

Probe finds war crimes evidence against 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday said to have found evidence against 16 men from Narail and Sherpur over cases filed for war crimes.

They were "involved" with Razakar Bahini and "committed" mass killing, murders, abduction, looting and arson in Narail and Sherpur in 1971, Sanaul Huq, co-coordinator of the agency, told reporters at it's Dhanmondi office.

Five accused in Narail case -- Abdul Wahab, 80; Omar Ali Sheikh, 64; Gulzar Khan, 75; Daud Sheikh, 67; and Badruddoza alias Badiuzzaman, 75; are now in jail while Khandakar Shawkat Ali Babul, 68, is yet to be arrested.

Of them, Wahab, Omar, Gulzar and Babul were supporters of Muslim League in 1971 and now Gulzar is involved with Awami League while Babul with BNP, said investigators. Badruddoza and Daud were supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami in 1971, they said.

The investigation agency did not reveal the names of the six others as arrest warrants were not issued against them yet.

In Sherpur case, SM Aminuzzaman Faruk, 58; IAKM Akram Hossain, 62; and Emdadul Haque alias Kwaza Doctor, 74; are now in jail while another is yet to be arrested. The three are now involved with BNP, investigators said.



An auto rickshaw, left, takes a nosedive in an oversized pothole on Arakan Road in Chittagong city. A broken down auto rickshaw, right, is being pushed out of an inundated portion of Agrabad Access Road in the city. The photos were taken recently.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

The nightmare on Ctg roads

MD ABBAS, Ctg

Moving from one place to another has become a nightmare for the residents of Chittagong city.

Subsequent waterlogging caused by the monsoon and by tidal water all throughout the year has taken a toll on roads of the second largest city in the country.

As soon as the residents step out of their houses, they find themselves in streets that are either submerged in water or dotted with large potholes. If they are fortunate enough to find a transport, they brace themselves for a bumpy ride that may end up horribly.

Aside from natural causes, dug

out roads for ongoing work by different utility service authorities have worsened the situation. Traffic congestion on these roads has turned chronic with unmarked trenches filled with water and piled up earth turned into slippery mud.

Having no other choice, passengers in vehicles, especially light ones, plying these treacherous roads hold onto their seats to escape physical injuries, if not fatal accidents.

Office-goer Shafqat Hossain said to get to Bahaddarhat from GEC intersection on any type of vehicle, one has to expect a rocky ride and lose a tremendous amount of time as there are at least a thousand potholes on the road.

With good road conditions "it usually takes around 15 minutes to pass this distance of three kilometres, but now it takes almost an hour," he added.

Rickshaw puller Javed Mia said his rickshaw fell into a large hole in this road a few days back. "Two of my passengers got injured in the accident, but I was lucky to escape."

Mohammad Shariful, a bus driver, said his bus was damaged three days ago when a wheel of his bus fell in an oversized pothole in the same road.

The city roads now are absolutely unfit for plying vehicles, he observed.

After visiting the city roads, this correspondent also found most roads in a deplorable state.

Port link road, Agrabad Access Road, DT Road, Polytechnic Road, Stand Road, Agrabad Sheikh Mujib Road, CDA Avenue, Arakan Road, Hathazari Road, Bayezid Bostami Road, Kapasgola Road, Firingi Bazar Mariners Road, Jubilee Road, Khaza Road, Mia Khan Road, Airport Road, OR Nizam Road, KB Aman Ali Road and numerous roads in Bakalia area are to name a few.

Every person this correspondent spoke with expressed dissatisfaction over the state of the roads and urged the authorities to remedy their sufferings.

According to Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), the incessant rain during last one month has damaged around 30 percent

of roads in the city with an estimated cost of Tk 500 crore.

Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahmed, chief engineer of CCC, said the roads that were already in bad condition have been affected most by the recent torrential rain.

Even though "we have been continuing the repair work of the roads, these [roads] return to their previous state due to rain," he said, adding that they have undertaken several more projects to reconstruct the roads.

"We could not start permanent repair work due to continuous rain." The tender process for Tk 166 crore worth of permanent road repair work in different wards have been completed and the work will start soon after the rainfall stops, he also said.

Asset, not burden

Speakers tell about girls emphasising their security, education to stop child marriage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If education and security is ensured for girls, child marriage can be stopped, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion on child marriage was organised by Prothom Alo in association with Unicef in the capital.

At the event, Maleka Banu, general secretary of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said the society needs to see women and girls as assets, not burdens. She called for greater investments for girls and women to empower them. She also opined that girls should be given quality education.

Tania Haque, teacher of Dhaka University, said parents should not discriminate between sons and daughters.

Barrister Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of BLAST, said it is a must to get consent of a girl before she is married off.

Nasima Begum, secretary to the Women and Children Affairs Ministry, said the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 does not allow marriage of a girl before 18 that easily. She said the government keeps the "special provision" considering the girl's interest and the act can only be applied with the consent of the parents.

Humaira Farhanaz, UNFPA national programme officer for gender, adolescent and youth, also spoke.



Several jaywalkers being escorted to a mobile court set up near Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport intersection in the capital yesterday. Even though there is a footbridge a few yards away, most people continue the careless practice.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Int'l conference on water begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming to discuss about sanitation, safe water, usage and integrated water management, a two-day international conference will begin at Sonargaon Hotel in the capital tomorrow.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the event where around 82 representatives from 23 countries will participate, LGRD Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said at a press conference yesterday. The conference will discuss the issues to attain SDGs 6, he said.

The Local Government Division is organising the event where expert opinions will be taken on eight subjects and "Dhaka Water Declaration" will be announced on the concluding day.

Water Resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud also spoke at the press conference.

