

An unpaid debt

HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

He had taken Tk 5 from his brother, saying he would return it one day. But Kazi Delwar Hossain never got the chance.

Because on this very day in 1984 a police truck intentionally ploughed through a peaceful procession of students protesting former military dictator HM Ershad's rule, killing Delwar and another Chhatra League leader of Dhaka University unit, HM Ibrahim Selim.

Thirty-two years on, none has been tried yet.

"We want justice. We want the persons responsible to be brought to book," said Delwar's elder brother Fazlur Rahman during a recent conversation with The Daily Star.

He says the moment Delwar asked for the money keeps popping up in his mind. It was the last time Delwar visited his home in Uttar Poykkhali village under Pirojpur's Bhandaria upazila.

Born in August 1962, Delwar was the fourth among his five brothers and two sisters.

Completing his school and college years in Pirojpur, he got admitted to DU's political science department in 1981 and was attached to Zahirul Haq Hall.

President Ziaur Rahman was assassinated that year on May 30. The then army chief General Ershad staged a military coup, overthrowing elected president Justice Sattar and grabbing state power on March 24, 1982 before imposing martial law.

Protests had by then erupted. The first major one came on February 14, 1983 when Jafar, Dipali Saha, Zainal, Mozammel, Ayub Kanchan and several others were shot dead during a massive student protest against the regime's education policy.

It was a platform of progressive student organisations, Chhatra Sangram Parishad, which brought out the 1984 procession protesting Ershad's decision to hold upazila elections.

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PROTEST AGAINST GAS PRICE HIKE Half-day hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some leftist political parties will enforce a half-day hartal today in the capital protesting the government decision to hike gas prices.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD), Biplobi Workers Party, Gono tantrik Biplobi Party, Gono sanghati Andolan and Gono tantrik Bam Morcha called the strike on Friday.

The BNP and the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports extended their support to the hartal.

The strike would start at 6:00am

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Stop production

FROM PAGE 1
Secretaries to the ministries of health and industries; director generals of the Directorate General of Health Services, Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection, Directorate General of Drug Administration and Rapid Action Battalion; inspector general of police and president of the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries have been made respondents to the rule.

A bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan came up with the order and rule following a writ petition by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

The HRPB recently submitted the petition to the HC, saying a committee of experts formed on instructions of the Speaker recommended in February last year that the production of the drugs should be stopped as they don't meet the standards (Good Manufacturing Practice) set by the World Health Organization.

During yesterday's hearing, petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid placed the committee's report before the HC bench, and argued that the laws of Bangladesh recognise GMP and any drug manufactured here without following it should be deemed substandard and threat to public health.

"If any company doesn't follow the directions, it will be suspended. Those who produce, store and sell假冒medicines will also be jailed for five years and fined Tk 1 lakh."

Moreover, service providers will face three-year imprisonment and fine of up to Tk 2 lakhs for their negligence and irresponsibility, according to the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009, if they cause harm to their clients financially or physically, said advocate Mursheed.

The five-member expert committee led by Dhaka University Pharmaceutical Technology Prof ABM Farouque suggested cancelling the production of antibiotics of penicillin and

cephalosporin groups by 22 companies.

The companies are Amico Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Aztec Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Bengal Techno Pharma Ltd, Benham Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Central Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Descent Pharma Ltd, Dr TIM's Laboratory Ltd, Globex Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Greenland Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Inova Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Maks Drugs Ltd, Medimet Laboratories Ltd, Modern Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Mystic Pharmaceuticals Ltd, National Laboratories Ltd, Organic Healthcare Ltd, Oyster Pharma Ltd, Premier Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Prime Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Seema Pharmaceuticals Ltd, United Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals Ltd, and White Horse Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

The committee said Mumtaz Pharmaceuticals Ltd and Unique Pharmaceuticals Ltd were found eligible to produce drugs only meant for use on human body, not any other drugs. And FNF Pharmaceuticals Ltd can produce drugs meant only for animals, not humans.

The units -- 1, 2 and 3 of Techno Drugs Ltd don't follow the standard practices in producing antibiotics and anti-cancer and hormonal drugs and so the experts recommended stopping their production.

In August last year, the HC ordered the government to stop drug production of 20 other pharmaceutical companies and production of all sorts of antibiotics by 14 others and to withdraw their products from the market.

It also demanded an explanation from the authorities as to why licences of the companies should not be scrapped.

Some of those companies later went to the Appellate Division, seeking a stay on the HC order, but the Appellate Division rejected their pleas and directed the HC bench to hold hearing on the rule.

