

## THE CONVICTS



**Maj LIAKAT**

Liakat Hossain, the then NSI deputy director, was responsible for smooth offloading and transporting of the arms. He was present at the CUFL jetty during offloading.



**PARESH BARUA**

The Ulfa leader lived in Bangladesh in disguise since 2001 and planned the smuggling with the help of DGFI and NSI officials. He held meetings with them at different safe houses.



**SHAHAB UDDIN**

The former NSI director maintained close relations with ISI officials at the Pakistani High Commission in Dhaka and sent NSI officer Akbar to Chittagong for hiring trucks.



**AKBAR HOSSAIN**

The NSI field officer went to the port city and hired trucks for carrying the weapons. He was instructed by wing commander Shahabuddin to do the job.



**HAFIZUR**

Hafizur Rahman, a local smuggler, arranged trawlers and labourers for transporting the arms. He also took Ulfa men to the Bay on trawlers and brought the arms to Chittagong.



**MOHSIN UDDIN**

The ex-managing director of the CUFL was aware of the consignment but did not take any departmental action against the security staff and Ansar members at the jetty.



**ENAMUL HOQUE**

The former general manager of Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Ltd, too, knew about the consignment but did not go to the jetty area even after being informed of the seizure.



**DEEN MOHAMMAD**

The proprietor of Friends Syndicate supplied labourers for unloading the weapons from the two trawlers. He was present at the CUFL jetty to supervise the unloading.



**ABDUS SOBHAN**

The owner of fishing trawlers arranged the two trawlers used for carrying the arms from the sea to Chittagong, and accompanied Hafizur and Ulfa leaders on the trawler.



**NURUL AMIN**

The industries ministry official went to Chittagong and was at the CUFL guest house when the arms were being offloaded. He was to ensure undisturbed use of the jetty.

## Gallows for 14

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"We usually hand down 10 to 15 years' imprisonment in a case over recovery of one or two firearms. But the seizure of 10 truckloads of arms is not a usual case ... We should not consider it similarly."

It is clearly understood that officials of two important intelligence agencies had rapport and communications with Ulfa leaders Paresch Barua and Anup Chetia. The intelligence officials confessed to it, and that has been reflected in the verdict, said the judge.

The convicts include former director of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) Maj Gen (ret'd) Rezzakul Haider Chowdhury, ex-director general of National Security Intelligence (NSI) Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdur Rahim, former NSI director wing commander (ret'd) Shahab Uddin, former NSI deputy director Maj (ret'd) Liakat Hossain, ex-NSI field officer Akbar Hossain Khan, former additional secretary of industries ministry Nurul Amin, ex-CUFL managing director Mohsin Talukder, and former CUFL general manager (admin) Enamul Hoque.

Three other condemned men are Hafizur Rahman Hafiz, a local arms

smuggler, Din Mohammad, who supplied workers for offloading the arms and ammunition, and Haji Abdus Sobhan, owner of one of the two trawlers that carried the weapons from the deep sea to the CUFL jetty.

Of the convicts, 12 were present in court, while Paresch Barua and Nurul Amin are on the run.

The then BNP-Jamaat government tried to cover up the involvement of the culprits in the incident that stunned the nation and raised serious concerns about the country's security. The names of 11 of the 14 convicts were tactfully dropped from the list of suspects during the investigation in the BNP-led government's tenure.

However, in further probe after a political changeover, all of them were eventually found to have been involved in the arms smuggling.

With some loopholes in both cases, the trial began in 2005. Forty-five people were accused in the smuggling case and 42 in the arms case.

The cases took a new turn after the caretaker government took over in 2007.

The Chittagong Metropolitan

Judge's Court on February 14, 2008, ordered further probe into the cases following a petition from the prosecution.

The long-delayed trial started again at the special tribunal on November 29, 2011, and 56 prosecution witnesses testified in the arms case and 53 in the smuggling case.

It took more than two years to complete the proceedings.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of the CID Muniruzzaman Chowdhury, also the fifth investigation officer of the cases, submitted two supplementary charge sheets in June 2011, accusing 11 new suspects that included ex-industries minister and Jamaat-e-Islami Chief Nizami and former state minister for home Babar. All the 11 accused were sentenced to death yesterday.

The court observed that the five people, arrested at the jetty for involvement in the arms smuggling, were released later on directives from Babar, the then ex-state minister for home. "Evidence supports it."

The judge first pronounced the verdict in the arms case and sentenced the 14 to life imprisonment for possessing illegal firearms and

another seven years for possessing illegal ammunition. Both the sentences will merge.

"Since I have given the highest punishment [life sentence] in the arms case, I have decided to award the same persons the highest punishment [death sentence] in the smuggling case, as they were found guilty on the charge of smuggling," the judge said.

The court also fined them Tk 5 lakh each in the smuggling case.

On claims that Babar and Nizami were implicated in the cases for political reasons, the judge said none of those who gave depositions were involved in politics, as they were either government high-ups or top officials of intelligence agencies.

The prosecution expressed satisfaction at the verdict.

