

'Robber' killed in police firing in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

An alleged robber was killed as police opened fire on his gang on Sreepur-Mawna road at Bakultala in Sreepur upazila of Gazipur early yesterday.

Identity of the deceased could not be known.

Sreepur police said around 15 people were trying to commit robbery by blocking the road.

When patrol police, in a rented microbus, rushed to the spot, the gang attacked them with sharp weapons, injuring Assistant Sub-inspector Sabuj Mia, 35.

Later, police opened fire on the miscreants killing one of them instantly.

However, the other robbers managed to flee the scene.

Police recovered a sharp weapon and a cellphone set from the spot.

The body was sent to Gazipur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

HAJJ FLIGHTS Haab to agitate for third carrier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) yesterday threatened to wage tougher agitations if the government does not meet its demands by June 10.

The demands include allowing a third carrier and cancelling the newly introduced quota system for carrying hajj pilgrims.

At a press conference in the capital's Jatiya Press Club, Haab President Mohammad Ibrahim Bahar demanded that previous rules for carrying hajj pilgrims be reinstated.

According to previous rules, each agency was entitled to send a minimum of 50 and a maximum of 400 pilgrims. But the government has fixed 150 as the minimum limit for an agency this year, he said.

Between 2001 and 2012, a total of 404 agencies got permissions to send pilgrims. But the government has given licences to 800 more agencies this year, Bahar said.

Some of the agencies will incur a huge loss as they will not be able to manage 150 pilgrims, he added.

Pointing out some mismanagements of carrying hajj pilgrims by Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines, the Haab president said, "If a third carrier is not introduced, the pilgrims will go through the same uncertainty they faced last year."

A total of 1,27,198 pilgrims will go for this year's hajj. Biman will carry 50 percent of the pilgrim, while the Saudi Arabian Airlines will carry the rest. But Saudi Arabia Airlines can carry maximum 40,000 passengers in a hajj season. So, there will be a flight crisis if the government does not engage a third airline to carry the pilgrims this year, Bahar said.

Hefza Khana teacher canes 12-yr-old boy unconscious

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 12-year-old student was clobbered with canes by his teacher at a Hefza Khana in Sitakunda upazila yesterday until the boy lost his consciousness.

Locals rescued Yusuf Khan Sagar and rushed him to a local pharmacy. There were long, swelling bumps and bruises all over his back and arms. The boy was punished on suspicion that he stole the mobile phone of his instructor (hujur) Abdur Rahim.

Police arrested Rahim of the Hefza Khana, an institution where students memorise the holy Quran, situated in Sonaichhari union of the upazila.

Samiul Alam, officer-in-charge of Sitakunda Police Station, said Rahim kept lashing Yusuf with around 10-12 canes until the boy could endure anymore and passed out.

Locals beat up Rahim heavily before handing him over to police.

A case was filed in this connection.



Prosecution witness's statements contradictory

Quader Mollah's lawyer tells SC on 8th day of hearing on his appeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prosecution witness Shafiuddin Mollah's statements before the International Crimes Tribunal-2 regarding Abdul Quader Mollah's involvement in killing villagers of Alubdi village are contradictory, Abdur Razzaq, a lawyer for Mollah, told the Supreme Court yesterday.

Razzaq was placing arguments on the eighth day of the Appellate Division's hearing on convicted Jamaat-e-Islami leader Quader Mollah's appeal seeking acquittal in the war crimes case.

On April 24, 1971, Pakistan occupation forces and non-Bangalees led by Quader Mollah attacked unarmed villagers of Alubdi and killed 344 people, according to a charge, which was proved before the tribunal.

Razzaq told the SC that Shafiuddin stated before the ICT-2 that he (Shafiuddin) was hiding under a bush from where he saw Quader Mollah talking to Pakistani army officers and firing on villagers.

"Shafiuddin said he could not hear anything from where he was but he also said Quader Mollah was speaking Urdu -- these statements are contradictory," Razzaq argued.

Razzaq further said some parts of Shafiuddin's statements are not corroborated by the investigation officer.

The ICT-2 on February 5 awarded life term imprisonment to Mollah. The Appellate Division fixed today for further hearing.

AMINBAZAR KILLING

Hearing on charge framing June 24

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed June 24 for hearing on charge framing against 60 accused in killing of six students at Aminbazar in July 2011.

Judge (in-charge) Runa Nahid Akhter of the Second Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court set the date and directed jail authorities to produce those who are in custody before it on that day.

Of the accused, 31 including Abdul Malek, the prime accused, are now on bail while 24 are on the run and five in jail custody.

Rapid Action Battalion on January 13 this year pressed charges over the killing against 60 people.

In the early hours on July 17, 2011, a gang killed the youths near Aminbazar bridge on the outskirts of the capital, took the bodies more than half a kilometre away at Koblarchar on the advice of police and called villagers, saying robbers had been caught.

The mob started bludgeoning the six, without knowing the ill-fated youths had already gone beyond all pain and this was how the murder became known as an incident of mob beating.

CITY CORPORATION ELECTIONS 2013



Left, 14-party backed mayoral aspirant Shawkat Hossain Hiron campaigns in Barisal city's Medical area for the upcoming city corporation polls while, right, his opponent Ahsan Habib Kamal, pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Nagorik Parishad-backed candidate, campaigns in the city's Kashipur area.



PIC: FOCUS BANGLA

FAMILIARISING VOTERS WITH EVM Sylhet, Khulna to hold mock polls on June 9

CITY DESK

The regional Election Commission offices will hold mock voting in two wards of Sylhet and Khulna cities on June 9 to get the voters acquainted with the electronic voting machines (EVMs), which will be used for the first time in one ward of each of the four city corporations during the June 15 elections, say officials.

In Sylhet, the daylong experimental voting will take place in three centres of ward-2, where the EVM will be used on June 15, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

Many of the ward's 6,291 voters have expressed interest in the new device, but three of the four councillor candidates are apathetic to the EMV, Assistant Returning Officer Rahsedul Islam said yesterday. He said the election officials would be trained on the EVM on June 10-11.

Our Khulna correspondent adds: The trial voting will be held in ward-8 where most voters are workers and do not know how to use the EVM.

With 6, 237 voters, ward-8 is the smallest of 31 Khulna city wards, Assistant Returning Officer Ruhul Amin Mallick said yesterday. "We have proposed to use the machine in 21 polling booths of five centres in the ward."

Mallick said the election officials would be trained on the EVM on June 7-8.

Khulna Mony, Modhu unhappy over pre-election law, order

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two mayoral candidates yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the pre-election law and order situation in Khulna city, a claim refuted by a representative of the ruling party-backed contender and outgoing mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque.

Moniruzzaman Mony, backed by BNP-led 18-party alliance, and Shafiqul Islam Modhu, backed by Jatiya Party, expressed their disappointment at a views exchange meeting between the mayoral and councillor candidates and the regional Election Commission office, the district administration, and Khulna Metropolitan Police.

The EC office organised the programme at the city's public hall, aiming to ensure a free, fair and credible election.

Mony said the police could not arrest the listed criminals and seize the illegal firearms ahead of the June 15 election though it started the drive in early May. He also said the KMP was yet to take any steps to remove some KMP officials, especially the officer-

in-charge of Sonadanga Police Station, who was transferred there allegedly on recommendations of the ruling party leaders, including Khaleque.

Jatiya Party's Modhu feared that licensed arms would be used during the election, as gun owners were still to deposit their arms in the local police stations though the KMP asked them to do so within June 8. There are at least 10,000 licensed guns in Khulna city, according to sources. Modhu also claimed that his campaign posters were pulled down in different places but law enforcers did not take any steps.

Mizanur Rahman Mizan, chief agent for Khaleque, however, expressed his satisfaction over the law and order situation, referring to the tenure of the BNP-led government when, he said, extortion, murders occurred regularly.

Meanwhile, Modhu announced his 19-point manifesto at Khulna Press Club yesterday, pledging to establish good governance and ensure the city corporation's accountability.

SCC MAYORAL POLLS Kamran accuses Arif of smear campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The ruling party-backed mayoral runner Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran yesterday accused his rival candidate Ariful Haque Chowdhury of conducting a smear campaign against him to get undue benefits in the June 15 Sylhet City Corporation election.

On his campaign, the outgoing mayor said the opposition candidate was propagating unfounded information about his development programmes. He said people were very conscious and educated these days, they could not be misguided.