Following a hearing on February 13, the HC upheld its earlier order.

claiming to be Abdul Khaleque and Alim Sikder, Rab said.

The national ID cards the robbers had given their employer -- Institute of Safety, Security and Information Technology (ISSIT) -- proved to be false in Rab investigation, raising question about the recruitment process of such security service providers.

The Rab personnel recovered Tk 1.17 crore, a truck, and a pistol from the possession of the gang members in drives that ended early yesterday.

The gang had bought garment factory machineries with the looted money to set up a factory of its own.

The four other arrestees are: Belayet Hossain Akanda, 42, Iqbal Hossain Rubel, 37, Khalilur Rahman Rana, 40, Uzzal Biswas, 34.

All of them, except Uzzal, took part in the robbery. Uzzal was arrested before they left.

some of the booty was in his possession.

GAZIPUR ROBBERY

Mahbub and Faruk's job was to track the money, assess internal situation in the factory and drug the security guards, said Mufti Mahmud Khan, director, Rab's legal and Media Wing, at the press briefing at the Rab Media Centre in Karwan Bazar quoting the arrestees.

The duo was on duty on January 7 night and they drugged the security guards of the factory with biscuits and drinks that had sedatives in them.

After the four guards passed out, the two let in the three others of the gang who were waiting outside. The three were wearing masks, as it appeared on the CCTV footage.

They then broke into the vault of the garment factory. The money was split before they left.

Prescription as usual

FROM PAGE 1

Prof ABM Farouque at the department of pharmaceutical technology of Dhaka University said there are some 150 drugs in Bangladesh with names close to one another. "If the handwriting is not clear, the dispenser might make mistakes."

For example, Inderal is a drug for high blood pressure, while almost similarly Incidal is an anti-allergic drug.

"If the retailer provides Incidal instead of Inderal, the high blood pressure is not going to normalise. This may lead to dangerous consequences," said Farouque.

Contacted, Health Secretary Sirajul Islam told The Daily Star that they asked the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday to issue the circular in this regard.

Prof Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the DGHS, told The Daily Star over the phone last night that they would issue the circular soon.

Manzill Murshid, the lawyer for the petitioner and also president of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, said respondents could wait for the court order in the cases where the authorities need to know details of the order. Short orders, like this one, should be complied with fast since it was published in the media.

Therefore, the order should have been complied with by February 9. "Waiting for the order to reach their offices and then acting on it is an old mentality," said Manzill.

The fact remains that authorities appear to work in a comfort zone, while doctors continue to write the way they have been, leaving the patients at risk.

The Daily Star correspondents visited Dhaka Medical College Hospital, National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease and National Institute of Traumatology &

Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) and a number of drug stores in the city, but found that no doctor was writing prescriptions in block letters.

They found that doctors of only a few reputed hospitals and some private practitioners provided printed prescriptions.

Rafiqul Islam, employee of Belview Pharmacy in Shahbagh, said he did not find a single prescription written in block letters.

Sontosh Mitra, another employee of Popular Pharmacy in Shahbagh, said, "We got some prescription written well but still most of the prescription are

written in bad manner."

Visiting Anura Pharmacy, Medicus, Bangladesh Pharmacy, Rogmukt Pharmacy, Dhaka Pharmacy, Seba Pharmacy, Medicine corner in city's Shamoli area where some specialised state-run hospitals are located, it was found that none of the pharmacies get any prescription written in block letters.

An employee of Lead Pharmacy in Mohammadpur Town Hall market said the situation has improved very little but did not find any prescription written in block letters.

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The National Academies of Science's Institute of Medicine in a July 2006 report said doctors' sloppy handwriting kills more than 7,000 people annually in the United States.

The World Health Organisation clearly said badly handwritten prescriptions could lead to mistakes, and it was the legal duty of the doctors to write legibly.

"The most important requirement is that the prescription be clear. It should be legible and indicate precisely what should be given. A few

prescriptions are still written in Latin; the local language is preferred," the WHO said.

WHY BAD HANDWRITINGS?

Doctors claimed that when they were medical students they had to write so much that their handwriting got from good to bad.

Even, while practicing, they often handle so many patients that it gets difficult for them to keep good handwriting.

Rumi Myedul Hossain, a child specialist at the Directorate General of Health Services, said they had to write long answers to many questions in their three-hour exams when they were students and it was difficult to maintain good handwriting.

"So, most of the medical students concentrate on answering all questions, not on handwriting, because the pass mark was 60 out of 100. If any question was left partially answered, there was no hope of passing."

