

Robber killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The chief of a robber gang active in the Sundarbans was killed in a "gunfight" with police in the district's Koyra upazila on Thursday night.

Deceased Moktarul Dhali alias Mokter, 32, was the leader of a robber gang named after him. He was son of Moti Dhali of Bhutuswari Char in the upazila.

Moktarul was accused in five cases, including four for murder, in Koyra and Dakop police stations, said Subir Dutta, officer-in-charge of Koyra Police Station.

Subir said acting on a tip-off, Koyra police arrested Moktarul from Mostofa Intersection in Khulna city on Thursday morning.

As per his confessional statement, police along with Moktarul raided different parts of Koyra upazila to recover firearms on Thursday night and reached Bhutuswari Char around 11:45pm.

At Bhutuswari, sensing the presence of policemen, accomplices of Moktarul opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate, the police official said.

Moktarul was hit by bullets while the others managed to flee the scene. He was rushed to Koyra Upazila Health Complex where on-duty doctors declared Moktarul dead, he added.

Police claimed they recovered four pipe guns, 16 bullets and six crude bombs from the spot.

Four policemen, including officer-in-charge of Koyra Police Station, were hurt during the "gunfight". They took first aid, the police official added.

Launch owned

FROM PAGE 16 fined MV Oishee Khan, named after the minister's daughter, Tk 10,000.

The launch is owned by the members of my family and my brother-in-law," Shahjahan Khan told The Daily Star over the phone last night.

Shafiqur Rahman, chief inspector of Department of Shipping, however, said they came to know about the ownership of MV Oishee Khan only after slapping the penalty.

Three more launches were penalised for not having proper safety equipment. The same punishment was given to ML Princess while ML Narisha and MV Tapan were fined Tk 10,000 and Tk 5,000.

Actions could not be taken against two other launches -- MV Sajal-1 and MV Sajal-2 -- as their authorities fled sensing the presence of the mobile court.

The vessels did not have sufficient fire extinguishers and lifebuoys, said Shafiqur Rahman.

The launches were anchored at Kawrakandi Launch Terminal in Madaripur yesterday when the drive was conducted.

Airports

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The move comes following the World Health Organisation declaring the Ebola outbreak in West Africa an international public health emergency.

Special attention should be given to the peacekeepers returning home from peacekeeping missions in African countries, Nurul mentioned.

The DGHS has asked the armed forces and police authorities to monitor the returnees and take them to the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control Research for check-up, he said.

The Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate has recently said no Bangladeshi peacekeepers were diagnosed with Ebola.

No govt can afford

FROM PAGE 16 stakeholders has turned into little more than eyewash and eventually a unilateral exercise," TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman told UNB.

The TIB official, who was at the forefront of civil society leaders invited to participate in the process behind formulating the policy, said no government can afford to restrict media freedom, not to speak of doing away with it.

"The only type of regime that finds it convenient to go that way is military or military-backed or other types of authoritarian government," he added.

The government will serve its own cause if it holds a series of genuine consultations with stakeholders to review the broadcast policy, observed Iftekharuzzaman.

He commended some good aspects of the policy. "But the unfortunate part of the experience is that our governments often fail to live up to their own standards."

The information ministry on Thursday published a gazette on the National Broadcast Policy 2014 for television and radio, ignoring wor-

Police foil demo

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groups of workers gathered at Jamgora-Fantasy Kingdom area in Ashulia and in front of Rana Plaza site in Savar. Each group had 20-25 people. They ran away when local police chased them," said Md Mustafizur Rahman, director of Industrial Police-1, Dhaka (Ashulia).

Yesterday's programme was called by Tuba Group Shramik Sangram Committee. The workers' platform has called a strike in garment factories across the country for today with the same demand.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has called upon the workers to withdraw the strike for the sake of the industry.

"We have disbursed the outstanding wages for two of three months at the BGMEA headquarters on Thursday," said Shahidullah Azim, vice-president of the garment makers' apex body, yesterday.

The arrears were for the months of May, June and July, including overtime bills and Eid bonuses.

"Workers will get the salaries for the month of July on Sunday at the BGMEA office," Azim said.

Tuba Group workers and labour leaders formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday, demanding payment of arrears and cancellation of Tuba Group owner Delwar Hossain's bail.

They condemned law enforcers' "attack" on workers that ended an 11-day hunger strike of workers at a

factory of the group on Thursday, and demanded that owners allow workers to form trade unions in all garment factories.

Labour leaders alleged Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan is working for the owners, not for the workers.

Minorin Rahman, a member of Garment Workers Unity Forum, said, "The minister is busy serving the interests of the BGMEA."

The Shipping Minister, along with State Minister for Labour and Employment Mujibul Haque Chunnu, held a meeting with Delwar Hossain yesterday and later told the press at the BGMEA office that Delwar was instructed to pay the workers "by any means".

