

Family gets blood money

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Begum Shamsun Nahar, expatriates welfare and overseas employment secretary, and Gazi Mohammad Julhas, director general of WEWB, handed over the cheques to the five.

MURDER, TRIAL
Victim's wife Hosne Ara Begum, 40, received a call from a Bangladeshi migrant worker in Jeddah on September 11, 2010.

She was informed that her husband was injured in an unprovoked gun attack by a Saudi Arabian citizen. Although the caller kept Bashir's death a secret, she could assume that her husband was no more.

"When we received the news that my husband was injured, we were heartbroken. We had nobody to support us," Hosne Ara told this correspondent.

The following day, the Bangladesh consulate in Jeddah contacted her brother Faruk Ahmed, a schoolteacher, to inform him that Bashir had been killed. The victim's body arrived home from Jeddah 10 days later.

After consulting with the Bangladesh consulate officials, Faruk decided to lodge a case with a Saudi court against the teenager.

"We were frustrated at the slow progress of the trial, but our efforts did not go in vain," he added.



Family members of Bashir Uddin, who was shot dead in Jeddah of Saudi Arabia in 2010, receive compensation cheques worth Saudi Riyal SR10,00,000 or equivalent to Tk 2.10 crore from officials of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry at the capital's Probashi Kallyan Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Yesterday, the WEWB also handed over another cheque amounting to Tk 43 lakh to Rahmatullah, 65, father of late Rokib from Comilla's Daudkandi upazila, as compensation related to his son's death.

Rokib along with six other

Bangladeshis was killed in a fire in Qatar in June last year. Their company has sent money, including insurance claims, service benefit and due wages, for the victims' heirs.

The cheques of the rest of the heirs would be given later.

Avalanche kills at least four in French Alps

AFP, Lyon

At least four people died in the French Alps yesterday when an avalanche engulfed nine people who were in an off-piste area near the ski resort of Tignes, rescue services said.

"Five people are still buried under a huge mass of snow," said a rescue official from nearby Albertville.

The rescue workers initially said they had found two people dead and two alive, but later reported four dead.

The police said the two people found alive appeared to have died shortly after being rescued.

The avalanche, some 400 metres (yards) wide, was apparently set off by a group of skiers higher up, the ski station said in a statement.

Two helicopters, rescue workers and sniffer dogs were searching for those missing, in the worst accident in France since the start of this year's ski season.

The accident near Tignes, a major resort near the Italian border, occurred at an altitude of 2,100 metres (6,900 feet).

Yesterday's avalanche risk in the area was listed as three on a scale of five.

Before the avalanche, 13 accidents have been recorded in the Alps and Pyrenees so far this winter, claiming a total of three lives.

Last winter there were 45 accidents and 21 fatalities.

Criminal killed in gunfight with army

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A criminal was killed and two minor boys were injured in a gunfight between criminals and an army patrol in Naikkhong Mukh Para in the district's Lama upazila yesterday.

The identity of the dead could not be known as of filing of this report at 2:00am today.

The injured, Mang Preng Mro, 8, and Du Nong Mro, 7, of the same area, were rushed to Lama Upazila Health Complex. Later, the two were moved to Chittagong Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated, said locals.

The two boys were injured by stray bullets from criminals, said an official of Inter Services Public Relation Department.

Maj Mustafizur Rahman, acting commander of Alikadom zone, said the dead, a member of Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS), was in army uniform.

The army patrol cordoned off

Naikkhong Mukh Para area around 4:00pm on information that an armed gang was there, he told The Daily Star.

"Shortly afterwards criminals opened fire on the troops. The army men retaliated, firing shots. The two sides fired at least 50 shots during the gunfight that lasted for around 10-15 minutes," added the acting zone commander.

According to Mustafizur, the army team searched the area and recovered a bandolier from the deceased.

Rezaul Karim Shammi, assistant director of the ISPR Department, confirmed the incident. The army men opened fire after being attacked by criminals, he said.

The PCJSS, however, denied its link with any armed men.

"Certain quarters were trying to tarnish the image of Jana Sanghati Samiti by indicating those people's association with our organisation," said Sajib Chakma, assistant information secretary of PCJSS.

Yunus, TIB must offer apology to nation

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in establishing that the corruption conspiracy allegation raised by the WB was false.

"They [Yunus, TIB and some local intellectuals] must offer unconditional apologies," said AL Publicity Affairs Secretary Hasan Mahmud at the press conference at the party chief's political office in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Yunus wrote an e-mail to a high official of the US, asking the official not to fund the project, he said.

Alongside TIB, several local intellectuals and media personalities were busy proving that there was corruption in the bridge project, Hasan added.

Bangladesh has suffered financially due to their evil efforts as the global lender withdrew its credit for the project, the AL leader said.

"They were engaged in hatching an anti-state conspiracy. The image of Bangladesh was tarnished abroad. They should be brought to book. The government should think about it."

About the BNP's stance regarding

the issue, Hasan, a former minister, said the opposition doesn't have faith in the court system whether it is local or foreign one.

CABINET GREETs PM
The weekly cabinet meeting at the Bangladesh Secretariat observed that when the WB brought an allegation of corruption conspiracy and pulled out the fund, the PM categorically said there was no corruption.

She had also asked the WB to prove the allegation but it failed, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiq Alam told reporters after the meeting.

Finally it has been proved in the Canadian court that there was no corruption in the project. That has been only possible, Alam said, due to Sheikh Hasina's bold leadership.

Due to WB's fund suspension, Bangladesh has been deprived of its desired economic growth for the last few years.

The cabinet members said at the meeting that Bangladesh would have achieved additional 1.2 percent economic growth had the bridge been constructed in due time, with the WB

fund.

They expressed the view that the Canadian court's verdict consolidated Bangladesh's stance and brightened the government's image in the global arena.

The cabinet also thanked the Malaysian government for sending relief materials for displaced Rohingya refugees.

BNP'S RESPONSE
The BNP yesterday turned down the ruling party's demand for an apology for supporting the WB's corruption allegation, saying corruption is everywhere in the country.

"Why should the BNP offer an apology? When the World Bank cancelled its deal raising the corruption allegation, as a responsible party, we couldn't remain silent. We rightly reacted," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir at a press conference at the party's Naya Paltan central office.

Public money is being looted from different sectors and development projects. "There is no area left where corruption is not taking place," Fakhrul said.

Don't sign deals limiting access

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According to a paper she presented, the prices of cancer drugs doubled over the last decade. Escalating prices of branded medicines to treat cancer, Hepatitis C and other widespread life-threatening conditions are straining budgets of governments, insurance companies and households, leaving many patients without access to these drugs.

The paper says drug-resistant viruses cause 7 lakh deaths a year globally and if unchecked, it would cause 10 million deaths by 2050. However, only one novel class of antibiotics developed in 40 years.

Besides, 26 neglected tropical diseases contribute to 14 percent of the global disease burden, but the global health-related research and development (R&D) expenditure for it was only 1.4 percent in 2013, it says.

In Bangladesh alone, 81,000 deaths occurred due to tuberculosis in 2014, while multi-drug resistant TB is emerg-

ing. However, only two new drugs for TB were developed in last 40 years, according to the paper.

Fukuda-Parr said there was a huge gap in innovation amid underinvestment due to low financial incentives for companies. These companies often inflate drug prices, arguing huge investments in research and development, but the spending was often not transparent, she said.

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan observed that medicines should be a global public good as they were directly related to health, a critical component in SDGs.

Laying stress on public funding in research for developing new drugs, he suggested that access to life-saving drugs should be on the global human rights agenda.

"State and market can be reconciled here," he said.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra Founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury said providing

low-cost healthcare had become a real need of the day with the rise in non-communicable diseases like diabetes, kidney disease and hypertension.

However, dominance of businesses is causing a rise in healthcare and drug cost, he said.

CPD Executive Director Dr Mustafizur Rahman said Bangladesh, as a member of the least developed countries (LDCs), was exempted from the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organization until 2033, and so it had to make the best use of it by investing more in research in developing new drugs.

As Bangladesh graduates from LDC, it would have to comply with the TRIPS when drug prices may be even higher as the companies have to pay fees for the patents of drugs they manufacture.

CPD Distinguished Fellow Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya also spoke.

Gun-toting ex-BCL leaders get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two expelled Bangladesh Chhatra League leaders, who brandished firearms during a clash between Dhaka South City Corporation staff and hawkers in the capital's Gulistan on October 27, 2016, were granted bail yesterday in an attempted murder case.

The charges against Md Sabbir Hossain and Md Ashiqur Rahman were not specific, reasoned Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka Nurunnahar Yasmin in her order after the duo's lawyer, Saidur Rahman Manik, moved a bail petition.

The same had been stated by Metropolitan Magistrate Md Khurshid Alam when he granted bail to Sabbir and Ashiqur, former general secretaries of BCL Dhaka south and Wari thana units respectively, on November 17, 2016.

He, however, issued arrest warrants on December 4 after the duo remained absent from that day's court proceedings.

The duo surrendered on Thursday before Metropolitan Magistrate Sarafuzzaman Ansari who cancelled their bail and sent them to jail.

On Sunday, another Dhaka court rejected a seven-day remand prayer submitted by Sub-inspector Emranul Islam of Shahbagh Police Station, the case's investigation officer.

Several Bangla dailies had published photographs of the duo brandishing firearms during the October 27 clash that left 10 people, including two corporation employees, injured.

Three days later, SI Abdul Mannan of Shahbagh Police Station filed the case against the two and 50 to 60 unnamed people.

Teachers feud, children suffer

Teachers' scuffle results in no classes since Thursday in Sadullahpur primary school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Students of Sadullahpur Government primary school in Birganj upazila of Dinajpur have not had any classes since Thursday following a scuffle between two teachers over the school's managing committee.

The school has nearly 100 students. According to the teachers of the school, Nurul Islam Khan, headmaster of Sadullahpur Government Primary School, last week unitarily formed a new managing committee after the end of the tenure of the previous committee.

Idris Ali Khan was made the president of the committee.

The headmaster sent the names of the committee members to Birganj upazila Primary Education office for approval. This angered other teachers of the school and some protested this.

On Wednesday, the headmaster locked in altercation with other teachers which resulted in a scuffle triggering panic among students.

"Students fled the school when the scuffle began," said Razab Ali who lives near the school.

During a visit to the school on Monday, this correspondent found no children there.

Seeking anonymity, the teachers alleged that not a single class had been held since the incident.

Head teacher Khan alleged that former president of the school's managing committee Ziaur Rahman was preventing the schoolchildren from attending their classes. He also blamed the parents for not sending their children to school.

Birganj Upazila Primary Education officer Ershadul Haq confirmed the disruption at the school. His office was investigating the irregularities in forming the managing committee, he said.

Nahid

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Education Board on Sunday. The minister said that the questions were leaked through Facebook and WhatsApp. On the other hand, there was another allegation that the questions were leaked soon after the test had begun, he added.

"We are looking into it. Without getting the right information we cannot cancel the examination of several thousands of students.

"We will find the truth and if we find that the questions were leaked and therefore had an impact on the exam, we will definitely take steps accordingly. We will find the people responsible," Nahid said.

Mentioning the steps taken to check leaks, the minister said BG Press was a major place from where questions were leaked earlier.

"We ensured safe printing of the question papers..."

The minister further said the government, if needed, would use new technologies to check leaks.

"But ultimately we have to depend on the teachers... If they do not turn out to be trustworthy, where shall we go?"

There had been allegations of question leaks in the SSC, HSC and JSC examinations in the past several years. In most of the cases, questions were leaked allegedly via Facebook and SMS.

In 2014, a government enquiry committee found questions of English second paper, and mathematics second paper of the HSC examination under the Dhaka Board had been leaked.

SHIMUL MURDER Shahzadpur mayor, five others on five-day remand

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, back from Shahzadpur, Sirajganj

A court yesterday put Shahzadpur Mayor Halimul Haque Miru and five others on five-day remand in connection with a factional clash of ruling Awami League that left journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul killed.

Police produced six accused before the Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate, Shahzadpur and sought seven days remand for each to get information about illegal firearms used during the clash on February 2.

The other five accused are the mayor's aide and AL leader Nasir Uddin, Nazmul Khan, Alamgir Hossain, Arshad Ali and Zahir Sheikh.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Hasibul Haque granted five days remand for each after the hearing, said Additional Public Prosecutor advocate Abul Kashem.

Shimul, Shahzadpur correspondent of the daily Samakal, received a bullet during the clash when the municipality mayor and his men opened fire. Shimul succumbed to his injuries on February 3.

The victim's wife filed a case accusing Mayor Miru, his two brothers and 15 others. The police arrested 12 people including the mayor, the key accused, who was arrested in the capital's Shyamoli area on February 5.

"According to video footage and witness, several firearms were used by the mayor and his men during the

clash. We seized a licensed firearm from the mayor's house, but the other firearms used in the clash could not be found," Inspector (investigation) Md Monirul Islam told The Daily Star.

LICENSING OF GUNS QUESTIONED

The mayor obtained a firearm licence in 2014 under the freedom fighter quota, but the process was questioned.

"Halimul Haque Miru is not a real freedom fighter. His freedom fighter certificate was managed hiding his real age. He has shown his date of birth as 01/01/1955, but his real date of birth is 01/01/1959 according to the voter list," Binoy Kumar, commander of Shahzadpur Muktijoddha Sangsad, told The Daily Star.

Asked about the allegation, Deputy Commissioner of Sirajganj Kamrunnahr Siddika declined to comment.

"I am not interested to say anything about it," the DC said.

Superintendent of Police Miraz Uddin Ahmed however said they had seized the licensed gun and were investigating the licensing process.

"If any flaw is unearthed, we will recommend cancelling the licence," he added.

"We are hopeful to get justice after the accused were put on remand. We will be happy when they get the due punishment," Shimul's wife Nurun Nahar said.

Ban stays on 20 drug

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health ministry, department of pharmacy of Dhaka University, the DGDA, and an expert committee formed earlier by parliament.

Based on the recommendations of the committee, the authorities concerned would decide whether the three companies would be able to produce drugs, the court added.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan came up with the verdict after holding a hearing on the writ petition of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) filed on June 5.

In the petition, the rights organisation sought HC directive on the government to cancel licences of 20 pharmaceutical companies and stop their production.

It also prayed for action against the 14 companies who were making substandard antibiotics.

CASE PROCEEDING
An expert committee was formed with the permission of the speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad following allegations that several companies were producing drug without complying with the GMP policy of the WHO.

After visiting 84 pharmaceutical companies, the committee recommended that the government cancel licences of 20 companies and stop the production of antibiotics of 14 other companies.

On June 5 last year, HRPB filed the writ petition after media reports said the authorities concerned did not take action as per the committee's recommendations.

The petition said the right to life of citizens was being violated due to manufacturing of substandard medicines.

On August 8, the HC ordered the government to stop all drug production of 20 pharmaceutical companies and production of antibiotics of 14 others and withdraw their products from the market.

It had also issued a rule upon the authorities concerned to explain why licences of the companies should not be ordered to be cancelled.

But some of those companies went to the Appellate Division seeking a stay on the HC order. The Appellate Division denied them the stay order. The Appellate Division also directed the HC bench to hold hearing on the rule it had issued.

Yesterday, the HC delivered the

verdict after holding a hearing on the rule.

Writ petitioner's counsel Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that every drug company must produce standard medicines under the GMP policy of the WHO, as per Section 15(1) of Drug (Control) Ordinance, 1982.

If the drug companies do not abide by this provision, their licences would be cancelled or suspended, he said, adding that a person could be sentenced for up to five years in prison for producing substandard drugs.

Manzill also said the 34 drug companies had produced medicines without following the provision of the law and were helped by the inaction of the authorities concerned.

The 20 drug companies that have been banned from producing drugs are: Axiem Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Avert Pharma Ltd, Bikolpo Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Dolphin Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Drugland Ltd, Globe Laboratories (pvt) Ltd, Jalpha Laboratories Ltd, Kafma Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Medico Pharmaceuticals Ltd, National Drug Pharma Ltd, North Bengal Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Remo Chemicals Ltd (Pharma Division), Rid Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Skylab Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Spark Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Star Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Sunipun Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Today Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Tropical Pharmaceuticals Ltd, and Universal Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

The 14 companies that have been banned from manufacturing antibiotics are: Ad Din Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Alkad Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Belsen Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Bengal Drugs Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Bistol Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Crystal Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Indo Bangla Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Millat Pharmaceuticals Ltd, MST Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Orbit Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Pharmatik Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Phoenix Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Rasa Pharmaceuticals Ltd and Save Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

During the "gunfight", Sub-inspector of DB Hemayet Mollah and constables Soheb Mia and Sohrab Hossain were wounded. They were admitted to Munshiganj General Hospital.

Law enforcers also claimed to have recovered two pistols, two magazines, five bullet shells and six sharp weapons from the spot.

'Criminal' killed

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area around 2:30am, some 10 to 12 accomplices of Shahjalal suddenly opened fire and tried to snatch Shahjalal from them, said police.

Police then returned fire, triggering a "gunfight". During the "gunfight", Shahjalal managed to escape from the police van, said police.

After the gun battle, police found the bullet-hit body of Shahjalal. They took him to Munshiganj General Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

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Chhatra League

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Narayanganj's Rupganj shot Mosharrarf over previous enmity, Shiblee Noman, additional deputy commissioner of Motijheel division, told The Daily Star.

"They also had an altercation centring a motorcycle rally in their area recently," said the ADC.

At one stage, Ashique shot Mosharrarf in his tummy, the ADC said, adding that the lawmaker was not present then.

No one has been arrested, said Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Paltan Police Station.