

No one will be spared

Says Obaidul Quader about drug dealers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said if allegations are proved, every drug dealer, no matter how powerful they are, would be punished.

"Anyone whose name is in the list of Department of Narcotics Control will face the same consequence," Quader was quoted as saying by BSS.

The minister said this while visiting the expansion work of Nabinagar-Chandra highway in Ashulia area.

In the last 12 days, 73 people, who according to law enforcers were drug dealers, were killed across the country in what officers said were gunfights.

"Even lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-4 constituency, Abdur Rahman Bodi, will not be spared if allegations against him are proven."

"No one will be spared even if he or she is a member of Awami League or BNP... Everyone will be punished," Quader, also general secretary of the Awami League, told reporters.

He said illegal drugs entered the country like the Rohingyas, our Savar correspondent reports.

Youths are being destroyed by these drugs, he observed.

A certain political quarter did not accept, but people wanted such a drive and accepted it, the minister said.

About the Nabinagar-Chandra highway, he said, "Construction work of the four-lane highway is almost complete. Whatever is left, will complete before the Eid."

The condition of Ashulia road is better, said Qader, adding that there was no possibility of tailbacks on the Dhaka-Tangail highway during the Eid holidays.

He also expressed his hope that the construction work of Abdullahpur -EPZ Elevated Expressway would begin in October.

About prime minister's visit to India, Quader said the matter of Teesta agreement would be discussed there, the BSS report adds.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT 4 teachers, 12 aspirants held for cheating

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers yesterday detained four teachers, including a college principal, and 12 aspirants of government primary school assistant teacher in Pabna, Barisal and Jamalpur for various irregularities.

They also detained 10 others, including a former Chhatra League leader, during and job exam held in different parts of the country.

The teachers were caught red-handed by a mobile court in Pabna while using mobile phones and allowing candidates of the exam to use electronic devices, according to court officials.

They were identified as Prof Rezaul Islam, principal of Government Bulbul College; Abdur Haque, lecturer of Muthurapur Amena Khatun Degree College and Iqbal Hossain and Shamim Hossain - both lecturers of Dr Johurul Kamal Degree College.

The court also handed out punishments, including jail time and fines, to nine candidates of the same centre.

Jasim Uddin, deputy commissioner of Pabna, who led the mobile court, told our correspondent that they would file cases against the teachers.

"We will also submit our report to the authority for departmental action against them," he said.

Pabna Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Obaidul Haque said, "The teachers on exam duty were responsible."

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Fans invade

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Fans arrived early and hundreds of people pushed against the gates, with some weeping children being lifted over the heads of adults to escape the crush. Other supporters pushed their way in, forcing police to chase them.

With numbers restricted some fans did not make it inside and chanted '7-1, 7-1' in reference to Brazil's humiliating defeat by Germany in the World Cup semifinal on home soil four years ago.

Friday's training was the only one open to fans and the penultimate session before the 23-man squad head for Europe.

Brazil play warm up games against Croatia on June 3 in Liverpool and Austria in Vienna on June 10 before heading to Russia where they face Switzerland, Costa Rica and Serbia.

77 jailed, 76 held

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similar results last night while another raid into the Korail slum could produce almost the same -- big-time dealers escaping arrest and a handful of small-timers being detained.

Around 500 people, including women and children, were picked up first in connection with their involvement in drug peddling in Geneva Camp yesterday, said Anwar Uz Zaman, commanding officer of Rab-2.

"After scrutiny, we detained 350 people. After further scrutiny we let 197 of them go. Of the 153 remaining, 76 were arrested in eight cases while the rest 77 were sentenced to six months to two years by the accompanying mobile court," the Rab official added.

The camp dwellers, meanwhile, alleged that most of the detainees were "innocent" while the real drug dealers fled after being tipped off about the raid.

"We will interrogate the detainees. After verification of information, we will take legal action against those involved in drug trading in the camp," Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of the force's legal and media wing, told reporters.