However, family members and counsels for the convicts termed the judgment "politically motivated", and said they had been "deprived of justice" and would challenge the verdict in a higher court.

Under legal provisions, the convicts have the right to lodge appeals with the High Court, and will also get a chance to file appeals with the Supreme Court if the HC

## Local smuggler

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officer of the case, CID Senior ASP Moniruzzaman Chowdhury, pick up a new lead and prepare supplementary charge sheets against 11 important persons, including former ministers Babar and Nizami, in June 2011.

In the statement, Hafizur claimed to have given the same information to previous investigators since his surrender on October 26, 2005, but those were never recorded.

According to his statement, Hafizur being a Jatiya Party (JP) activist was known to Azmal Huda Mithu, former president of JP's cultural wing Jatiya Sangskritik Party.

A month before the 2001 parliamentary elections, JP leader Golam Faruq Obhi introduced Hafizur with a person named "Zaman" at Mithu's house in the capital's Banani.

"Obhi told Zaman that he [Zaman] could take help from me to unload goods in Chittagong," Hafizur said in his statement, adding that he later came to know that Zaman was actually military wing commander of Ulfa, Paresch Barua.

Zaman maintained contact with Hafizur and several weeks after they had met, he asked Hafizur to see him in Dhaka. Hafizur met Zaman and Obhi at a fast food restaurant where Zaman sought help for unloading some imported goods in Chittagong.

In the mean time, Zaman helped Hafizur financially in his ailing business.

Hafizur came to know about Zaman's real identity when one day he saw a 10-year-old girl with him and later learnt that she was daughter of Ulfa leader Anup Chetia. Zaman (Paresch) told him that the intelligence of Bangladesh had assured them of safety and shelter.

On March 23 or 24 in 2004, Paresch called Hafizur to urgently have some machinery transported from a ship near St Martin's Island.

When Hafizur asked him about permission from the Bangladesh Navy, coast-guard, and customs and jetty authorities, Paresch told him not to worry about that.

"Paresch said the NSI and DGFI chiefs had made all arrangements while the CUFL jetty authorities already granted permission; so, no one would arrest me,"

said Hafizur in the statement.

Paresch gave him Tk 50 lakh in four packets and introduced him with a man named Asif in Dhaka.

With Asif, Hafizur went to Chittagong by his car and left Asif at a hotel. He then hired two trawlers from one Hazi Sobhan with Tk 12 to 13 lakh.

In the evening of March 29, when they reached St Martin's Island by trawlers, Hafizur and Asif found a vessel anchored there. As Paresch instructed, Asif talked to the captain of the ship in English through a loudspeaker. The two exchanged some code numbers and then Asif asked to anchor the trawlers next to the vessel.

According to Hafizur's statement, it took 14 hours to unload by crane so many wooden boxes from the ship.

Over the phone, Hafizur told Asif to berth the trawlers at CUFL jetty, as it was difficult to moor the trawlers in the dark. Coastguard vessels provided light to help the trawlers berth. Seven trucks and a crane were also hired to carry the boxes. To allay any fear, Paresch assured them of protection from the coastguard.

But two sergeants -- Alauddin and Helal Uddin -- appeared at the scene in uniform when unloading of goods from three trucks had already been done.

Asked, Hafizur told the sergeants that the goods belonged to the government. But the cops challenged alleging that the goods had been smuggled from Myanmar. They were locked into an altercation.

On Paresch's instructions, one Jewel told the cops that the goods were arms for Ulfa, a separatist group of India, and they were unloading those upon government permission.

Hafizur stated that only then he came to know about the arms and instantly phoned Paresch out of panic. Paresch told him that he would call the NSI and DGFI chiefs and take care of the situation.

But by 11:00pm, officer-in-charge of Karnaphuli Police Station appeared on the spot with a huge force of police.

"I then left for home walking along the river," confessed Hafizur, adding that Paresch later advised him to stay in hiding.

Hafizur was arrested when he surrendered before the High Court on October 26, 2005.

## Sabuj Mia sees end to his plight



The photo published by this paper on Saturday touched the heart of one Tanzina of Dhaka who donated the couple Tk 15,000 to buy cattle for pulling their plough.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

The poor couple, who have to pull the plough themselves for they cannot afford bullocks, is likely to find some respite from their plight as a woman from Dhaka has come forward with financial help.

The Daily Star, in its January 28 issue, published a heart-rending photo and a story of Sabuj Mia and his wife Lalbhani Begum of Sarderpara village in Gaibandha's Fulchhari upazila. Sabuj Mia pulls the plough while his wife holds steady the ploughshare to till the 10 decimals of land that a local NGO had provided to the landless couple. They, however, feel that they have no complaints and thus, are happy.

The front-page story published in the "Positive Bangladesh" column with

the headline "No point in complaining: Together, they create happiness out of nothing" that stirred many of its readers.

One Tanzina, who declined to disclose further information on her identity, from Dhaka instantly extended financial assistance to the poor farmer couple for purchasing bullocks.