Another human chain was formed in Chittagong by rights body Coalition for Humanity demanding government's interference in realising the "just demands" of the garment workers.

Meanwhile, the shipping minister has defended Thursday's crackdown on Tuba Group workers, saying the government intervened as a faction of workers tried to refrain workers from receiving arrears.

"When the government had taken steps for providing wages of the agitating workers, a section of workers tried to create a problem so that other workers could not receive it. This compelled the government to intervene," Shahjahan Khan said at a programme at Bashundhara City in the capital.

He said the disbursement of salaries and Eid bonuses at Tuba Group was delayed as its owner was in jail.

US jets strike

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predecessor George W Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq, said he was not sending back ground forces.

"As commander in chief, I will not allow the United States to be dragged into fighting another war in Iraq."

Obama said the strikes would be limited and it remained unclear how much of a game-changer they would be on the ground.

Pentagon spokesman Rear Admiral John Kirby said on Twitter that US forces bombed the jihadists after artillery fire against Kurdish regional government forces defending their capital Arbil.

Iraq's military chief of staff told AFP he expected to see his forces and the peshmerga reclaim large tracts of land "in the coming hours".

He said he thought the US air strikes would extend to other towns controlled by IS but he did not say which ones. The jihadists control towns west, south and north of Baghdad.

There has been daily fighting on several fronts for two months and as the conflict escalated, the US banned its civilian airliners from overflying Iraq. Britain asked its nationals in parts of Kurdistan to leave and global stock markets were unsettled.

Many people in Baghdad were sceptical of Obama's motives.

"He did nothing for three years but something happened to the Kurds and the Christians and he started talking about terrorism," said Rashaad Khodhr Abbas, a retired civil servant.

"Where were you all this time, Obama?"

IS has enjoyed a spectacular run of military successes in Iraq, but the group also scored a key victory in Syria, with the capture overnight of a key army base in Raqa province.

The Kurdish peshmerga, short of ammunition and stretched thin along a huge front, have been forced to retreat in the face of brazen assaults by the jihadists.

Their withdrawal from Iraq's Christian heartland on Wednesday and Thursday sparked a mass exodus and spurred Western powers into action.

Obama's announcement came after an emergency UN Security Council meeting called by France, which also offered to support forces battling the jihadists and contribute to the relief effort.

Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako said Iraq's largest Christian town of Qaraqosh was emptied of its population on Thursday and estimated the number of Christians forced from their homes at 100,000.

In Mosul, the country's second city, identical sermons were delivered in all mosques Friday, residents said, with worshippers asked to swear obedience to the "caliph", Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

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He also instructed the Inspection and Trade Unions Directorate of Bahrain to increase its visits to the concrete plants to ensure workers' safety there, said the newspaper.

He said that the ministry would submit to him a detailed report on plant authorities' alleged violations of law, following which they might face legal action.

He hoped that the broadcast commission would be constituted by individuals who enjoy credibility in public eye, who are impeccably non-partisan and well-known for contributions to public life, media and broadcast sector in particular.

"This is against the spirit of democracy. Nobody or no institution can be above criticism in democracy," he pointed out.

The policy also contains many provisions that are subject to such scope and risk of motivated, subjective and arbitrary interpretations that the document can at best be called as a lost opportunity, mentioned the anti-graft activist.

"The basic constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom of expression can be severely curtailed. The policy appears to be a brainchild of those in the government who are intolerant to media freedom and critical views," he added.

The TIB chief executive said he does not think that there is absence of media freedom yet in Bangladesh.

On formation of a broadcast commission, he said the selection process should be absolutely trans-

parent though the experience of commissions in the country is far from satisfactory.

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Hasina slams

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with protests and criticisms. Today, hundreds of children and women, including expecting mothers, are being killed with bullets... why their conscience is silent," she questioned.

The prime minister was speaking at a function organised by women and children affairs ministry at Osmani Memorial Auditorium marking the 84th birth anniversary of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, the wife of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was killed along with most of her family members, including Bangabandhu, on the fateful night of August 15, 1975.

Chaired by the State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki, the function was addressed, among others, by Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique, Chairman of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha Momtaj Begum and Bangladesh Shishu Academy Chairperson Selina Hossain.

The premier also took a further dig at the 'civilized world', saying, "Why the people, who claim themselves as civilised ones, are silent now?"

Pointing finger at the country's human rights organisations, Hasina said these organisations often run to the hill tracts, islands and here and there in case of any trivial incident. "Where are they now, why are their voices missing?" she asked.

She requested the Mahila Awami League and other women organisations of the country to strongly raise their voice against the killing of women and children.

"When there is any such incident anywhere in the world, I'll request you to raise your voice... though these incidents are not taking place here in Bangladesh, there shouldn't be any complacency that we are safe," she said.

Briefly describing the role of Fazilatunnesa, the prime minister said the killers of August 15, 1975 knew about her courage and organisational capacity. "That's why they didn't spare my mother," she said.

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