

# Bootleggers want to pay way out of prison

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**BOOTLEGGERS** who face execution for murdering a rival in a turf war are lobbying to pay the victim's family compensation in a bid to earn a pardon.

The second appeal for the 17 Indians who have been convicted of killing a Pakistani was adjourned at Sharjah Court of Appeal yesterday.

Baljeet Singh, a member of the Indian community who is helping the bootleggers, said they were working towards securing an out of court settlement by offering blood money to the victim's family.

"We will submit an application to the court to allow us to secure an out of court settlement. We are in talks with the family who are in favour of accepting the blood money and would then hope to secure a pardon for the accused," said Singh.

The case was adjourned until July 14 after an Arabic-Punjabi interpreter did not show for court proceedings. The defendants only speak Punjabi.

"How would you get to this stage and call for the execution of 17 men without providing them with a translator?" one of the defendant's lawyers, Abdullah Salman, said after the hearing.

Sixteen of the accused were in the dock yesterday but the 17th, Arvinder Singh, had been hospitalised after having breathing problems.

Mohammed Salman, another of the defendant's lawyers said: "We are meeting with the men every week while they are in prison. They are generally doing alright.

"One of the accused could not attend the court as he was sick due to a breathing problem," he said.

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