

RAJUK LAND ALLOCATION

Abbas, Kabir face arrest orders

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrants against five people, including former housing and public works minister Mirza Abbas and state minister Alamgir Kabir, in a case filed for causing the state a loss of Tk 16 crore.

The case was filed with Shahbagh Police Station on March 6 last year against Alamgir and four others on charge of allocating seven acres of land of Rajuk to a journalists' cooperative society at a rate lower than the actual.

The other accused are: former joint secretary of housing and public works ministry Bijon Kanti Sarker, National Housing Authority Cashier Mansur Alam and Assistant Cashier Motiar Rahman.

After accepting the charge sheet,

Judge KM Imrul Kayes of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order.

The court directed the officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station to submit a report on execution of arrest warrant by March 25.

Hamidul Hassan, deputy director of the Anti-Corruption Commission and also investigation officer of the case, on February 16, submitted the charge sheet against the five accused to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, showing 17 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO showed all the five accused fugitives and appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants against them.

Later, the case was transferred to the Special Court of Dhaka for its next course of action.

Hindus' death angel

FROM PAGE 1

Hindus, and the International Crimes Tribunal-1 in its judgment yesterday said it had found his "genocidal intention" from those attacks and his inciting speeches had aimed at destroying the community.

Santosh Kumar Mitra, sixth prosecution witness in the case against the fugitive convict, yesterday told The Daily Star, "The Hindus feared him as if he were an angel of death."

The witness during the trial said Jabbar accompanied by Razakars had attacked their Angulkata village on October 6, 1971. He had woken up that morning by the sound of whistles blown by the Razakars, he added.

Eight families used to live in their house and the intruders had detained all the men on Jabbar's instruction. They looted jewellery, money and other valuables and tied Santosh and his father Surendra Nath Mitra with a rope, he further said.

As many as 37 people were detained and taken to the municipality office of Mathbaria that day.

Of them, seven including the victim's cousin Monindra Master were released and the rest were taken to an area near the sluice gate of Surjamoni village, the witness said.

Twenty-two people including his father and brother were shot dead

later that day.

"The detainees were taken beside a canal one after another and shot dead from behind. My brother Foni Mitra and I were tied to each other and shot. My brother died on the spot and I was injured," said Santosh, who is still carrying marks of injury on his back and below his right chest.

The witness received primary treatment at his brother-in-law's pharmacy in Duatola Bazar and later went to the Sundarbans camp of freedom fighters to get further treatment.

Asked about his reaction to the verdict, a visibly frustrated Santosh just commented, "I have nothing to say."

Jabbar used to address the collaborators of the Pakistani invading army at different rallies in Pirojpur to incite them.

"Wealth and property of the Hindus are war booty and thus belong to the Muslims. If the Hindus want to live in this country, they will have to become Muslims," Shoebur Rahman Golder, first prosecution witness, quoted Jabbar as saying at a rally in Tushkhali on May 16, 1971.

The next day Jabbar along with 30-35 members of the Pakistani army had gone to the village.

He had asked the army to kill

Sarda Kanto Paik, who was running for his life.

Paik had been shot dead on the spot.

About 360 houses of the village had also been looted before they were set on fire.

About eight to 10 days later, on Jabbar's instructions, Razakars forced 200 Hindus of Paikbari to convert to Islam.

"The Hindus were given Muslim names and forced to eat beef," the witness added.

Nineteenth prosecution witness Santosh Kumar Kharati said Razakars led by Jabbar attacked their Noli village on May 22, 1971.

"The accused [now a convict] shot dead my elder brother Sokha Nath Kharati," said the witness.

Kharati added, "Upon Jabbar's instruction, Razakars shot dead 11 people including Jitendra Nath Biswas, Ganesh Chandra Mistri, Nepal Chandra Mistri, Upendra Nath Mistri and Bosonto Halder."

Another prosecution witness, Dilip Kumar Paik, said he and his father had been detained and given a proposal to convert to Islam or else they would be handed over to the Pakistani army.

"We gave silent consent to save our lives," said Kharati, who was

along with around 150 to 200 Hindus of Phuljhuri village at that moment.

"Against our will, they forced us to recite kalma [one of Islam's pillars] and say prayers," he said, adding that the Hindus had also been given Muslim names.

"My father was named Kaimum Khan, while I was named Delwar Hossain Khan," he said, adding that some days later, two to three Hindus were forced to eat beef, while others had rejected it.

All the witnesses testified before the tribunal that more than 500 houses, mostly belonging to the Hindus, were plundered and destroyed by Jabbar's men.

While delivering the judgment, the tribunal said, "It is well proved that accused Md Abdul Jabbar Engineer had direct complicity and substantially contributed and facilitated in the commission of such barbarous types of crimes and as such no punishment other than death will be equal to the said horrendous crimes for which the accused has been found guilty beyond reasonable doubt."

The tribunal, however, took lenient view in the matter of awarding punishment to the accused, considering his old age.

No link with Burdwan blast

Times of India reports on Saradha scam fund

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Hasina government and has carried out attacks in Bangladesh earlier."

The charge sheet, set to be filed next month, is likely to also remain silent on the alleged transport of bombs from West Bengal to Bangladesh for there is little evidence to make such claims, it said.

After five months of investigations and having arrested 17 people, including a Bangladeshi national, the NIA has reached a conclusion that there is no link between Saradha scam money and the Burdwan blast. It has also not found any proof of transportation of bombs from India to Bangladesh for alleged destabilisation of the Sheikh Hasina government as was suspected earlier, the newspaper said.

On November 30 last year, BJP President Amit Shah had claimed in a public meeting in Kolkata that Saradha scam money had funded Burdwan blasts. Three days later, the government denied the charge in reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha. It had triggered bitter exchanges between the BJP and the ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal.

Rab hands over Manna

FROM PAGE 1

from his niece's residence at the capital's Banani around 3:30am yesterday.

But DB officials and Banani police throughout the day denied detaining the Nagorik Oikya convener.

Amid controversy over leaked phone conversations with BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka and an unnamed person, Manna went to his niece's house on Road 17/A in Banani on Monday evening, family sources said.

"Around 3:00am, a group of people knocked at the door. They said they were from the Detective Branch," his niece Shahzema Sharmin told reporters at her house yesterday.

As she opened the door, five to six persons went to Manna's room. "Before leaving around 3:30am, the plain-clothes officials told us that Manna was being taken to the DB headquarters," she added.

Manna's wife Meher Nigar alleged the detectives dragged away her husband without showing an arrest warrant.

"They even did not give him time to change clothes and take his necessary medicines," she told The Daily Star based on Sharmin's account as she was at her own house at the time of the arrest.

Talking to reporters at his office around noon yesterday, Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of DMP's Detective Branch, said they have no information about the detention.

He added detectives were looking into the family's claim as well as the two leaked phone tapes, which surfaced in the media on Sunday.

In one of the conversations, Manna, also a former organising secretary of the Awami League, was heard talking to Khoka about strengthening the anti-government movement, among other issues.

The other call was made to an unknown person. Manna was asked by the man if he would like to sit with army generals purportedly about bringing a changeover in the country.

Also yesterday, Nagorik Oikya leaders held a press briefing on the Jatiya Press Club premises, demanding an end to "propaganda" against Manna and also sought an explanation from the government over his arrest.

They said leaking out a private conversation is a violation of one's constitutional rights.

Meanwhile, Chhatra League activists erased the name of Manna from

the honour boards of Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) and Chittagong University Central Students Union (CUCSU).

Manna was the general secretary of CUCSU in 1972-1973 session. Later, he went to the DU and became the vice-president of DUCSU.

Chhatra League men also removed his photo from the CUCSU archive and declared him persona non grata at the CU campus. Also at Dhaka University, some members of the pro-government student organisation burnt posters containing his photo.

'Criminal' killed in 'shootout' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A suspected criminal was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Sreenagar upazila here yesterday.

The dead, Shaheen, 26, was from Rudrapara village in the upazila. Police said he was a member of a criminal gang named after its leader Tazul.

Police constable Al Amin received a bullet in his right hand during the "shootout" and was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sheikh Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sreenagar Police Station, said a police team launched a drive at Rudrapara village around 1:30pm acting on intelligence that a group of armed thugs gathered there to commit criminal activities.

Sensing the presence of cops, criminals opened fire on law enforcers, leaving Al Amin injured.

On information, an additional police force went to the spot and cordoned off the area. Criminals at that time again opened fire on cops, prompting retaliatory police fire that left Shaheen dead on the spot.

The other criminals managed to flee the scene. Shaheen was accused in at least six cases, said the OC.

With Shaheen, 37 people are known to have been killed in such "shootouts" with law enforcement agencies across the country since the BNP-led alliance called a nationwide indefinite blockade on January 5.

Of them, 24 people were killed in "gunfights" with police, 11 with Rapid Action Battalion, one with Border Guard Bangladesh and one with police-BGB joint force.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over a certificate to a graduating officer of the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) in the Mirpur Cantonment during the graduation ceremony of the "DSCSC 2014-2015 Course" yesterday morning.

PHOTO: BANGLA CHOKH

LAUNCH CAPSIZE

Death toll 71

STAR REPORT

Another body was recovered from the Padma river last evening, almost fifty-five hours after the launch accident on Sunday, bringing the death toll in the disaster to a total of 71.

The body was recovered from Mandrakhol area under Shibhal upazila, about three kilometres from the accident site, at around 7:00pm, fire service officials carrying out the rescue operation said.

The deceased was identified as Shubal Sutradhar, a carpenter by profession and a resident of Boalia area of the upazila.

Five people are still missing, according to officials at the district administration control room.

Of the recovered bodies, 69 were handed over to their families while one remained unidentified. The unidentified body of a female was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for DNA tests.

CHARGES & PUNISHMENT

1. Killing of two people at Phuljhuri village in Pirojpur on May 16 on Jabbar's instruction

IMPRISONMENT UNTIL NATURAL DEATH

2. Killing of Sarda Kanto Paik, looting 360 houses of Phuljhuri on May 17

IMPRISONMENT UNTIL NATURAL DEATH

3. Killing of 11 Hindus at village Nali on May 22

IMPRISONMENT UNTIL NATURAL DEATH

4. Forced conversion of 200 Hindus of village Phuljhuri in last week of May

20-YEAR RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT AND TK 10 LAKH FINE

5. Killing of 22 Hindus of Mathbaria and Angulkata villages on Oct 6-7

IMPRISONMENT UNTIL NATURAL DEATH

"All the crimes listed in the said four charges [charge 1, 2, 3 and 5] relating to genocide and crimes against humanity were massive human rights violations."

The fierceness of the events of genocide and crimes against humanity were extremely detrimental to basic humanness. It deserves to be evaluated as 'crimes of serious gravity' intending to demean the human civilisation," said Justice Rahim.

The tribunal tried Jabbar in absentia, as its attempts to have him in the dock failed. It said the accused absconded to evade the process of justice.

"It may be presumed that had the accused not been involved in the crime, he would have certainly appeared before the tribunal to face the trial," said the court.

It directed the home secretary and the inspector general of police to arrest Jabbar, taking the help of the Interpol, if necessary.

Our Pirojpur Correspondent Habibur Rahman contributed to this report.