

## SC upholds bail for Mintoo, Zainul of BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld High Court orders that granted bail to BNP leaders Abdul Awal Mintoo and Zainul Abidin Farroque in three vandalism cases.

Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed "no order" on three petitions filed by the government, seeking stay on the HC orders that allowed Mintoo and Farroque four weeks' anticipatory bail each.

Mintoo got the bail on January 8 while Farroque on January 7, said AKM Ehsanur Rahman, a lawyer for the accused BNP leaders.

The three cases, one against Mintoo while two against Farroque, were filed on charges of torching and damaging vehicles and preventing police officials from discharging duties during agitations on January 4 and 5, he added.



Clockwise from left, water hyacinths, garbage and earth block the Khilgaon-Basabo canal, a major storm water drainage channel of the capital, while a signboard of Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) on its bank warns residents against indiscriminate dumping of waste into the waterbody, calling such an act punishable. Blocked canals are a major contributor to waterlogging in Dhaka city. The photo was taken recently.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Second Rab 'shootout' victim also identified

He too had been missing for more than a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One of the two men who had been missing over a month and were allegedly killed in shootouts with the Rapid Action Battalion in the capital's Banasree early Sunday was identified yesterday.

Sabina Begum, the wife of the man, Sultan Biswas, 40, claimed that her husband went missing on December 21 last year from Gazipur's Kashimpur where the couple lived with their 11-year-old daughter.

Talking to The Daily Star by phone, she said her husband was a mason. Herself a garment worker, Sabina said she could not believe Sultan was a criminal, as Rab claimed.

The body of Sultan was handed over to her at Dhaka Medical College Morgue yesterday.

# Bangalee attack on Santal village sparks water crisis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A dearth of water has crippled life at Chirakutipara in Parbatipur upazila since Saturday when Bangalee land grabbers rampaged through the Santal village, looting and burning their houses and taking away or destroying the tube-wells that supplied water to its over 300 inhabitants.

The upazila administration has installed six tube-wells so that they could go about their daily business for the time being, but two of them are failing to pump out water, deepening the crisis.

"We are without drinking water, cannot wash our clothes and take shower," said Dipali Tudu, an honours student at Carmichael College in Rangpur, yesterday when this correspondent visited the village, where 55 Santal families live.

She said most of her books were

burnt.

The indigenous community leaders say Bangalees from the neighbouring villages have been trying to grab 18 acres of their cultivable land for decades now.

On Saturday, one Jahurul Islam went to the farmland to install an irrigation pump, which the Santal men protested immediately, seeing it as a primary act of the grabbing process.

A quarrel soon turned into a clash between over a dozen Bangalees and the Santal men, leading to the death of Jahurul's son, who was struck by an arrow that a Santal man shot.

The clash halted for sometime when police rounded up 19 Santal men, but soon after the law enforcers left, several hundred Bangalees launched an onslaught on Chirakutipara.

They looted over a dozen houses, burnt seven, torn their land documents into pieces, and took away their

cattle and a few dozen tube-wells, said victims. Fearing arrests, the Santal men are still in hiding.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Adivasi Parishad yesterday held a human chain in front of Dinajpur Press Club, demanding immediate arrest of the attackers.

Speaking on the occasion, JAP leaders including its president Rabindranath Soren also demanded immediate release of Antanus Tudu, who is supposed to sit for his SSC exams early next month.

Mahmudul Alam, officer-in-charge of Parbatipur, said no case was filed yet over the looting and the arson attack.

Rahenul Islam, the upazila nirbahi officer, said the administration distributed 50kg of rice and some kitchen utensils to each of the 55 families.

"Besides, corrugated tin sheets will be distributed very soon," he told The Daily Star.

## FUTILE POLICE DRIVES AGAINST ARSONISTS IN CTG

### Some cops maybe leaking info to planners

Suspect top officials

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Top police officials in Chittagong are concerned as they suspect that many of their drives to arrest the petrol bomb throwers, planners of violent attacks and their financiers went in vain because the information of the raids had been "leaked" by some police personnel.