"If there are many patients in the chamber, then doctors have to listen, think, and write at the same time. Patient pressure often force doctors to write quickly."

An intern in a state-run medical college hospital in Khulna said the situation worsens during internship.

"Two interns in a ward have to handle at least 100 patients. Writing clearly does not remain a priority then ... Later, this practice continues," the intern said.

Rashid-E-Mahbub, chairman of the National Committee on Health Rights Movement, said clear handwriting or print prescription was important for countries like Bangladesh where there are no pharmacists in drug stores.

"Eventually, we also need to go for print prescriptions with dates and signatures," Prof ABM Farouque told The Daily Star, adding that doctors' handwritings could mean the difference between life and death for patients.

According to Rab, Mahbub got Tk 70.26 lakh and \$10,000, Faruk Tk 70 lakh and \$2,000, Khalilur Tk 70 lakh and \$10,000, Belayet Tk 50 lakh and \$1,000 while Iqbal took Tk 60.50 lakh and \$2,000.

They even destroyed a server on their way out, mistaking it to be the recorder of the CCTV cameras, Rab said.

Khondaker Jubayer, assistant manager (HR and compliance) of Knit Plus Ltd, said, "The money in the vault was for paying the wages of around 3,000 officials and staff of three factories the next morning."

Rab said the gang had a plan to set up a garment factory with some of the money, some was deposited in bank accounts while the rest they kept with them.

"The gang had looted another garment factory in Badda area using the same technique in 2015," said Mufti.

According to Rab, Mahbub, Faruk, Rana were accused in a case filed following the Badda robbery.

Belayet was accused in a bank robbery case filed in Jhenidah and a jewellery shop robbery case filed in Chandpur.

Rubel is accused of murder in Badda, Rab claimed.

"If people accused in different cases, including robbery and murder, are employed as security men, there is a risk of recurrence of such incidents," said Mufti.

"There is a chance that militants could get into important institutions in disguise of security men, if their details are not verified properly," he told The Daily Star after the briefing.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of buildings in the capital use guards of private security service providers.

still dismayed by his death.

Due to financial crisis, his wife, Nasima Jahan, then a final-year honours student, had to stop her studies and start living with her parents in Barisal.

"I too could not study after class IX for money problem and some family issues," Dorothea said.

She later passed her SSC and HSC examinations from Bangladesh Open University. In 2012, she got a fourth-class job in Barisal University.

Living in Barisal with her mother, the 33-year-old sometimes visits her father's house in Bauphal.

"My paternal uncle grabbed our land and misbehaves with us, if we go there. Yet, he is involved with the local Awami League and has become the union parishad chairman, using my father's name," she said.

Contacted, Ibrahim Faruk, chairman of Najarup Union Parishad, refuted the allegations.

Despite these issues, Dorothea, who is also involved with several cultural organisations in Barisal, keeps trying her best so that people remember her father for what he did.

In December last year and this January, she gave photographs of her father to the Barisal divisional museum and the national museum in Dhaka.

On January 18, Dorothea submitted an application to the mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation, demanding that the road on which Selim and Delwar were killed be named after them.

"Our honourable prime minister and some other people still remember them and their contributions. However, society has forgotten them. I am doing this to let everyone know about them."

The man behind the brutal deaths in the 1980s, Ershad, the former military dictator, is still very much active in the country's political arena. He is the chief of Jatiya Party and also a special adviser to the PM.

Jatiya Party is the opposition in parliament and three of its lawmakers are members of the cabinet of the AL-led government.

Asked how she feels about it, Dorothea said, "What can I say? I won't say anything. Allah will try him [Ershad]."

"As far as I know, no case was filed in connection with my father's death," she said, adding, "What shall it bring even if a case is filed?"

Verdict in

Hoshi murder case today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Rangpur court is set to deliver the verdict today in the Kunio Hoshi murder case, over one year after the Japanese national was shot dead in the district's Kaunia upazila.

Noresh Chandra Sarker, the judge of the Special Court in Rangpur, will announce the verdict.

The court on November 15 last year framed charges against eight "members of outlawed Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB)" and recorded testimonies of 56 witnesses till February 14, said Rathish Chandra Bhownik, special public prosecutor in Rangpur court.

Of the eight accused, five are now behind bars. They are Masud Rana alias Mamun alias Montri, 21, Abu Sayeed, 28, and Ihsak Ali, 25,

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Take proper care of the patients from Bangladesh

Mamata Banerjee asks pvt hospitals in Kolkata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee