

Barisal's 'Khokababu' gang surrenders

Hands over 22 firearms, 1,303 rounds of ammo

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Twelve pirates including leaders and members of the Sundarbans-based notorious "Khokababu" gang surrendered at Rab-8 headquarters in presence of the home minister and the Rab DG yesterday.

The pirates also surrendered 22 firearms and 1,303 bullets at the Rab office in the district.

The surrender was led by Md Kabirul Islam alias "Khokababu" of Chandpai range of Moukhali canal under the Sundarbans forest region.

The gang was under surveillance of the law enforcers for several months and had no alternative to surrendering, Rab sources said.

"They have surrendered because they lost their operational strength," added a Rab source.

"We will now take action against those, who have supported the pirate gangs and given them money and shelter," Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said.

"Those who have lost their ways of

leading a normal life, we are trying to bring them back on right track. The pirates who have surrendered and are not accused of murder and rape would be rehabilitated," the minister added.

The other surrendered pirates were Amirul Islam, 32, Md Shahjahan Gazi, 30, Md Abdul Aziz, 44, Md Mizanur Rahman, 36, Md Rabiul Islam, 25, Md Osman Gani, 33, Md Rafiqul Gazi, 33, Md Yasin Ali Gazi, 25, Md Mohidul Islam, 33, and Md Mojibor Rahman, 38.

As many as 226 pirates of seven pirate gangs have so far surrendered since May this year with 652 firearms and 18,055 rounds of ammunition, Rab sources said.

AL lawmakers Abul Hasnat Abdullah, advocate Talukdar Md Yunus and Sheikh Jebunnessa Afroz, Rab Director General Benazir Ahmed, DIG Barisal Range Sheikh Md Maruf Hasan, Rab-8 Commander Md Iftekharul Mabud, among others, were present.



The leader of Sundarbans-based robber gang "Khokababu Bahini" and his 11 cohorts surrender with 22 firearms and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition at the Rab-8 headquarters in Barisal yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

No bail for MP Rana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday refused to grant bail to ruling Awami League lawmaker Amanur Rahman Rana in a case filed for killing freedom fighter Faruk Ahmed in 2013.

The bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan dropped the bail petition of the lawmaker, now in jail, from its cause-list, Deputy Attorney General Mohammad Bashirullah told The Daily Star.

He said after hearing Rana's bail petition, the judges declined to grant him bail, considering the allegation brought against him.

The lawyers for Rana prayed to the HC to make the bail petition out of list, and then the court granted their prayer, said Bashirullah, adding that the bail petition could be moved before another HC bench.

Abdul Baset Majumder and SM Rezaul Karim argued for Rana.

Faruk Ahmed, former publicity secretary of Tangail district unit AL, was found shot dead near his College.

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Executive jets for VVIPs soon

2 probe bodies formed over PM's flight glitch

STAR REPORT

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said the government would purchase executive jet airplanes for carrying VVIPs soon.

The minister said this while talking to journalists after a standing committee meeting in the afternoon, reports UNB.

The finance ministry has already agreed to provide the money, he said.

On Sunday, a VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Budapest in Hungary made an emergency landing at Ashgabat International Airport in Turkmenistan due to a technical glitch.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines and the Ministry of Civil Aviation yesterday formed two separate committees to investigate the emergency landing of the VVIP flight.

Captain Fazal Mahmud Chowdhury, Biman's chief of technical, would lead the four-member probe body, said Shakil Meraj, general

manager (public relation department) of Biman, told The Daily Star.

The committee was asked to submit its report by December 1, he added.

Swapan Kumar Sarkar, additional secretary of the civil aviation ministry, would lead the other committee, Menon told journalists at his office at the secretariat.

After four hours of repair and a test run, the plane resumed its journey to Hungary where it landed at 11:00pm on Sunday Bangladesh time, Biman sources said.

Hasina was on her way to Hungary on a four-day visit to attend the Budapest Water Summit 2016 which began yesterday.

Meanwhile, in a meeting, the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation yesterday asked the ministry to ensure exemplary punishment to the people responsible for the incident.

CASES AGAINST ERSHAD Raushan to ask PM to have those dropped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader Raushan Ershad yesterday said she would urge the prime minister once again to take steps so that all the cases against her husband and Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad were withdrawn.

"Whenever I raised the issue to the honourable prime minister, she told me that she would take measures in this regard," Raushan, also senior co-chair of the JP, said at the party's joint meeting at city's Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh.

In the meeting, the JP leaders and activists chanted slogans, demanding withdrawal of cases against Ershad. In response, Raushan assured the activists of taking the responsibility for withdrawing the cases.

"I am more disappointed than you [activists] are because he [Ershad] is your chairman, but my husband. You

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Case designed to be doomed

FROM PAGE 1

Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) while dealing with four drug adulteration cases filed in the early 90s.

From June to August in 2009, 28 children across the country died of renal failures caused by the intake of the paracetamol syrup and suspension allegedly manufactured by Rid Pharma.

On July 22, 2009, the Drug Administration sealed off Rid's factory in BSCIC area of Brahmanbaria following wide media coverage of the children's death, and findings of Dhaka Shishu Hospital physician Prof Mohammad Hanif that Rid Pharma's Temset had toxic substance.

In August the same year, Shafiqul Islam, then superintendent of Drug Administration, filed the case with the Dhaka Drug Court and only five prosecution witnesses testified after the court indicted the five accused in March 2011.

Three other cases were also filed in this connection in Narayanganj, Brahmanbaria and Sylhet.

After yesterday's judgment, Prof Mohammad Hanif said: "Not only for me, it's a matter of regret for the entire nation."

He said the judge mentioned about the negligence of the Drug Administration. So, he said, the drug administration and its officials who were involved in the case should be made accountable.

"They [drug administration officials] should answer why the accused did not get punishment when there is enough evidence and so many lives have been lost."

The Daily Star tried to reach the director general and a director of the DGDA over the phone but failed.

Anwar Zahid Bhuiyan, a defence counsel, said he was happy as his clients were acquitted. But, at the same time, he is unhappy as the "real culprits" behind the death of the children remained unidentified.

"We hope the Drug Administration, in future, will file a case following due procedure and ensure punishment of the accused," he told this newspaper last night.

FLAWS IN CASE
When charges were framed by the Dhaka court in March 2011, legal experts and the authorities concerned did not expect much, as they saw loopholes in the cases.

For example, autopsy was not done on any of the 28 children who died allegedly by taking the paracetamol laced with deadly diethylene glycol, an industrial solvent and an ingredient in antifreeze and brake fluid.

So there was hardly any chance of linking the deaths to the presence of the toxin.

Besides, the fact that diethylene glycol was present in Rid Pharma's paracetamol syrup, Temset, was not mentioned at all in three of the cases.

Those cases only mentioned that the syrup was "substandard". The only exception was the case in Narayanganj.

Lacking was also noticed in testing the syrup. Products from the same batch were tested in government and private laboratories.

While the private tests showed presence of diethylene glycol, the government tests did not. No effort was made to check the validity of the government lab tests, and the private test results were not mentioned anywhere in the cases.

Prof Hanif, the man who blew the whistle first in 1992 confirming presence of diethylene glycol in four brands of paracetamol syrup, was again the first to announce presence of the same element in Temset around mid July in 2009.

Death of 20 children admitted to Dhaka Shishu Hospital with acute renal failure in June-July 2009 prompted Hanif to send to laboratory for testing a sample of Temset that he had collected from the family of a victim.

The test found toxin in the sample, Hanif told this newspaper in March 2011. The Daily Star was then conducting an investigation into the issue.

But while filing the case, the Drug Administration did not mention presence of diethylene glycol in Rid's drug; it rather mentioned the drug as "substandard", Mahmud Hossain Jahangir, a public prosecutor in the case, told this newspaper yesterday.

Delivering the summary of the judgment yesterday, the judge said that from Prof Hanif, the Drug Administration collected the samples of paracetamol syrup and suspension manufactured by Rid Pharma.

But it neither made Hanif a witness nor produced him before the court to exhibit the seized materials.

The judge also said the Drug Administration did not seize any samples from Rid's factory where the said medicines were manufactured.

Besides, as per the law, the Drug Administration after collecting any sample was supposed to divide the seized materials into four parts.

One part was to be given to the accused, another to the court. It was to send another part to the laboratory while the drug administration would have to keep the fourth part, he added.

The Drug Administration did not follow the procedure, the judge mentioned.

Citing a 1987 High Court ruling, the judge said the HC overturned a lower court judgment as the verdict was delivered ignoring the mandatory provision of seizing any materials.

So, the activities of the Drug Administration showed negligence, inefficiency and incompetence in dealing with the case, the judge said before acquitting the accused.

Asked about the acquittal order, Public Prosecutor Mohammad Nadim Miah said he was dissatisfied over the verdict, adding that he would decide whether to file appeal after getting certified copy of the full verdict.

Asked why he did not produce Prof Hanif as a witness, Nadim said he took over as public prosecutor of the Drug Court in 2014. Recording of the testimony of the prosecution witnesses was completed by this time, he added.

NEGLECTANCE, NOT NEW

It took more than 22 years for the first trial in the drug adulteration cases to be completed mainly because of manipulation of the legal process and the drug regulatory body's sheer indifference, the Law Commission said in 2014.

On July 22, 2014, a Dhaka Court delivered verdict against the Adflame Pharmaceuticals, the country's first-ever judgment against drug adulterators. The case was filed in 1992.

The long delay in trial prompted the commission to launch an investigation.

Adflame is one of the five companies that allegedly used Di-Ethylene Glycol in their respective brands of paracetamol, prompting the DGDA to file cases against four of them in 1992. Three other companies are BCI (Bangladesh) Limited, Polychem Laboratories and Rex Pharma.

One of the companies was never sued as it had ties allegedly with the then BNP government, court sources said.

However, trial proceedings against all the four were stayed in 1994 following an HC order. After an investigative report by The Daily Star in November 2009 revealed "corruption" among government agencies to save the accused in the cases, trial of three companies resumed immediately.

But the trial in the BCI case could not be resumed until August 2011 as Abul Khair Chowdhury, a director of the DGDA and also complainant of the cases, disregarded the court orders to testify in the cases for another two years.

In August last year, the Dhaka Drug Court handed down three directors and three employees of the now-defunct BCI to 20 years of imprisonment and fined Tk 4 lakh each in two cases for producing and marketing toxic paracetamol syrup.

Appeals in the cases against Adflame and BCI are now pending with the High Court while trial proceeding of the case against Polychem Laboratories is now underway in the Drug Court.

The accused in the case against Rex Pharma, filed with a Mymensingh Drug Court, were acquitted, thanks to the prosecution's alleged reluctance to produce relevant documents before the court.



Relatives mourn the death of day labourer Safor Ali in Mymensingh's Fulbaria upazila. Safor was killed during a clash between police, and teachers and students of Fulbaria Degree College on Sunday. Inset, police beat up a teacher of the college during the incident.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Cops didn't allow ambulance

FROM PAGE 1

The 55-year-old teacher was taken to the hospital around 3:30pm. He died around half an hour later.

Another teacher Arup Kumar Basak said, "Mymensingh Medical College Hospital is around 20 km off our college. But we didn't travel on Mymensingh-Fulbaria road for fear of further attacks."

However, OC Rifat Khan of Fulbaria Police Station claimed cops did not see any ambulance in the college area during the clash.

Azad of Nandail upazila and Safor Ali, 65, of Fulbaria were killed and over 100 others injured when police swooped on a demonstration by teachers, students and staff of the college in Fulbaria on Sunday.

Witnesses said demonstrators brought out a procession on the campus demanding nationalisation of the college. All of a sudden around 1:00pm, a police team entered the college and beat up demonstrators indiscriminately.

Safor Ali, a day labourer, was crossing the college area during the clash. Doctors at Fulbaria Upazila Health Complex said he was brought dead there.

The bodies of the two were handed over to their relatives after autopsies at Mymensingh Medical College yesterday. The two were later buried at their village homes.

Police yesterday filed a case with Fulbaria Police Station accusing 400-500 unidentified people of attacking

law enforcers during Sunday's clash. Safor Ali's brother also filed a case of unnatural death.

Meanwhile, the education ministry yesterday formed a three-member committee, headed by Shamsul Huda, deputy director of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, to probe the teacher's death.

Mymensingh police formed another committee, led by Assistant Superintendent of Police Noor-e-Alam, to investigate the incident.

Rights group Ain O Salish Kendra yesterday in a press statement condemned the police attack on demonstrators in Fulbaria and demanded punitive action against "the law enforcers for the excesses that led to the death of two people".

FEAR GRIPS FULBARIA

Law enforcers were patrolling the Fulbaria municipality area yesterday after the upazila administration imposed section 144 on Sunday midnight for an indefinite period.

There were no academic activities at the college. Only a few rickshaws and auto-rickshaws plied the town streets.

Talking to The Daily Star near the college, some students said police didn't allow them in to sit exams.

Students wanted to bring the teacher's body to the college for a funeral prayer, but could not do so due to imposition of section 144.

Asma Akter, a councillor of the municipality and also a local resident, said her college-going son went into

hiding as the situation in the area became tense.

"His HSC exams are not far away. I am very worried about the prevailing situation. The local lawmaker should have taken initiatives beforehand to avoid such an untoward incident," she added.

Many other parents in the area said their children didn't go to schools or colleges yesterday as they were feeling insecure.

Lawmaker Muslem Uddin, also the president of the college's governing body, said he on several occasions had invited teachers to discuss their demands, but they didn't pay heed.

Seeking anonymity, a teacher said the MP had called a meeting to discuss the issue, but they did not want to join it as the lawmaker made "false promises" before.

THE COLLEGE

Established in 1972, Fulbaria Degree College has about 6,000 students and over 100 teachers.

Since the beginning of the agitation around one and a half months ago, the teachers and students have been holding the MP responsible for nationalisation of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Mohila College, a non-MPO college, instead of Fulbaria Degree College which has a much better infrastructure and academic achievement than that of the former.

The Mohila College was set up in 2009 and nationalised around one and a half months ago. Emdadul Haque Selim, the lawmaker's son, is the governing body president at the college.

Japanese firm

FROM PAGE 16

5,000 fish were frozen under the surface of the ice as a decorative effect while customers skated above.

But the concept was slammed as unethical and the rink in the city of Kitakyushu was forced to close on Sunday, Space World spokesman Koji Shibata said.

"We received critical voices saying it is not good to use creatures as a toy, and that it is bad to let food go to waste," he told AFP on Monday.

29th November, 2016 marks the 1st Death Anniversary of Mrs. Feroza Mahbub (1940-2015) wife of Mr. Mahbubur Rahman, Former Minister and Member of Parliament, mother of Ar. Faisal Mahbub, Murshed Mahbub and Justice Farah Mahbub. She was a lady with a loving heart and a compassionate soul.



Her deep concern for anybody in distress left a lasting impression in the hearts of many.

All Members of the Mahbub Family

Today we mourn the gaping hole she has left in us and pray that Allah grants her eternal peace and a place in Jannah.

A dua mahfil will be held on Friday, the 2nd December, 2016 at Feroza Manzil, 9/K, UN Road, Baridhara. The mahfil shall start immediately after Magrib Prayers.