Sust teacher demoted over 'Facebook post'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An assistant professor of anthropology of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) has been demoted to the post of lecturer over a controversial post on Facebook.

The decision was taken at an urgent syndicate meeting on Wednesday.

The teacher, Monjur-ul-Haider, allegedly wrote in a recent Facebook status, "Din Gunchhi... Aschhe Amar Anonder August (Counting days, my happy August is approaching)". Sust Registrar Ishfaqul Hossain said the teacher was also sent on six months' leave and fined Tk 50,000, which he must pay within six months.

On July 18, after the Facebook post, a faction of teachers under the banner of "Mohan Muktiyuddher Chetonay Udbuddho Sikkhok Forum" submitted a memorandum to the vice chancellor, demanding his punishment.

They claimed that the teacher intentionally humiliated Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was assassinated in August, and that he posted another status against Bangabandhu in 2013.

Registrar Ishfaqul said the administration gave him a "show cause" notice on July 18, but he could not give any satisfactory answer. On July 17, Bangladesh Chhtrata League men also vandalised the teacher's room over his Facebook post.

Talking to The Daily Star, the teacher said his original birth date was August 15, 1975, and his PhD thesis submission date and the date of publication of his journal article on birds also fell in August.

He said the authorities misinterpreted his statement as his birth date in all certificates was mentioned as December 26, 1977, which was changed during his school registration. "I will appeal against the syndicate's decision following the university's action," he said.

HC asks cops to arrest drug co official over death threat to Manzill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered police to immediately arrest Kazi Mamun, an official of a drug company -- Techno Drugs Ltd, over allegation of death threat to Manzill Murshid.

It also asked Shahbagh police to probe the death threat to the president of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

The HC passed the order while dealing with the allegation placed by Manzill.

Manzill told The Daily Star that he got the death threat from some men of the drug company on Wednesday on the court premises for challenging a report that was in its favour.

Techno Drugs counsel Bakir Uddin Bhuiyan told the court that Kazi Mamun was among others who were out of the courtroom on that day, he added.

Bakir Uddin could not be reached for his comments despite several attempts over the phone.

Supreme Court Bar Association yesterday condemned the incident of the death threat. Manzill has lodged a general diary (GD) with the police over the death threat.

Gullible enough to be defrauded

Detectives arrest six of gang which swindles people thru promise of investment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It took seven months to come to his senses. In the meantime, he lost Tk 25 lakh.

A gang of two Bangladeshi women and four Nigerians swindled Mohammad Kamruzzaman out of the money, promising they would invest in his business.

It all started when Kamruzzaman got acquainted with one "foreign woman", Prisca Khalifa, through Facebook in September last year.

She told him that she had \$3.38 million in a bank, which she wanted to withdraw and invest in Bangladesh. But for withdrawal of the amount, there is a processing fee which she did not have at the moment, and that's why she wanted his help.

In the seven months, she took Tk 25 lakh in five instalments from him. Kamruzzaman deposited the amount in the accounts of Liza Akther, a member of the gang.

But Prisca recently wanted a final sum of Tk 32 lakh to get her "funds" released. It was only then could Kamruzzaman understand he was being defrauded.

The story was revealed by detectives yesterday, during a press conference at Dhaka Metropolitan Police Media Centre.

Following Kamruzzaman's complaint, they arrested six of the gang in the capital on Wednesday, said Joint Commissioner Abdul Baten of Detective Branch of DMP.

A medicine seller from Char Fashion upazila of Bhola, Kamruzzaman filed the case with Uttara Paschim Police Station.

The arrested Nigerians are Jhon Agodi

UGO, Mikel Eugene Obumname, Namdi Kelvin and Afeez, while Liza, Mohsin Sheikh, and Tasmia Parveen alias Shimu were their local associates.

Joint Commissioner Baten said, "The gang used to swindle people, sometimes letting their prey develop love affairs with Bangladeshi girls, or alluring people with investing in the country."

He said foreigners from different African countries used to send emails to people, expressing their desire to invest.

"When someone responds to their emails, they send various supportive documents including bank statements and build relationship with their targets," Baten said.

Once the gullible people get convinced, the frauds ask them to deposit money in the accounts of their Bangladeshi accomplices, he added.

The money is later smuggled out of the country through Hundi and other means.

Baten said a Pakistani man, Danesh Rizvi, used to collect most of the money staying in Malaysia. "This gang transacted around Tk 1.5 core through different bank accounts of Liza only," he said.

At the briefing, the officer said the African nationals staying in the country were involved in different crimes including drug smuggling. Police had arrested many of them, but they later came out on bail and relapsed into criminal activities.

Of the four Nigerians, Jhon Agodi UGO was earlier arrested by the Department of Narcotics Control with cocaine, the officers said.

Campaign against child marriage launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming to empower youths for taking action against child marriage, an awareness building campaign was launched yesterday.

The campaign, "Hello, I AM" (HIA), will help girls make decisions regarding education, marriage and motherhood, said speakers at the launching ceremony in the capital.

As part of the campaign, BBC Media Action, Bangladesh will create a series of media contents including documentaries. Rutgers will provide technical assistance for its implementation and research.

Funded by IKEA Foundation and coordinated by Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC), in partnership with Reproductive Health Services Training and Education Programme and Dushtha Shasthya Kendra, HIA will be implemented in six upazilas.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu was present at the event.

Belal Hossain, teacher of Dhaka University; Dr Vestjens of the Netherlands embassy; and Dr Noor Mohammad, executive director of PSTC, were also present.



After an escalator in the footbridge in front of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport went out of order, the authorities have kind of abandoned it and shut it to pedestrians, instead of fixing the problem. In the meantime, floating people have made a home out of the staircase. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN