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BSF MAN CLEARED AGAIN OF FELANI MURDER

Disappointing

Victim's father, rights activists reject verdict
in retrial for 2011 border killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The father of Felani Khatun, the girl in the iconic photo showing a body hanging from a barbed-wire fence, has rejected the verdict of an Indian court that once again acquitted a BSF man of shooting his daughter on Indo-Bangla border in January 2011.

Constable Amiya Ghosh of Border Security Force (BSF) was brought to a second round of trial earlier this week after he was exonerated in 2013.

Hearing the retrial, the General BSF Court in West Bengal's Cooch Behar district on Thursday upheld the previous judgment that Amiya was "not guilty", sources told our New Delhi correspondent yesterday.

"We don't accept this verdict because the accused already admitted to killing her [Felani]. We want a fresh trial by an international court," Felani's father Nurul Islam told The Daily Star over the phone in a choked voice.

In its reaction, Indian human rights group Banglar Manabdhikar Suraksha

Mancha (MASUM), which closely follows the trial, termed the trial "eyewash", reported BBC Bangla Service.

Kirity Ray, chief of the organisation, said, "It was already decided at the BSF court what the verdict would be. The trial was mere eyewash."

The organisation has yet to decide whether it would take any legal step in this regard, but it would definitely think about it, added the rights activist.

On January 7, 2011, on her way home from New Delhi, 15-year-old Felani was shot while crossing into Bangladesh illegally as her clothes got stuck in the barbed-wire fence at Aanatapur border point in Phulbari

upazila, Kurigram.

The photo of her body hanging from the top of the fence triggered a fresh global outcry and renewed the call for an end to border killings.

Amid pressure from rights organisations, India opened investigations and the trial started at the BSF court in August 2013.

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People scrambling for bus tickets at an overcrowded counter in the capital's Gabtoli bus terminal, ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the country's biggest festival. A few hours within advance sales began yesterday, tickets for the most desired dates -- April 14, 15 and 16 -- were sold out. Many have failed to get a ticket even after waiting for hours in a queue.

PHOTO:
RASHED SUMON

Bus tickets 'sold out' within hours

Operators charge increased fare amid high demand for tickets for Eid trips

PANKAJ KARMAKAR

Advance bus tickets for Eid holidaymakers were almost gone within a few hours they were up for sale in the capital yesterday.

Hundreds of people waited in queues at inter-district bus counters since early morning, but could not buy tickets for July 14, 15 and 16. The Eid-ul-Fitr will be either on July 17 or 18.

Ticket-seekers alleged that bus operators charged them higher fares than usual, taking an undue advantage of the huge demand for tickets.

Visiting several bus counters in Kalyanpur, Technical and Gabtoli areas, this correspondent saw chaotic scenes there as many people could not get tickets for their desired dates.

"I need two tickets to Rajshahi for July 16. But the counter staff said tickets for that day were sold out, though the sale of tickets started just about five hours ago," said Mizanur Rahman at a counter of Shyamoli Paribahan in Technical area.

Posing as a passenger, this correspondent asked for tickets to at least 10 districts including Rangpur, Kushtia,

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Letter from prison

Death-row Huji leader directs fellow militants to use code language, change names to avoid arrests

RAFIUL ISLAM

An alleged letter from a death row Huji leader in Kashimpur jail shows that militants are changing tactics, using code languages and changing names to plan and carry out subversive acts and avoid arrest.

The letter from Maulana Moin Uddin alias Abu Jandal to Huji men advises them to use the word "Book Purchase" instead of "ambush" while planning attacks like last year's ambush on a prison van in Mymensingh to free fellow militants.

The Daily Star has obtained a photocopy of the letter, seized by Rab on Thursday from one of the 12 arrested Huji men. The elite force captured them from different areas in the capital on Wednesday and Thursday.

"We want to be out of prison. I'm thinking of engaging you and Habib in this operation. If you agree, I will let you know what to do through a letter. To know your opin-



Abu Jandal

ion on this I'll just ask if you want to 'purchase new books'," reads a part of the letter, written in Bangla.

This newspaper is not in a position to verify the authenticity of the letter.

According to Rab officials, Abu Jandal wrote the letter to Maulana Mainul Islam Mahim, who is allegedly organising inactive Huji operatives across the county and trying to coordinate with al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS).

How and exactly when the letter was written and delivered is unclear, but it directs Huji members to communicate "important matters" with him via letters to be sent through "lawyers or drivers just as I did."

The letter begins with a caution to militants not to speak about issues related to Jihad over the phone. "I've learnt from

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JUSTICE DENIED

We don't accept this verdict because the accused already admitted to killing her. We want a fresh trial by an international court.

■ **NURUL ISLAM**, FATHER OF FELANI

India has lost a great opportunity to prove that it has the political will to ease border tensions.

■ **SULTANA KAMAL**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AIN O SALISH KENDRA

I am also disheartened . . . We will certainly assist Felani's family if they take any further legal step.

■ **MAJ GEN AZIZ AHMED**, BGB CHIEF

It was already decided at the BSF court what the verdict would be. The trial was mere eyewash.

■ **KIRITY RAY**, CHIEF OF INDIAN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP MASUM

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GD-2291

Father, 3 sons murdered in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

A father and three of his sons were stabbed to death by their close relatives over a family feud in Nandail Upazila last night.

The deceased father was Billal Hossain, 58, a carpenter by profession, and his three sons were Farid, 28, Pavel, 18, and Himel, 16.

Billal's wife Banesa Begum, 45, also sustained critical head and neck injuries and was rushed to Mymensingh Medical college Hospital, police said.

Billal's two other sons -- Kiran, 25, and Rubel, 20 -- were not hurt as they were in another room during the attack.

Murad Ali, a sub-inspector of Nandail Police Station, said Billal's elder brother Lal Mia and his two sons -- Jamal and Kamal -- stormed their house around 10:30pm wielding sharp weapons and stabbed them indiscriminately.

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