

27 more fake war heroes identified

FROM PAGE 1

executive engineers, tax officers, primary school teachers and accountants.

"We have received the list of 27 fake freedom fighters. We will announce it in the next two or three days," Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque told The Daily Star yesterday.

Some 5,000 more people, including 300 government employees, are also being investigated for fraudulently obtaining freedom fighters' certificates.

"If the allegations are found to be true, we will cancel their certificates gradually," the minister added.

On July 21, the ministry revoked the certificates of 35 public servants, also on the basis of NSI investigation. Earlier, 116 fake war heroes were stripped of the title.

The latest list shows that 20 of the 27 public servants obtained the certificates during the 2009-13 tenure of the Awami League government. The seven others acquired those during the tenure of the BNP-led alliance government from 2001 to 2006.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the list, signed by Enayet Ullah Khan Yusufzai, senior assistant secretary of the ministry.

The NSI in its report said none of these people could produce any documentary evidence to prove that they were freedom fighters.

The report comes amid widespread allegations that a large number of government officials fraudulently obtained freedom fighters' certificates over the past few years to extend their service period by one year.

In November 2012, the government extended the retirement age of freedom fighters from 59 years to 60. Earlier in April 2010, their retirement age was extended by two years from 57.

Following the 2012 extension, the number of freedom fighters in government services stood at around 11,000.

Of them, those in the final years of their service now were at best 15 or 16 years old during the Liberation War in 1971.

To identify fake freedom fighters in the civil bureaucracy, the government's first consideration was the age of the officials at the time of the Liberation War in 1971.

At present, there are some 2.12 lakh freedom fighters. The number was 1.98 lakh in the 2002 gazette published during the period of BNP-

NAME	I POST
M Mahbulul Alam	Joint secretary of public administration ministry
Abdul Hamid	Executive director of Bangladesh Bank
Sirajul Islam	Executive engineer at the public health engineering department
Saidur Rahman	Executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board
Nazmul Kabir	Tax officer at Benapole Customs House
Mostak Ahmed	Tax officer at Customs, Excise and Vat Commissionerate of Dhaka (south)
Nilufa Sultana	Tax officer at the same office
Ala Uddin	Lower division assistant/typist at Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority
Fayez Kabir	Former security inspector at Chittagong Port Authority
Abdur Rouf Molla	Assistant teacher at Narerkanda non-government primary school in Madaripur
Motiar Rahman	Assistant teacher at Saritoil Govt Primary School in Tangail
Mohiuddin Moral	Assistant teacher at Dakkhin Shahpur non-government primary school
Khagendra Nath Saha	Headmaster at Badarghat Government Primary School in Naogaon
Afaz Uddin	Assistant teacher from Naogaon
SM Selim	Project director of UCRIP under the LGED
Alamgir Kabir	Retired typist of Tax Zone-3 in Chittagong
Abdul Mannan	Former chief assistant-cum- accountant at Upazila Health Complex in Nababganj, Dhaka
KM Abul Hossain	Deputy assistant engineer of Roads and Highways of Faridpur
Abdul Malek	Food inspector of Kapashia Food Godown, Gazipur
Abdul Rauf Sarkar	Clerk from Narsingdi
Niranjana Kumar Roy	Sub-inspector in Chittagong
Monisha Ranjan Roy	Retired accountant at BADC, Krishi Bhaban, Dhaka
Asaduzzaman	Assistant agriculture extension officer of Narsingdi Sadar
AKM Ataul Islam	Director (planning and training) of Civil Aviation Authority, Dhaka
Khan Sirajul Islam	Chief assistant of Chittagong Port
SM Alauddin	Directorate of agriculture extension
Jasim Uddin Mohammad	Sub-registrar of Gazipur
Toufiq Elahi	

Jamaat rule.

Under the rules, freedom fighters, their children and grandchildren enjoy 30 percent quota in government jobs. In addition, freedom fighters' children and grandchildren get special quotas in pub-

lic schools, colleges and universities.

There are allegations that many government employees obtained freedom fighters' certificates through forgery to have their children and grandchildren avail those benefits.

Nat'l broadcast policy

FROM PAGE 1

Shafiul Alam, who was involved in formulating the draft, said there would be no restrictions on broadcasting reports on members of the armed forces or law enforcement agencies or government officials if they commit crimes or get involved in illegal activities.

Broadcasters will not be allowed to broadcast news of any mutiny, chaos and violent incidents which may hamper public interests, according to the draft that incorporated objectives and provisions regarding licensing and contents of news, programmes and advertisements.

"The proposed draft has given the authority concerned more power that can be misused. It will be very tough for the media to work independently if such a policy is implemented," said Sanaullah Lablu, chief operating officer of Radio ABC.

He said the draft left out many recommendations that came up during discussions between the government and the stakeholders.

Shykh Siraj, director (news) and general secretary of Association of Television Channel Owners (ATCO), said there should not be any policy which would curb broadcasters' independence.

Referring to the social media, he said none can hold back any information in the era of information technology. He hoped the government would consider all of the ATCO's recommendations about the policy.

Once the draft is approved, an independent broadcast commission will be formed to oversee programmes and recommend applicants for broadcast licence.

The draft policy, however, didn't mention any timeframe for the formation of the commission.

The commission will monitor TV and radio programmes to ensure accountability of the stations and protect public interests. It will also prepare and enforce a guideline for broadcasters.

The country's president will appoint the chairman and members to the commission upon recommendations from a search committee comprising journalists, academicians and development activists.

According to the draft, the broadcasters will have to air government-approved programmes on issues of national interest, and programmes of the president and the prime minister.

The draft policy has come under criticism from the advertising community for being unclear and unreasonable.

The government held a series of consultations and discussions with stakeholders after it moved to formulate a broadcast policy last year.

Ain O Salish Kendra has expressed deep concern, saying the proposed policy might curb the broadcasters' independence.

appointed for two years last year but he had to resign on health grounds.

Since then, Biman Director AM Mosaddique Ahmed had been serving as the acting managing director.

Biman had asked interested and qualified professionals to apply for the job and received 40 applications for the post, 26 foreign nationals and 14 Bangladeshis.

A core committee made a short-list from the applicants and they were given a special problem-solving assignment to find out the best person to fit Biman's need.

The committee then chose three candidates. The Biman board interviewed them and picked Haywood, sources said.

Only tear-stained

FROM PAGE 16

her at Nishchintapur in Kaliganj upazila yesterday.

Her elder son Bhabesh Biswas was sitting beside her on the veranda, nursing the wounds he had received in the accident. Though he survived the deadly mishap, his daughter Trishna Biswas could not.

Trishna was an MA student of philosophy at Dhaka's Eden College. She had appeared in her MA final examinations and gone home on Eid holidays. She would return to Dhaka for her viva voce test after the holidays.

"I requested them not to go to the wedding. If only they had listened to me!" wailed Trishna's bereaved mother Kalpana Rani as she frequently banged her head against a bedstead.

"At times, we felt it hard to bear her educational expenses. Trishna would then tell me, 'Don't worry, Maa. Endure the hardship for now. I will run the family when I get a job.' Now who will take care of us?" she said, holding a photo of her daughter against her chest.

Parula's younger son Ranjan Biswas is bed-ridden in the grief of losing his wife Banya Biswas and his son Kawshik, a grade four student. When this correspondent went to him, a blank look was all he gave.

His elder son Nishan Biswas, 22, was lying on another bed with a fractured lower jaw. He too had gone to the wedding of their relative Tapas Kumar Biswas and was returning in the bus that was crushed by a train at a level crossing. Eleven people were killed and 60 injured, some critically, in the tragedy.

Three days into the tragedy, a pall of gloom still hung over the home of the bereaved family as this correspondent made his way out of the place.

Sangram editor

FROM PAGE 2

The defence tried to defend their stance saying the prosecution had submitted evidence that was recorded during investigation in the case. However, the tribunal did not buy the argument as the investigation had taken place at pre-trial stage.

Tarafdar told the tribunal that there was precedence of accepting such evidence in other war crimes cases.

In response, Justice Enayetur Rahim said there was no scope to make public statements regarding a trial after framing of charges.