During the drive, Rab recovered around 13,000 yaba pills and 30kgs of cannabis.

Mufti said the drug dealing in the densely populated camp had been going on for decades. There are many families involved in drug dealing. It was tough to search every nook and cranny of the congested camp, he added.

"Law enforcers had bitter experience in conducting raids here in the past and that was why we had taken proper preparation and engaged several teams, including the Rab Headquarters," the Rab official said.

On May 4, Rab launched its own anti-narcotics operations while the Police Headquarters on May 16 instructed all police units across the country to conduct a special 10-day drive from May 18.

Rab-2 Commander Anwar Uz Zaman said they had been monitoring the camp for the last few days. "As it [Geneva Camp] is a sensitive place, we decided to raid in the morning," he added.

Geneva Camp, also known as Bihari camp, is home to more than 40,000 Urdu-speaking people. Each family with eight to 10 members on average live in one-room homes. Around 90 people share a toilet,



Policemen take away detainees after the raid at Korail slum in the capital last night. Inset, Rab uses sniffer dogs to scour Geneva Camp area for drugs yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

sources said.

Drug dealers of different ages, holding small packets of the pink tablets, peddle openly in the camp. 'INNOCENTS HELD'

After the drive ended in Geneva Camp, many family members of the detainees protested the detention of the "innocent".

Thirteen-year-old Soni, student of class-V at a local school, was picked up during the drive.

"She woke up in the morning and was doing boutique work on a dress. Rab personnel came and picked her up from our home," Ruma, her sister, claimed as tears started rolling down her cheeks.

Soni was released in the evening. The camp dwellers alleged that many of the detainees were innocent people and only a handful of small-time peddlers were detained.

"Police know everything. Why don't they arrest the real drug traders?" said 50-year-old Enamullah, an embroider by profession. He said his younger brother Habibullah, a tailor, was held yesterday.

"There is no one in my family who even smokes a cigarette. How can he [Habibullah] be in the drug trade?" he said.

Dhaka's 'drug queen'

FROM PAGE 1

owns at least 10 buildings in different parts of the capital. She also moves around in her own luxurious cars and has big, fat bank accounts.

Rahima earned a fortune by expanding her illegal drug trade over the years.

Dubbed the "drug queen" by police, Rahima was named by the Department of Narcotics Control on its list of most-wanted criminals thought to be on the run. She is considered one of the top five drug dealers in the city, said DNC officials.

Her husband Hazrat Ali is also a narcotics trader, according to a list prepared by Dhaka Metropolitan Police in 2017.

"Rahima is wanted in at least 14 cases, including one for murder," DNC Inspector Helal Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Rahima met Hazrat in 2000 and since then, they had jointly been running their drug trade, he said.

Rahima, now 47, had at least 35 close accomplices and the racket earned crores of taka every month, DNC officials said.

"We have been able to arrest several of the group members but Rahima somehow manages to dodge law enforcers," Helal said.

Interrogating the arrestees, DNC officials came to know about the buildings and cars owned by Rahima. Three of the buildings are in Gendaria and Sanirakhra areas.

"We could not confiscate the properties as she bought them in the name of her relatives. However, we have prepared a report and sent it to the Anti-Corruption Commission so that it investigates [the matter] and

takes action against her," said the inspector.

While visiting Gendaria this week, this correspondent found that Rahima was indeed a notorious drug dealer in the area. However, no one agreed to speak against her.

The reason for the fear was probably because she reportedly broke the hands and legs of people, and even killed those who tried to go against her, according to DNC officials.

Take the example of Aslam Shikder, 55.

Aslam was a close accomplice of Rahima but he reportedly tried to betray her and have her arrested. Somehow, Rahima learnt about it in advance and she had him "killed".

On November 8 2014, police recovered Aslam's bullet-riddled body from his home in Dania area.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police unraveled the mystery after the arrest of 11, including Hazrat, said police and DNC officials.

