

Probe on, cops

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cargo of the same consignment while being loaded on another 10 trucks for thorough search but did not find any more 'replica weapons'.

The police detained six trucks from Chittagong and four from Comilla.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) probe committee is investigating the matter and is expected to file its report within the stipulated 72 hours.

Earlier on Monday evening, security personnel at Multi Purpose Berthing (MPB) Gate No. 1 recovered 11 replicas of DBBL gun from a truck and a container laden with imported cargo while passing out of Chittagong Port.

Five of the recovered 'guns' were tied beneath the chassis of the truck carrying fabrics for a garment company while six others were found in a container carrying telephone accessories of the Dhaka Telephone Company Limited.

The security personnel in presence of CPA officials, customs, representatives from Dhaka Telephone Company and C&F agent Emess Shipping, and different law enforcement and intelligence agencies started searching the cargo loaded on 10 trucks inside the MPB jetties at 11:00am yesterday.

Engineer Mamunur Rashid of the Dhaka Telephone Company told The Daily Star that they imported telephone accessories and wireless

phone sets in 971 boxes from Huyai company in China. With necessary clearance from the customs, the delivery of the cargoes duly started on Monday morning, he said.

"The cargoes were loaded on 30 trucks, 20 of which started for different destinations and 10 were supposed to leave the port by [Monday] night when we were informed of the embarrassing matter," he said.

The representatives of the importer and the C&F agent concerned claimed that they knew nothing about the 'gun-like things'.

The customs and security officials believed that the attempt to take the replica guns out of the port must have been in the knowledge of the driver and helper of the seized truck.

Truck driver Liton, 34, and helper Kabir, 18, were arrested and are likely to be placed on remand for interrogation, sources said.

Meanwhile, the three-member probe committee headed by CPA Deputy Director (Security) Lieutenant Commander Shahed Karim started investigating the matter.

The committee comprising CPA Assistant Traffic Manager Mashur Rahman Beg and Dock Manager Captain Faridul Alam examined the seized items and inspected the search.

"We have started the investigation and are interrogating all persons concerned," said Shahed Karim.

Politics by teachers

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internal resource mobilisation by the universities, providing Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities to all higher education and affiliated colleges, establishing a national research council, setting up Research Coordination Cell in ministries, establishing a national research laboratory, supporting PhD and new researchers, setting up three new public universities, and rationalising the students fee structure in the public universities.

The mid term phase from 2014 to 2019 includes setting up Post Graduate University, adopting zero based budgeting, and setting up seven new public universities.

The long-term phase from 2020 to 2025 includes setting up 12 new public universities.

The UGC's 20-year plan for higher education stresses the need for rationalising the different university laws by developing a single legislation for public universities with a view to ensuring accountability of teachers, students and university administrators.

It urges actively discouraging direct involvement of the teachers with national politics for removing present division and polarisation among the university teachers due to partisan politics.

The UGC plan also urges building up a national consensus on discouraging the students' affiliation with the party politics.

It stresses the need for restricting the political meetings, slogans and processions on the university campuses and regular elections of student bodies based on students' representation in faculties.

The strategic plan also seeks to increase tuition fees, boarding and meal fees for the residential students of the universities in line with the present context.

The plan suggests accepting the international donor agencies for project based funding for further development of higher education in consideration of the government's fund constraint.

"We are very much optimistic that the 20-year strategic plan will bring about a significant change in the country's higher education," UGC Chairman Prof M Asaduzzaman said.

He said the strategic plan is very suitable for the time and logical in

the present context of the country's higher education that is plagued with problems and constraints such as poor funding, weak management, and involvement of the teachers and students with the state politics.

Termining the UGC plan's proposal to increase tuition and other fees for the university students as 'very logical', he said, "How do the universities claim themselves as autonomous bodies while they are almost completely dependent on the government funds?"

The universities should be real autonomous bodies by generating their own funds, he added.

The UGC has prepared the 20-year strategy plan for higher education in six months in consultation with teachers, students, guardians, and people from different professional groups across the country, the UGC chairman mentioned.

SC Bar asks

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exchanging notes, which the CEC did not follow, he said.

Not implementing HC order amounts to breach of oath, he remarked.

"I am drawing the president's attention for forming the Supreme Judicial Council for hearing the misconduct of CEC Justice MA Aziz," he said.

He also demanded immediate resignation of the CEC.

Condemning the 'politically motivated' appointment of two 'controversial' new election commissioners, the SCBA secretary also demanded cancellation of the appointment to make the EC acceptable to all.

"We came to know that Justice MA Aziz had secretly recommended the two election commissioners to the government for appointment in a non-transparent way. He did it with an ill motive. He did not call any meeting of the Election Commission over preparing the voters list," said Enayet.