She sent Taka 15,000 in cash to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Fulchhari for Sabuj Mia the same day.

UNO Mostafizur Rahman handed over the cash to Sabuj Mia and his wife at his office yesterday.

Receiving the money, the couple expressed their gratitude to the person who had helped them.

"It is heartening to know that we are not alone. Someone stood beside us. Thanks a lot to the unknown contributor."

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## 5 BNP leaders denied bail

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Fakhrul Islam Alamgir in three arson attack cases.

Judge Md Zahirul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka dismissed the five BNP leaders' bail petitions after holding hearings on the appeals.

The leaders were shown arrested in the cases on January 6 and 9.

Moudud, Anwar and Rafiq are accused in a case filed with Motijheel Police Station over Hefajat-e-Islam's May 5 mayhem in the capital.

In the same case, BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia's Special Assistant Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas obtained bail from the same court on Tuesday, while the BNP chief's Adviser Abdul Awal Mintoo secured

bail from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on January 21.

Hafiz is an accused in two cases filed with Motijheel Police Station for attempting to kill police in Motijheel area on September 24 and November 5.

Another case has been lodged against him with Ramna Police Station in connection with killing Ferdous Khalil, a police constable, in the capital's Bangla Motor area on December 24.

Milon has been made an accused in a case filed with Ramna Police Station for a bid to murder the deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ramna division

on January 4.

SC ON FAKHRUL

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed the HC orders given in favour of Fakhrul after the government filed three separate leave-to-appeal petitions challenging the HC orders.

The court also allowed the government to move separate appeals before it against the HC orders within a week.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain fixed February 18 for hearing.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star that the apex court would examine whether the HC can direct the government to follow the orders.

On January 16, the HC had directed the law enforcers not to arrest or harass Mirza Fakhrul in the three arson attack cases following three bail petitions filed by him.

Police had filed the three cases with Ramna and Shahbagh police stations on different dates in November and December, and Fakhrul was made an instigator there.

On December 24, a police constable was killed when arsonists set fire to a requisitioned police bus at Bangla Motor.

On November 29, four people were killed and several others injured in a petrol bomb attack on a bus in Shahbagh area, and the following day, a man was killed in an arson

## Brain

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new region thinks over what we might have done instead.

Scientists at Oxford University made the discovery after scanning human brains in two different ways.

Scans from 25 men and women showed that this part of the brain is made up of a dozen smaller sections. The scans were then compared with monkey brains.

The scans showed that there is nothing like it in the brain of the macaque monkey, despite it being one of our closest relatives.

Eleven of the 12 sections in the network were similar -- they were found in both humans and monkeys and connected up to other, more distant, brain areas in similar ways.

Oxford University scientist Matthew Rushworth said: "We've identified an area of the brain that appears to be uniquely human."

The lateral frontal pole prefrontal cortex is found at the very front of the brain -- with one just above each eyebrow.

In some people, it is the size of a Brussels sprout; in others, it is as big as a tangerine.



INSTRUCTIONS NOT GETTING THROUGH ... A large number of college students, mostly from Government BM College in Barisal, queue up on the roadside to greet Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, who went to Barisal Circuit House to attend a reception. Many of the girls complained that they had been forced to stand there. A mere three days earlier, the government had asked school authorities not to line up primary school students on the streets to welcome any public representatives. The education ministry in 2009 had asked all educational institutions to stop this practice.

PHOTO: STAR

## Google sells ailing Moto

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make Lenovo the world's third-largest smartphone maker behind Samsung and Apple.

Market research firm Strategy Analytics said in a blog post that Lenovo had made "a good move" and would benefit from economies of scale.

"The Chinese vendor gets access to the valuable US smartphone market and the fast-growing Latin America region. This complements its existing global PC business."

"For Motorola, it gains access to an ambitious sugar daddy that has a strong presence in the huge China market. For Google, it divests a loss-making hardware division," it said.

This is the second major acquisition for Lenovo in the same number of weeks.

Last Thursday, the Thinkpad-maker announced it had acquired IBM's low-end server business for \$2.3bn, in what was then China's biggest technology deal.

Shares of Lenovo being traded in Hong Kong fell by more than 8 percent following the announcement, which came after the US market had closed.

"Whether Lenovo can turn around the

long-struggling Motorola business, and what happens to the Motorola brand long-term, remain key questions that will need to be answered in the coming months," Strategy Analytics said.

On a conference call following the deal's announcement, Lenovo chief financial officer Wong Waiming said they were not concerned that they may have overpaid for Motorola.

"Market prices go up and down and I would not take a one-day or half-day performance as a reflection of the market viewing it negatively," he said.

Wong also said there was "no urgent need" for the company to tap the capital markets for money to fund the Motorola purchase given it had more than \$3bn in cash available.

The purchase of Motorola was Google's largest acquisition and it signalled a growing effort by the search giant to enter the hardware business.

Motorola Mobility created the Moto X and Moto G phones.

Despite the sale, Google chief executive Larry Page insisted in a blog post: "This does not signal a larger shift for our other hardware efforts."