Five of the arrestees gave confessional statements in court and all of them mentioned that they killed Aslam on Rahima's instruction. DB police also submitted a charge sheet with a Dhaka court against Rahima and 10 others in the case in January last year.

The then investigation supervising officer of the case, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) of DB police Mainul Islam, said Rahima was a notorious drug trader. "Aslam was killed as planned by her."

In another case, Rahima broke the legs and hands of a youth named Jahir for giving information about one of her yaba consignments to police,

Officer Mohammad Ali said the top listed drug dealers were not among those arrested during the drive.

Rakib, a close aide to Ishtiaq, and another drug peddler Mamun were arrested, said Jamaluddin Meer, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station.

"Rakib has been involved in yaba trade for the last four to five years. He used to work for Ishtiaq in the camp. Many peddlers used to work under him," the OC said, adding that Rakib was apparently untouchable.

KORAIL RAID

Around 1,000 policemen with a dog squad gathered on T&T ground just beside Korail slum in Mohakhali around 7:30pm.

They setup a tent, four bright lights, and two horn speakers which they used to warn slum dwellers that they would be conducting a raid there.

The raid began around 9:00pm with policemen in different groups going into the slum. Some of them returned the ground around 11:00pm.

Briefing newsmen around 11:15pm, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit (CTTC) chief Monirul Islam said they detained around 30 people at the slum and the raid was still on.

"We have recovered some yaba, cannabis and some local weapons," Monirul said, adding that the seizure list was yet to be made.

He said another raid was going on at TT para slum in Kamalapur in which another 1,000 policemen were taking part.

Asked, if it was possible to arrest the listed drug dealers with such an elaborate and public arrangements, Monirul claimed that plainclothes policemen were inside to prevent criminals from fleeing.

He said the drug lords did not live in that slum. "I suspect most of the detainees here are those who had been arrested before."

Meanwhile some family members of the detainees claimed that police picked up people who had nothing to do with drugs.

Mobarak, 19, a night guard was picked up when he was going to work in uniform.

TT PARA RAID

At least 24 people had been detained in the raid at TT para slum in Kamalapur, said ADC Shibli Noman of DMP Motijheel division.

He said no listed drug dealers had been arrested and that they were able to seize some yaba pill, locally made alcohol, and cannabis.

10 more killed in 'shootouts'

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drug dealers Sabdarul Islam and Abdus Salam were killed in two "gunfights" early yesterday.

The Rab claimed 40-year-old Sabdarul of Birganj upazila was killed in a "gunfight" between a gang of drug traders and members of the elite force in the upazila's Basudevpur village.

Mohammad Raju, son of Sabdarul, said his father had been traceless since Friday evening and his phone was found switched off.

Aged about 47, Salam of Dinajpur's Mohorampur village was killed in another "shootout" between two groups of drug traders in Paschim Deyal village, police claimed.

According to police, both the deceased were among those who controlled drug trade in the district.

A "gun battle" between drug traders and Rab in Bhimpur village of Joypurhat's Panchbibi upazila left Rentu Mia, 35, killed. He was from Uttar Gopalpur village in the same upazila.

In Comilla, alleged drug traders Babul, 40, and Almas, 35, were killed in a "gunfight" with police in Brahmanpara upazila early yesterday.

Syed Abu Mohammad Shajahan Kabir, officer-in-charge of Brahmanpara Police Station,

claimed police recovered 40kg cannabis and a pistol from the spot.

According to police, Babul and Almas, residents of the same upazila, were accused in 16 and eight cases respectively.

Almas's wife Taslima Begum said her husband worked as a day labourer and was the only earning member of her family. He was picked up by police from his village home on Friday, she alleged.

Anwar Master, member of a union parishad, said Babul used to work as a drug carrier.

In Kurigram, alleged drug peddler Ibrahim Hossain from Bhurungamari upazila was killed in a "shootout" with police.

OC Imtiaz Kabir of Bhurungamari Police Station said Ibrahim, aged about 37, was accused in five drug cases.

In another "gunfight" between police and drug peddlers, alleged drug trader Abdur Rahman was killed in Pabna's Mohendrapur area.

A resident of the district's Kabirpur village, the 45-year-old man was arrested in the village on Friday noon.

The "gun battle" broke out after police had taken him to the area to arrest his "associates", said Goutam Kumar Bishwas, additional superintendent of police in Pabna.

Police claimed to have seized a

firearm, three bullets and 200 yaba tablets from the spot. They said Rahman was accused in nine cases.

In Mymensingh, alleged drug trader Shahjahan was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Ishwarganj upazila's Atharabri Telwari area early yesterday, said Ashikur Rahman, OC of Mymensingh Detective Branch of police.

Shahjahan, aged about 30, was from Bongaon village in the same upazila. He was accused in eight drug cases, police said.

Law enforcers claimed to have recovered 200gm heroin, five used bullets and two sharp weapons from the spot.

Alleged drug peddler Bablu, 35, was killed in a "shootout" with police in Chandpur's Kachua upazila. Syed Mahbubur Rahman, OC of Kachua Police Station, said a police team arrested Bablu from his house. The team came under a bomb attack on its way back to the police station. A "gun battle" broke out there that left Bablu dead, he said.

In Thakurgaon, alleged drug trader Mobarak Hossain was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Pashchim Begunbari village early yesterday.

Abdul Latif, OC of Thakurgaon Police Station, claimed to have recovered 200 yaba tablets from the

spot.

A resident of Chit Chilarang village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, 40-year-old Mobarak was accused in 15 cases, police said.

His wife Monowara Begum, 35, admitted that her husband was involved in drug trade. She alleged that police picked up her husband from their house on Tuesday evening.

However, the OC denied allegation of picking up Mobarak.

The nationwide anti-drug drive was launched by Rab on May 4 upon receiving directives from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Police have been carrying out the drive since May 18.

According to police headquarters, police during the drive arrested 6,200 alleged drug traders and filed around 5,000 cases across the country. Police also seized 15 lakh yaba tablets, 2,000kg cannabis, 13,000 bottles of phensedyl, 52,000 litres of local liquor and 450 bottles of foreign liquor.

The Rab during the drive arrested around 700 people while its mobile courts jailed around 3,100 for different terms.

Our correspondents in Dinajpur, Comilla, Kurigram, Pabna, Mymensingh, Thakurgaon and a correspondent in Chandpur contributed to this report.

said DNC officials.

DNC Inspector Helal said they were conducting drives in different points of the capital to arrest Rahima.

"Rahima uses at least 60 cell numbers and does not use the same number for [more than] two months. For this reason, it is difficult to arrest her but we are trying," he added.

Meanwhile, despite the ongoing anti-narcotics crackdown, Rahima's men were selling drugs in "some spots" in Jatrabari, Dania and Gendaria areas, alleged locals.

Although the peddlers hid during the daytime, they came out to sell the drugs after sunset, they added.

This correspondent saw that happening in the Gendaria slum around 1:30am on Wednesday.

Brazil govt orders troops to clear strikers' blockades

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil's government raised the stakes in its tense standoff with striking truckers Friday, ordering troops onto the streets to clear huge blockades that have left much of the country paralyzed.

The country's economic capital of Sao Paulo declared a state of emergency, the auto industry shut down, gas stations ran out of fuel and dozens of flights were canceled on the fifth day of the protest Friday.

The truckers have attempted to put a stranglehold on movement of goods in Brazil to protest fuel price rises.

They blocked main roads in much of the vast South American country that has only limited rail services and where 60 percent of goods are transported by road.

The truckers pressed on with the strike despite an agreement announced by the government with union representatives late Thursday to call a 15-day suspension.

President Michel Temer announced in a televised address Friday that he had "mobilized the security forces" to clear the roads -- a move criticized by Amnesty International as "impermissible."