



Visiting World Bank President Jim Yong Kim calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

## Rokon gave 'Neo JMB Tk 80 lakh'

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Rokonuddin Tk 10 lakh gave the group just Tk 30,000.

Before leaving, Rokonuddin gave his relatives and others, whom he had lent money, the contact details of the militants, Monirul said while talking to reporters after a press conference at the DMP Media Centre.

He, however, did not disclose the identities of those who were to pay the money.

Rokonuddin, his wife Naima Akhter, an associate professor of Botany of Jessore MM College, their two daughters -- Rezwana Rokon Nadia and Ramita Rokon -- and Nadia's husband Saad Qayes Shishir left their home in Khilgaon in July last year, saying they would visit Malaysia but did not return.

The family reportedly went to Syria, a part of which is a stronghold of the Islamic State (IS), quitting civil service jobs and leaving behind huge properties.

Rokonuddin is now working as a child specialist at an IS-controlled hospital in Syria's Raqqa while his wife is probably teaching children at a school there, said a top police official.

"Neo JMB military commander Major (ret'd) Jahid" who trained the Gulshan café attackers gave all his retirement money and savings to the outfit, said Monirul.

Jahid was killed during a police raid

in Rupnagar of the capital on September 2.

Tanvir Kaderi, who killed himself during a September 10 raid on a militant den in Azimpur, donated all his money to "Neo JMB". He had got the money selling his flat in Uttara, said police.

Tanvir and his wife Abedatul Fatema alias Khadiza also had lucrative jobs before they got involved in militancy.

Tanvir was responsible for looking after a militant fund collected from sources at home and abroad, police added.

Basharuzzaman alias Chocolate, who escaped during the Azimpur raid, used to receive the money and ensure delivery of funds when necessary.

His wife Khadiza, Basharuzzaman's wife Ferdousi Afrin, and another top "Neo JMB" leader Nurul Islam Marzan's wife Shaila Afrin alias Prioty were arrested.

Monirul said all the three female "militants" are now repenting that they had gotten involved in militancy.

Earlier, investigators had found that a portion of the fund for the deadly Gulshan and Sholakia attacks in July had come from a Middle Eastern country.

The amount was Tk 13.40 lakh and it arrived in Bangladesh from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through Hundi, an illegal way of money transferring.

The sender is a sympathiser of "Neo JMB", an offshoot of banned militant

outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, the investigator had said earlier.

"The Neo JMB may also have other financiers abroad. Our investigation is underway," Monirul said during yesterday's press conference.

Investigators believe "Neo JMB" carried out the two attacks -- one in Gulshan's Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1 killing 20 hostages and two police officials and the other near the Sholakia Eidgah on July 7 leaving two policemen, a woman and a militant suspect dead.

"Neo JMB", as called by law enforcers, is now inspired by the ideology of Islamic State. It does not keep any fund deposited in any bank. Rather they keep the fund with their operatives who are reliable but do not hold any key position in the organisation, Monirul added.

One such reliable operative is Abdur Rahman, said a police official but did not say whether this Abdur Rahman was the militant who jumped to his death during a recent Rab raid in Ashulia.

The Neo JMB used the fund for renting houses, purchasing firearms, and paying salaries and living expenditure of full-time members.

Monirul said since Tanvir's wife resided in the Bashundhara den of the militants and used to cook for the Holey Artisan attackers, she might be an accused in the Holey Artisan attack case.

## Mobile court verdict illegal

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submissions from the counsels of the UNO and the OC, a counsel of The Daily Star, whose report prompted the court to issue a suo moto rule, and Khurshid Alam Khan, a Supreme Court lawyer who placed the report before the judges.

Coming out of the court, Sabbir told reporters: "I've got justice."

He was sentenced by the mobile court reportedly under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act for threatening the lawmaker via Facebook.

The Daily Star on September 20 published a report under the headline "Boy jailed for FB comment about MP".

Quoting the UNO and the OC, the report said UNO Rafiqul, also an executive magistrate, passed the order a day after police detained the boy following the filing of a general diary by Anupam, lawmaker of Tangail-8 (Basail-Sakhipur) constituency.

Following the report, the HC on September 20 issued the suo moto rule and asked the UNO and the OC to appear before it on September 27 and explain as to why a schoolboy was sentenced to two years' in jail under the ICT Act.

