



The island of ILLEGAL ARMS

At least six crime gangs run makeshift
gun factories in Moheshkhali

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, from
Cox's Bazar

The type of light guns put on display during the recent surrender of 102 narcos in Teknaf is easily available in Moheshkhali island, where illegal makeshift factories manufacture such firearms.

The Daily Star carried out an investigation in Moheshkhali, off Cox's Bazar coast, after the "recovery" of 30 LGs from listed yaba godfathers and dealers who gave themselves up on February 16.

Locals and even some law enforcers were surprised to see the small arms -- made of wood and metal -- at the surrender ceremony.

They had noticed yaba godfathers using firearms, but not these locally made guns which any one can buy for around Tk 6,000 each.

"Give me Tk 3,500 and an additional Tk 2,000 as carrying cost, you will get an LG after four days," a source at a Moheshkhali gun factory casually said on February 18.

Long-barrelled rifles cost more -- Tk 8 to 10 thousand for single barrel and Tk 15 to 20 thousand for double.

"But bullet prices these days are higher; you need to pay Tk 600 for each. Earlier it was Tk 300," said the source when these correspondents in local dialect expressed willingness to buy guns after identifying themselves as members of a Chattogram-based political group.

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DRIVES AGAINST ARMS
(2014-18)

6,999 firearms recovered
in Ctg division,
1,720 only in Cox's Bazar

3,793 people
arrested in Ctg division,
1,019 in Cox's Bazar
alone

Rab busted two arms
factories in Moheshkhali
in 2017 and 2018



Seized arms on display during the surrender of yaba godfathers and dealers in Teknaf on February 16. This type of light guns is made in Moheshkhali Island off Cox's Bazar coast.



PHOTO: FILE



Quader stable, flown to S'pore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader was flown to a Singapore hospital for better treatment as his condition became stable yesterday.

An air ambulance of Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital carrying Quader took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka around 4:12pm, said Group Captain Abdullah Al Farooq, director of HSIA.

Quader's wife Isratunnesa Quader and Prof Abu Nasar Rizvi, director (planning

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Suspended in name, 'blacklisted' for life

Workers vocal in trade unions being purged
by factories in Ashulia

BISHAKHA DEVNATH

Arif Hossain* has been worried about his future since his name and photo was put on a list of "suspended" workers outside his garment factory in Ashulia in the middle of January.

He knows that even though it says suspended, he has actually been fired since he would not be paid his dues unless he resigned.

What's worse is that on the list he had been labelled a thief and a vandal, and now he would not get a job in any garment factory in the Ashulia industrial area.

The list of 23 workers with allegations of vandalism and theft was hung at the gate of Al-Ghousia Textiles Ltd.

While workers claim those were false accusations, the apparel unit filed two cases to allegedly purge these labourers. These workers are considered

to be vocal on trade union activities and rights issues.

In addition, the company had them blacklisted so that they do not get jobs at other factories in Ashulia, the workers alleged.

The suspensions began when garment workers took to the streets to demand a new wage board with a minimum monthly pay of Tk 16,000.

Recollecting previous instances, Laboni Akter, an organiser at the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers' Federation, said finding a job in Ashulia was difficult if a worker got blacklisted this way.

Advocate AKM Nasim, who works on labour rights, said the labour law did not allow such blacklisting of workers. "It is unethical too," he added.

According to section 24 of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, there is a process to follow before punishing any worker. A show-cause notice has to

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Huji now raising funds through robbery: DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad Bangladesh (Huji) had been engaged in fund collection through robbery to reorganise itself and free a death row inmate either by ambushing a prison van or attacking a jail, police said.

As part of its plan, the Huji joined hands with a robbery gang more than one and a half years ago. It supplied arms to robbers and took 30 percent of looted money in return, said Abdul Baten, additional commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

He was speaking at a press briefing at the DMP media centre yesterday, hours after the arrests of two Huji leaders and 12 members of the robbery gang in the capital's Jatrabari and Rampura areas.

Detectives also recovered an AK-22 rifle, two pistols, 10kg gun powder, Tk 3.5 lakh and some local sharp weapons from their possession.

"The gang has so far amassed around Tk 5 core by committing at least nine robberies in different districts. The militant outfit took 30 percent of the money," Baten said.

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MARCH 5, 1971

Bangabandhu in command

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Pakistan authorities and Yahya Khan's central government had virtually lost all control over East Pakistan, except in the cantonments, even without the declaration of independence.

The regime was on the brink of paralysis due to the non-cooperation movement led by Bangabandhu.

It had become apparent that amid the movement, offices, businesses, banks, educational institutions and other establishments

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HIJACK BID Caab suspends five employees for negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh has suspended five of its employees on charges of negligence in duty during the hijack attempt of a Biman aircraft on February 24.

Civil Aviation Secretary Mohibul Haque yesterday confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

The five were involved with the security checking of the passengers and their baggage that day, sources at the civil aviation ministry said.

They were deployed at the domestic terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA).

Actions were taken following scrutiny of CCTV camera footage at HSIA.

Sources said the five security staff, including a member of Airport Security Force, did not carry out their duties properly.

The action was taken in line with the primary

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Candidates from Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, the platform that spearheaded the quota reform movement, campaign for the Ducusu polls on DU campus yesterday. Inset, a student of Bijoy Ekattor Hall writes what type of dormitory he wants. Later, he dropped the paper with the comment into the suggestion box.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DUCSU POLLS Suddenly so dear to them

General students who usually have
a rough deal from pro-govt student
leaders now being wooed for vote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even in the recent past, general students of Dhaka University cowered away from most of the pro-government student leaders who exercise power often with intimidation and coercion.

But now they are noticing changes in the behaviour of those leaders as the electioneering for March 11 Ducusu polls has brought festivity to the university.

Almost all student leaders, including those from the pro-Awami League Chhatra League, are passing busy hours trying to woo general students with their electoral pledges. All are promising to ensure a better campus free of all forms of conflict.

"I have been on the campus for the last six years, but never saw such an atmosphere before. I wish it continues," Rakib Hasan, a master's student at Development Studies Department, told The Daily Star. Many other students echoed his views.

On the second day of electioneering yesterday, candidates from BCL; Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, the platform that spearheaded the quota reform movement; Pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD); leftist bodies as well as independent candidates were seen campaigning at different places of the campus.

BCL General Secretary Golam Rabbani, a general

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