The officials said some personnel having "leanings" to the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami might have "leaked" the information to the leaders and activists of those parties. Some others might have done it "in exchange for money", they told The Daily Star.

Banaj Kumar Majumder, additional commissioner (crime and operation) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), said some of their drives ended in smoke.

"We suspect the information might have been leaked by some police personnel before the team reached the spot."

He, however, said such leaks of information was common. "We will have to work on it and reduce such incidents."

Abdul Jalil Mondol, commissioner of CMP, said, "Some police officials who did it might be politically biased or they might have done it in exchange for money."

"We are trying to identify them," he said, adding, "We are keeping a tab on the suspected personnel and holding professional motivational trainings."

The same concerns were shared by the Chittagong city and district Awami League leaders.

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## Local public reps will be held responsible for highway arson

Says Home boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will hold local public representatives responsible if any attack on vehicles takes place on the highways in their areas, said State Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday.

"We will give responsibilities to the members and chairmen who reside along highways to keep the highway at their locality free from attacks. If they fail, we will take action against them," he added.

He made the comments at a meeting with the leaders

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Adivasi Chhatra Parishad, Dinajpur district unit forms a human chain in front of Dinajpur Press Club yesterday demanding immediate arrest of those who attacked Santal people of Chirakutipara village in the district's Parbotipur upazila on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Mahidur, Afsar murdered 24 in Chapainawabganj

First prosecution witness tells International Crimes Tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

War crimes accused Mahidur Rahman and Afsar Hossain Chutu were involved in the murders of around 24 people and the looting of 70-80 houses in different villages of Chapainawabganj in October during the Liberation War, testified the first prosecution witness yesterday.

Speaking before the International Crimes Tribunal-2, sexagenarian witness Ahasan Habib, also a freedom fighter, said after training in India he joined the Liberation War camp at Binodpur High School in Chapainawabganj.

The camp employed some freedom fighters as informants who provided information on the movement of Razakars.

From the informants, Habib learnt that in the morning of October 6, 1971, Mahidur and Afsar along with others, under the leadership of Razakar commander Moazzem Hossain, brutally tortured 16 to 17 Chandshikari villagers on the Binodpur High School playground.

"At one stage, they [villagers] were forced to stand in queue while Razakars -- Mahidur Rahman, Afsar Hossain and Gafur Jola -- opened fire on them. Twelve died on the spot and four to five persons managed to flee," the witness said.

Habib also learnt that on the same day, Mahidur, Afsar and Gafur caught about 20 persons and tortured them at the school.

"The following evening, I learnt that among those detained, six to seven people were released and the rest were shot by Moazzem, Mahidur, Afsar and Gafur on the playground. Twelve were killed on the spot, while two sustained injuries," he said.

The injured -- Jakaria and Fosi Alam Satu -- are now cripples, he added.

About six days later, Habib came to know that Moazzem, Mahidur, Gafur and Afsar looted valuables from 70 to 80 houses in villages Kobirajtola and Eradat Biswas Tola and set those on fire, he said.

The defence cross-examined the witness. Proceedings of the case were adjourned till today.

The duo are facing three charges for their alleged involvement in mass killing, arson, looting, abduction and torture committed in Chapainawabganj during the Liberation War. They claimed themselves 'innocent'.

**TRIBUNAL-1** Meanwhile, 16th prosecution witness Solaiman Sarder yesterday corroborated the testimony of 15th prosecution witness Sohrab Nakib who testified against Khan Akram Hossain and Abdul Latif Talukder on Sunday.

On December 13, 1971, Solaiman along with six fellow freedom fighters, including Sohrab and Fazlur Rahman, was going to Teligati village to see his ailing mother. On the way, Razakars caught Fazlur in Muchibari.

War crimes accused Khan Akram Hossain and Abdul Latif Talukder and other Razakars took Fazlur to the bank of a nearby canal and shot him dead.

Abdul Latif and Akram are facing three charges in the war crimes case.

The proceedings of the case were adjourned till today.

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