The HC also granted Sabbir bail and asked him to appear before it on the same day with relevant documents to ascertain his age.

But, on September 27, the UNO's lawyer SM Rezaul Karim told the HC that there was no connection between the general diary lodged in favour of the MP and the mobile court verdict.

Acting on a tip-off, the magistrate went to the place of occurrence and ordered police to arrest Sabbir after recovering marijuana from his possession, he said, adding that Sabbir pleaded guilty and then the magistrate convicted him.

Sabbir refuted the lawyer's version.

**YESTERDAY'S PROCEEDING**

At the beginning of yesterday's proceeding, Khurshid Alam submitted Sabbir's statement to the court through swearing an affidavit by his father. Barrister Tanjib-ul Alam, who represented The Daily Star, submitted an affidavit authenticating the report. He said the reporter of the newspaper prepared the report after talking to the UNO and the OC.

Tanjib said the reporter talked to the UNO and the OC again when The Daily Star office in Dhaka found that a mobile court cannot deal with such a matter, as the ICT Act is not within the mobile court's schedule. Both the UNO and the OC then confirmed



Sabbir Shikder

him again.

The lawyer mentioned the mobile phone numbers, date and time of the mobile phone communications between the UNO, the OC and the reporter, which was stated in the affidavit.

Besides, Prothom Alo, Ittefaq, Jugantor, Manab Zamin and Amader Shomoy published similar reports over the issue, he added.

Justice Rahim said according to Sabbir's statement, he was arrested on the night of September 16, while the magistrate in his statement said he arrested and convicted Sabbir around 5:00pm on September 18.

Tanjib said Prothom Alo and Jugantor on September 18 published reports about Sabbir's arrest following the general diary filed by the MP.

"Then, how can he be arrested and convicted in the September 18 evening?" Justice Rahim asked.

Defence counsel Rezaul Karim said the mobile court played vital roles in curbing "eve teasing" and acid violence. Although the law was enacted considering its good sides, there may be some deviations from the law in some cases, he added.

Justice Rahim said, "There is a lot of discussion about the law [Mobile Court Act-2009]. It is necessary to look into the matter if there is any weakness in it [the law]." He also cited a recent media report in which a Kurigram magistrate conducted mobile court from Dhaka over the phone.

Rezaul Karim said in Sabbir's case, the magistrate conducted the mobile court following due procedures and no deviation of the law occurred there. But The Daily Star report gave a different impression, he alleged.

Justice Rahim said no one denied the September 18 newspapers' report on

Sabbir's arrest. If he was in police custody, how did he get 100 grammes of marijuana there, questioned the judge.

OC Maksudul's lawyer Nurul Islam Sujan said The Daily Star published the report with "mala fide intention" and to malign the image of the MP. "Its report cannot be reliable."

Justice Rahim said let's assume that the magistrate went to the spot, that is Protima Bonki village, and ordered to send Sabbir to Tangail Central Jail after convicting him. Then why was he taken to the police station, he questioned.

When Sujan said the reporter has to see the case record of the magistrate, Justice Rahim asked: "How can a reporter see a magistrate's report? All newspapers mentioned that they talked to the UNO."

Khurshid Alam said the report was not about the image of the lawmaker, rather it was on whether the mobile court was conducted following due procedures.

He said there were recent reports on anomalies in mobile courts' procedures in Kurigram and Chittagong. Mobile courts will discharge their responsibilities but they have to follow due procedures, he added.

**WHAT SABBIR TOLD BEFORE THE HC ON SEP 27?**

"I was home on September 16. At 9:00pm, someone called me from outside. I came out and saw a man in plain clothes and a policeman. They asked me to go to the police station. They took me to the office room of the OC. The OC showed me a mobile phone and asked me what I had written. I said I did not write that. He repeatedly questioned me about it and I replied I did not write that."

"Then I was taken to the MP's house. I saw that the MP was sitting on a sofa. I was produced before the MP. He [the lawmaker] asked me what I had written against him. Then he hit me twice. I didn't mind, thinking he might be angry. The MP asked the OC to take me to the police station."

"I was taken to the police station where the OC severely tortured me blindfolded and threatened me with crossfire. Fearing crossfire, I confessed that I wrote that. The OC asked me not to write such things anymore. After three days, I was taken to the UNO's room. The UNO kicked on my chest, and I fell unconscious. Someone took me away. I was taken to the police station and the OC told me that I was handed two years' imprisonment."

Sabbir burst into tears and told the court that he wanted justice.

## WB commits \$2b fund in 3 years

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making the announcement at a press conference.

The WB, which provided Bangladesh more than \$24 billion in financing in the last 45 years, organised the press meet to share Kim's experience during the two-day visit in Bangladesh, first by a WB president in nearly a decade.

During the visit, Kim marked the End Poverty Day in Dhaka on October 17 and met with top policymakers, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

In his first trip to Bangladesh, Kim also visited rural communities, schools cum cyclone shelters and some rural houses lighted by solar power in the southern region.

"I met with people today [yesterday] who talked about the threats of cyclones and flooding," he said making the pledge of financing for tackling climate change.

The \$2 billion pledge for climate change mitigation is in addition to \$1 billion pledged by Kim on October 17 to end childhood stunting in Bangladesh.

Both amounts are contingent on a

successful replenishment of the International Development Association, the World Bank's fund for the poorest countries, which should be agreed in December, said the WB.

At the press conference, Kim said he is very impressed to see Bangladesh's innovation in fighting poverty, empowering women and battling climate change.

He also praised the security measures provided to him and his colleagues during his visit and said every country faces the threats of terrorism.

"There is no single country in the world, no matter how wealthy it is, that is free from threats of terrorism," he said.

"We see it in the United States, Belgium and France and of course there was a great tragedy that occurred here last summer in Bangladesh. I can just tell you that the security I received during my visit was extremely impressive," said Kim, responding to a question from the media.

"Terrorism is one of the great unfortunate realities of the society today. And no country is going to be immune to it," he said, stressing the need for continuous and vigorous monitoring

and screening.

"It takes just constant vigilance in being able to prevent terrorist attacks. Literally, they are popping up everywhere," Kim observed.

Kim also said he sees a bright future for the people of Bangladesh.

Despite progress in various areas, Kim said the country still faces many obstacles to reaching its goals to move from low-middle-income status to middle-income status and to end extreme poverty by 2030.

The WB president suggests that the government should focus on three areas in order to become successful.

The first is policy reforms that improve the business climate, he said, citing that foreign direct investment in Bangladesh lags behind that of its neighbours.

"If the country attracts more investment from the private sector, it will mobilise funds necessary for infrastructure projects," added Kim.

Secondly, Bangladesh needs to strengthen its institutional capacity, and thirdly the country should strengthen governance, he told the press conference.

He said the government correctly

points out in its 7th Five-Year Plan the need to strengthen institutional capacity and governance which includes building a strong civil service, judiciary, public banks, tax collection system and the anti-corruption watchdog.

"We share Bangladesh's zero tolerance towards corruption, believing strongly that any fund diverted from beneficiaries amounts to stealing from the poor," he said, adding that the WB is willing to support Bangladesh's development priorities, reducing poverty further, creating more and better jobs, and working to build a more vibrant private sector.

He said the WB would also expand its engagement with Bangladesh in infrastructure particularly, renewable energy, improving inland waterways and logistics and regional integration through Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) and urbanisation.

Citing his meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he said he offered to make partnership with Bangladesh. What they really want to do is to bring experiences from all parts of the world to Bangladesh, he added.

Kim also said a real opportunity

exists to attract capital because of low interest rate now.

It is a real opportunity to launch infrastructure projects that will attract private sector investment. The key to that, of course, is to give private sector investors a sense that business environment is conducive to getting involved and coming to Bangladesh, he observed.

He further said he made a commitment to Hasina that the WB would provide as much technical assistance as Bangladesh would like to improve its business environment.

He added the WB will be paying very special attention to ensure that Bangladesh becomes more resourceful to battle climate change.

"Bangladesh has a great threat from climate change and funding from many donors has not been flowing as quickly as we think it should, especially as Bangladesh tries to adapt to the climate change," he noted.

Replying to a query on interest rate on WB Group loans for Bangladesh as it becomes a low-mid-income country, he said Bangladesh would receive more concessional funds and start borrowing from non-concessional

funds.

On a question regarding conditions for the loans, he said every loan is negotiated directly with the government.

"We are very clear about requirements we impose when a loan is being taken," he said, citing an example that one has to abide by environmental and social safeguards, which were agreed upon by the 189 member countries including Bangladesh, to get loan from the WB Group.

He said the WB is not an institution that thinks secretly. "We are an institution where everyone plays a role and everyone has a voice. The conditions on the loans that are imposed are agreed upon by the countries," he said.

"We do not force countries to do something they do not want to do," he added.

Kim recommended that Bangladesh looks outward, saying that countries cannot become successful by looking inward, no matter how wealthy they are.

"You cannot look inward and be successful. My strong suggestion is that Bangladesh should look outward even more aggressively."

## Freedom fighter's body exhumed for proper burial

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Forty three days into his burial as an unidentified deceased, freedom fighter Abdul Latif yesterday received the posthumous guard of honour that he deserved from the state.

Muktijoddha Sangsad leaders from the district as well as Phulbari upazila were present on the occasion when they paid tribute to their comrade, covered in national flag, while honour guards saluted and played the national anthem.

The state ceremony was conducted around 11:30am by a contingent of police, led by Assistant Commissioner (land) of Dinajpur Golam Rabbani, after the remains of Abdul Latif were exhumed from Sheikh Jahangir graveyard in Dinajpur town.

Following the ceremony the remains were formally handed over to this son Mominul Islam. In the afternoon the same day, the state hero, having freedom fighter ID number



Forty-two days after his death in a road crash, freedom fighter Abdul Latif gets guard of honour in front of Sheikh Zahangir Graveyard in Dinajpur yesterday. The body of the 66-year-old was exhumed for the ceremony. He had been buried unidentified before.

0308010686, was finally laid to rest at a graveyard of his birthplace in Jamgram village of Phulbari upazila in the district.

Latif's son Mominul Islam told this correspondent over phone yesterday, "Whatever happened, finally my father at least got the state honour."

On September 5, Abdul Latif, son of late Tozimuddin Sarker, died of serious injuries at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital. He was brought to the hospital on September 2 as an unidentified victim of a road accident in Phulbari Bus Terminal area.

On the day of the incident, 67-

year-old Latif was returning home after drawing Tk 20,000 -- his two months' state allowance as a freedom fighter.

On the very day of his death, the hospital authorities forwarded necessary documents to Dinajpur Sadar Police Station to find the relatives of

the deceased, said Jahangir Alam, director of the hospital.

On September 7, failing to identify the deceased, police buried Latif as an unidentified person at Sheikh Zahangir Graveyard in the town with the help of a voluntary organisation.

Latif used to live with his son Mominul Islam, a rickshaw puller by profession, at Nimnagar Balubari area in Dinajpur town.

Mominul was unaware of the incident as he was out of town on the day of the incident. He came to know of his father's death after he returned home and went to local police station to report his father missing.

This incident came to light when his son Mominul, on September 19, filed a petition at the deputy commissioner's office of Dinajpur, requesting investigation into anomalies as well as a posthumous state ceremony for his freedom fighter father.

This newspaper also ran a story on the matter on September 26.

Following the petition, a five-member probe committee, led by District Additional Magistrate Golam Rabbani, was formed on September 25 to investigate the incident, Dinajpur Deputy Commissioner

Mir Khairul Alam told this correspondent.

When asked why it took almost two months for the authorities to arrange the state ceremony for the deceased state hero, the DC said the state ceremony was arranged as soon as the formalities -- including confirmation of the freedom fighter's identity, ministerial instruction and court order, were completed.

Asked about the complaints filed by the son of the deceased, District Additional Magistrate Golam Rabbani, head of the five-member probe committee, told this correspondent yesterday that the committee did not find any negligence on part of the hospital authorities, the police or the Muktijoddha Sangsad.

Mominul Islam in his petition claimed that although his father had Tk 20,000 in his possession when he died, police had returned only Tk 12,000 to him. Whereas, the hospital authorities claimed to have given Tk 17,200 to police, after deducting Tk 2,800 for hospital charges.

The remainder of the money was recovered later and handed over to Mominul, the magistrate said.

PHOTO: STAR