"We will see if [newspapers] can publish such reports during trial and if the reports influenced trial proceedings," he said.

Earlier, the same tribunal sentenced the daily Sangram editor and publisher and his Feni correspondent to imprisonment for a few minutes for publishing a "contemptuous" report over trial proceedings and fined them Tk 5,000 each.

The defence witness, who is 52, yesterday exhibited the SSC, HSC, bachelor and master's certificates of Azharul.

After his testimony, the prosecution began cross-examining him until the proceedings were adjourned until today.

Azharul, who faces six charges for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity and genocide during the Liberation War in 1971, was produced before the tribunal yesterday.

Israel 'spied

FROM PAGE 1

further strain ties between Israel and the United States.

Kerry regularly spoke by telephone with high-ranking officials throughout the Middle East during the negotiations that finally collapsed earlier this year.

Spiegel, which cited "several sources among secret services", said that he used not only secure lines but also normal telephones with satellite connections which were vulnerable to tapping.

"The government in Jerusalem used this information in the negotiations on a diplomatic solution in the Middle East," it said.

Spiegel said Kerry's office and the Israeli government declined to comment on its report.

Kerry made reviving Middle East diplomacy a central priority at the start of his term and coaxed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas back to the negotiating table in July 2013.

But in April this year, Israel made a surprise announcement of plans for 700 new settlements and refused to free a last batch of Palestinian prisoners after earlier releases. Abbas in turn sought Palestinian membership in 15 UN conventions and the peace drive eventually broke down.

Kerry has attempted to mediate during the current Israeli military offensive in Gaza and flew to Israel last week.

But he has failed to bring about a lasting truce in the 26-day confrontation that has claimed more than 1,700 lives.

Stephen J Rapp due today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador-at-Large for the Office of Global Criminal Justice Stephen J Rapp arrives this morning for a three-day visit.

This will be his 5th visit to Bangladesh. He came here in January, May and November 2011 and in May 2013 and discussed about Dhaka-based International Crimes Tribunal and the ongoing trial of war criminals.

As per the schedule, he will first visit the Tribunal and sit with prosecutors, investigators and defence lawyers about the present state of the trial.

Rapp, who served from 2001 to 2007 as the senior trial attorney and chief of prosecutions at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, will visit the Liberation War

Museum at Segunbagicha around 2:30pm today.

Officials said the US official will meet Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque tomorrow and hold a press conference when he will brief the media about the outcome of his visit.

During his last visit in mid-May 2013, Rapp, expressed satisfaction over the war crimes issue in Bangladesh but said the process has not maintained international standard.

Earlier, he had suggested some changes to the International Crimes Tribunal Act 1973 for ensuring a transparent trial, maintaining international standard.

US city runs out of safe

FROM PAGE 16

Lake Erie, according to city officials.

The National Guard has been called in to bring water to the area after a warning against drinking from the tap sparked a shopping frenzy for clean bottled water.

Speaking to the Associated Press, Gov John Kasich said it was too early to know how long the crisis would last.

"We don't really want to speculate on this," he said. "When it comes to this water, we've got to be very careful."

Results from tests had been expected back yesterday, according to USA Today, after the toxin was discovered in an area water treatment plant.

Blue-green algae are naturally found in lakes and ponds around Ohio.

Algal blooms in Lake Erie have become fairly common in recent years,

especially in the summer months, emergency operations spokesman Chris Abbruzzese told Reuters.

The blooms are rapid increases in algae levels caused by high amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous which can come from runoff water from heavily fertilized fields, farms and gardens or broken septic tanks.

Drinking the contaminated water could result in vomiting, diarrhea and other problems.

Boiling it will not remove the toxins, however, and residents have been advised to not even brush their teeth with it, though showers and baths are said to be permitted.

There are no reports yet of people becoming sick from drinking the contaminated water.

BGMEA to pay

FROM PAGE 1

However, the agitating workers yesterday rejected the BGMEA's offer and vowed to continue their demonstration.

Terming the offer a "joke", they said the owners should immediately clear all the dues.

"They made similar promises in the last few months but did not keep those," Moshrefa Mishu, president of Garment Workers Unity Forum, told The Daily Star.

