Besides, the accused got opportunity to appoint lawyers by themselves, he added.

"Depositions of witnesses, misleading information produced by jawans, records, documents, mobile call list, age, video footage, photograph, and accused' final statements were taken into consideration in handing over punishment", said Sayeed Khan. "The jail term will be effective from today (yesterday)."

Of the convicts, 20 were jailed for

seven years, three for six years, 14 for five years, two for four years and six months, eight for four years, 16 for three years, 23 for two years, eight for two and six months, 33 for one year, 20 for one year and six months, 30 for six months, and five for four months.

Charges were framed against 187 jawans of the signal sector on December 5 last year and 75 witnesses gave depositions against them. The court recorded depositions of 22 defence witnesses.

The convicts were charged with leaving the Darbar Hall defying the orders of the then director general Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed, not controlling their juniors and taking effective measures to thwart the mutiny, taking part in mutiny with firearms, collecting firearms and ammunition from the armouries, and making statements before the media.

KALYANPUR CANAL Wasa knocks down illegal structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 20 concrete and semi-concrete structures on Kalyanpur Gha Khal (canal) in the capital were demolished in a drive yesterday.

A joint team of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) and the district administration conducted the drive with some 100 day-labourers and 50 police men from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

The objective of the drive is to recover from grabbers the 1.25 km long canal stretching from Shewrapara to Janata Housing in West Agargaon, said Kazi Wasiuddin, executive magistrate of Wasa.

Ruhul Amin, executive engineer of Wasa, said, "We demolished 20 among 37 illegal structures built on the canal." A five-storey building, a three-storey and a two-storey building were knocked down partially.

The drive will be continued today to demolish the remaining structures. Within a few days after eviction of all illegal structures, they will start working on a walkway at a cost of Tk 50 lakh, added Ruhul.

Wasiuddin said the drive is part of the initiative for canal recovery in the city.

"We will gradually recover 13 canals in the city from encroachers," he said.

Meanwhile, locals complained that the boundary of the canal has not been set correctly.

Abir Khan, a resident of the area, said the surveyors on Sunday marked the boundary incorrectly, for which three rooms of their house at Paschim Kafrul Molla Para in Taltala fell under the drive.

Wasa engineer Ruhul Amin, however, said they demolished only the structures which were illegally constructed on the canal.

'Relocate chemical shops'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Save the Environment Movement yesterday demanded relocation of chemical factories, shops and warehouses from residential areas to safeguard the areas from fire hazards, says a press release.

Speaking at a human chain organised by the movement at Armanitola, they also demanded a time befitting guideline and its implementation for manufacturing, marketing, storing and handling of chemicals.

Though some initiatives were taken by the government right after the Nimtoli tragedy last year, currently there is no progress in this regard, they added.

Teesta failure overshadows achievements

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The weekly cabinet yesterday observed that the achievements of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit were overshadowed by the failure to sign the Teesta river water deal.

Presided over by Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina, the cabinet elaborately discussed Manmohan's two-day visit to Dhaka and its outcomes.

"The cabinet members, including the prime minister believes that Bangladesh achieved a lot from the trip," a senior minister said after the meeting, held at the cabinet division of the Secretariat.

The PM said the deal will be signed soon, he said.

The crucial achievement was the protocol to the 1974 Mujib-India Land Boundary

Agreement, he said, adding that resolving the long-standing border and boundary-related problems would now be possible through the protocol's ratification by the two neighbours.

Meanwhile, the cabinet outright rejected the health ministry's amendment proposal of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Act, 1998.

BSMMU authorities took the initiative to introduce MBBS course in the university curriculum and the proposal was endorsed by the health ministry.

"The prime minister outright rejected the proposal saying that introduction of MBBS programme would hamper the research environment at the university," said press secretary to the PM Abul Kalam Azad while briefing reporters later.

Shibir, Jubo League clash in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Some five people were hurt as cadres of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) yesterday locked in a clash with Bangladesh Awami Jubo League activists over capturing of Howsy site at Sopura in Rajshahi.

Among the injured, Jubo League activist Monirul Islam was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

ICS activists beat up Abdus Samad Khan, a photojournalist of local daily Sun Shine and damaged his motorcycle during the clashes that sparked off tension in the city.

The regional office of Jubo League unit, portraits of Bangabandhu and the prime minister were damaged during the 45-minute clash that initiated around 8:00pm yesterday.

Gunfire sounds were heard during the clash while both the groups threw scrap bottles and pieces of iron at each other, said Shahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Boalia Police Station.

The Jubo League unit General Secretary Touhid Al Masud Rony said the clashes erupted when a group led by Shakil Ahmed, a former joint secretary of ICS unit of Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute, armed with sticks and rods attacked the office.

He said Shakil wanted to capture a site of Howsy legally run by the DSA.

Police and Rab personnel rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control.



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