Kamran said the Awami League-led government started many of the major development projects, including water supply, infrastructure development, riverbank protection. In the last five years, the projects cost Tk 500 crore, he said. The city AL president said most of his 2008 electoral pledges were already delivered.

During his campaign, BNP central leader Arif said he had pledged to make SCC accountable to the city people. "If elected, I will run the corporation above political consideration. It will be a totally service-oriented organisation."

The opposition-backed candidate also said he had tried to contribute as much as possible during his tenure as chief of SCC's city development sub-committee. "I will try to serve better, if the people give a chance."

BNP, AL central leaders to join Sylhet campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

National level leaders will join the election campaign for both the ruling alliance and opposition backed mayoral candidates in the June 15 Sylhet City Corporation election, leaders of the parties said yesterday.

The Awami League advisory committee members Tofayel Ahmed and Amir Hossain Amu are scheduled to reach Sylhet Friday to join the mass contact drive for city AL president and outgoing mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran. For BNP central leader Ariful Haque Chowdhury, BNP Vice-chairman Dr Osman Faruque and BNP chairperson's advisers Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury will join the campaign in a day or two.

Meanwhile, the Sylhet city unit of Muktiyoddha Sangsad yesterday declared to back Kamran, saying pro-liberation people should be elected to help continue the war crimes trial.

RAJSHAHI Mayoral runners promise not to use black money

STAR REPORT

All three Rajshahi mayoral candidates yesterday promised that they would not use black money in the June 15 city corporation elections and accept the poll results whoever wins.

They assured the voters of working with the elected mayor.

Awami League-backed candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, BNP-backed Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul and independent candidate Habibur Rahman made the promises at a meet-the-voters programme organised by Shushashoner Janney Nagarik (SHUIJAN).

SHUIJAN Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar moderated the programme in Rajshahi city's Swapnil auditorium where the three answered questions of the people.

The candidates affirmed their position against drug abuse and land grabbing in the city. They said they would create employment for the youth and women and develop the IT sector.

Meanwhile, Liton yesterday unveiled his 37-point manifesto with commitments of making the city corporation self-reliant through income-generating projects. "If the corporation can be self-reliant on only office expenditures, it can increase civic facilities," Liton said while reading out his charter in Nunking auditorium.

His manifesto includes creating a fixed deposit of Tk 100 crore within two years from profits of the 14 multi-storey commercial buildings in the town, establishing rail links with Chittagong, and setting up agro-based industries to facilitate export from the city.

Gas has been provided to seven industries, and all households will get it, he said. He also pledged to formulate a 25-year master plan, implement the drainage project's third phase, found a private university, and complete the unfinished development works.

Bangladesh foreign policy absolutely independent Says Dipu Moni refuting US view

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday categorically said Bangladesh's foreign policy belongs to Bangladesh exclusively and it is not influenced by anybody.

Disagreeing with the US State Department's view that Bangladesh's foreign and domestic policies are heavily influenced by the region's major powers, particularly India, she said, "Our foreign policy belongs to us exclusively and is run to protect the interest of the people and the state."

Dipu Moni made the remarks in response to a question about the US State Department, which in its 2012 country report on terrorism on May 30 said Bangladesh's foreign policy is heavily influenced by India.

The foreign minister said Bangladesh-USA bilateral ties are "extremely good, effective, cordial and with full confidence" despite misleading campaign by some quarters.

She said Bangladesh is working closely with the United States and regional countries to deal with regional and international terrorism.

Questions were asked regarding India's win over Bangladesh as India did not pass the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) and Teesta River water sharing agreement although Bangladesh allowed shipment of Over Dimensional Cargoes (ODC) for Palatana power project and is now allowing shipment of food grains without any fees or charge.

On that matter, Dipu Moni said win-win situation does not mean that, "If we give A, we will get B in exchange." She claimed that Bangladesh has achieved duty-free and quota free access to Indian market and tariff and para-tariff barriers were removed, which greatly expanded the volume of trade, and US\$1 billion Line of Credit (LoC) for infrastructure development of Bangladesh.

Of the LoC, she said US\$200 million was given as grant. She claimed that Bangladesh would be able to import 100MW from Palatana project in Tripura.

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