The protesters also vowed to lay siege to the BGMEA office in the capital tomorrow and organise rallies and processions today.

The workers under the banner of Tuba Group Sramik Sangram Committee made the announcement at a press meet at Hossain Super Market, which houses three units of Tuba Group, on Pragati Sarani.

On July 28, workers of five factories owned by Tuba went on a hunger strike for the due payments of more than Tk

4.14 crore.

As the mass hunger strike entered the seventh day yesterday, the health risks of the workers were growing.

With 17 workers already hospitalised, physicians at the spot said the workers needed to break their hunger strike immediately.

"The workers should agree with the decision of the BGMEA as it was taken in consensus with all stakeholders," said Sirajul Islam Rony, a trade union leader, who was present at the meeting.

On July 25, the aggrieved workers confined Laili Begum, mother-in-law of Delwar Hossain, managing director of Tuba Group, on the eighth floor of Hossain Super Market, to press home their demand.

On February 9, Delwar was sent to jail in a case filed in connection with the Tazreen Fashions (owned by Delwar) fire that killed 112 workers on November 24, 2012.

Madness must stop

FROM PAGE 1

forced to flee their homes by the ongoing violence in Gaza.

Ban said the latest attack was "yet another gross violation of international humanitarian law," and said the Israel Defence Forces had been repeatedly informed of the UN sites.

"This attack, along with other breaches of international law, must be swiftly investigated and those responsible held accountable. It is a moral outrage and a criminal act," he said.

Ban repeated his demand for an immediate ceasefire.

Images of the carnage in Gaza, where medics say 1,766 Palestinians have been killed and another 9,320 wounded in the past 27 days, have shocked the public worldwide with British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond demanding an unconditional ceasefire to resolve the "intolerable" situation for civilians trapped in Gaza.

"We have to get the killing to stop," Hammond told the Sunday Telegraph, saying many people were "deeply disturbed" by the civilian loss of life.

Intensive international attempts to broker a diplomatic end to the fighting between Israel and Hamas have so far proved fruitless but the efforts are continuing.

A Palestinian delegation was to hold truce talks in Cairo with senior US and Egyptian officials yesterday, although Israel has said it sees no point in sending its negotiators to the meeting, citing what it says are Hamas breaches of previous agreed truces.

Islamic Jihad was also expected to join along with US Middle East envoy Frank Lowenstein.

Several Israeli newspapers reported that cabinet ministers have taken a decision not to seek a further negotiated ceasefire agreement with Hamas and were considering ending the military operation unilaterally.

Israel's army yesterday confirmed it had begun withdrawing some troops from Gaza.

"We are removing some (forces)," Lieutenant Colonel Peter Lerner told

AFP, saying troops were "extremely close" to completing a mission to destroy a network of attack tunnels.

"We are redeploying within the Gaza Strip, taking out other positions, and relieving other forces from within, so it won't be the same type of ground operation," he said.

"But indeed we will continue to operate ... (and) have a rapid reaction force on the ground that can engage Hamas if required."

"It's changing gear but it's still ongoing."

Israel's assault on Rafah began early on Friday in the opening hours of a 72-hour humanitarian truce, which was quickly shattered when militants ambushed a group of soldiers, killing two of them.

A third was reported missing, believed snatched in a development which drew sharp condemnation from top US and UN officials.

But early yesterday, the Israeli army formally announced the death of the soldier, 23-year-old Hadar Goldin, saying he had been "killed in battle in the Gaza Strip on Friday".

His death raised to 64 the total number of soldiers killed since the start of the operation on July 8, its heaviest toll since the Lebanon war of 2006.

Nonetheless, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to press on with the offensive, promising that Hamas would pay "an insufferable price" for continued cross-border rocket fire.

"We will take as much time as necessary, and will exert as much force as needed," he said late on Saturday. Netanyahu's remarks came after the army gave a first indication it was ending operations in parts of Gaza, informing residents of Beit Lahiya and Al-Atatra in the north that it was "safe" to return home.

Witnesses in the north confirmed seeing troops leaving the area as others were seen pulling out of villages east of Khan Yunis in the south, with commentators suggesting it was the start of a unilateral withdrawal.