Appointment of the two new election commissioners is a 'bad omen' for free and fair election, which would jeopardise the democracy, he said, adding, "The election commission now seems to be of the ruling BNP-Jamaat, for the BNP-Jamaat, and for the BNP Jamaat."

The SCBA has called a protest rally today at the south hall of the association at 12:30pm.

Fear, rejoice at EC

FROM PAGE 1
secretary of the secretariat, was elevated to the post of additional secretary Sunday and was given temporary charge of the secretary to the EC Secretariat the next day.

Zakaria has all along been very close to Election Commissioner Zakaria, officials said.

Another senior assistant secretary is likely to be promoted to the rank of deputy secretary soon as a reward for maintaining close ties with Zakaria, they added.

Besides the officials, Class-III and -IV employees at the EC Secretariat were also busy yesterday congratulating SM Zakaria with bouquets.

A number of officials from the Election Training Institute and Dhaka district election office yesterday came to the EC premises to congratulate Zakaria.

Justice Mahfuzur Rahman, the other newly appointed election commissioner, however was not received that warmly when he arrived at the commission yesterday.

Zakaria, who joined the EC Secretariat on April 1, 2002, had been engaged in a severe conflict with the former chief election commissioner (CEC) MA Syed,

He had avoided EC meetings during the last two years of Syed's tenure.

The former CEC on several occasions had requested the government to withdraw Zakaria from EC Secretariat and appoint a new one. But the government took no heed of the call and instead gave him (Zakaria) a year's extension after his contract ran out in February last year.

His relations with the two election commissioners, M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali, got strained as the latter did not approve of the then secretary's bunking off the EC meetings.

When Syed was replaced by MA Aziz as the CEC in May last year, situation at the commission took a new turn. Soon the secretary became very close to the new CEC and took the secretariat completely under his control.

The rift between him and the two election commissioners had gone so far that he at one stage stopped the payment of medical bills and entertainment allowances submitted by Munsef Ali and Mohammad Ali.

Sunny

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Bachhid of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed January 31 for the framing of the charges against them.

On Monday, the same court directed the jail authorities to produce Sunny along with the six accused before the court yesterday.

The other accused are AHM Shamim, 23, Zakaria alias Jewel, 21, Nur Azam Siddique alias Yeasir, 27, Belal Hossain alias Tamim, 21, Aleya Ferdous, 27, and Akramul Islam, 23.

Sources said Aleya Ferdous, who was also not produced before the court yesterday, was admitted to jail hospital to give birth to a child.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on September 8 last year arrested five of the accused, including Aleya, at a house in East Bashabo. Sunny rented the house to coordinate the countrywide serial blasts. The law enforcers believe he narrowly escaped arrest then.

Rab arrested Sunny at Dhaka in September last year. As per his information, Rab recovered huge arms and ammunition from South Manda in the city.

The Criminal Investigation Department on October 10 last year submitted the charge sheets of two cases to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka. All of them except Sunny gave confessional statements to magistrates on different dates.

Indo-Pak

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Jammu and Kashmir, Sir Creek in the marshy lands near western Indian state of Gujarat, terrorism, drug trafficking and economic cooperation.

The two foreign secretaries will assess the progress of the confidence building measures across the divided Kashmir and finalise dates for technical level meeting to discuss modalities for a new bus route, movement of trucks across the border, allowing cross-border pilgrimage and setting up meeting points for relatives on both sides of Kashmir.

Soon after his arrival here on Monday evening, Riaz Muhammad told reporters that he was hopeful that his talks with Saran would move in a positive manner.

Officials in New Delhi are also optimistic about the talks, but there is still concern over Pakistan's commitment to end cross-border terrorism as mentioned in the January 2004 joint statement with India.

Since 2004, India and Pakistan have taken several confidence building measures, including reviving civil aviation links that was snapped after a terrorist attack on Indian Parliament, and opening of new bus and rail links.

Officials of the two countries are in talks for establishing one more bus route and rail link within weeks.

3 firearms

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nearby tree.

They decamped with the weapons and ammo in a boat they came by.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Zahid of Shyamnagar Police Station said the pirates called him over phone later and demanded Tk 3 lakh in return for the weapons. Police would launch an operation to hunt down the criminals, he added.

A case has been filed with Shyamnagar Police Station against Shawkat and others.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), police and Forest Guards have beefed up security at all the outposts in the Sundarbans, BDR sources said.

Judges ask govt

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judges across the country, guards at judges' residences and payment of Tk 50 lakh each in damages to the families of the slain judges in Jhalakathi bomb attack on November 14.

The government has fulfilled their demands partly and has not taken any steps for fulfilling the rest, BJSAs sources said.

BJSAs pressed three-point demand to the prime minister in addition to their 11-point demand on December 21 at their 55th annual conference, which BJSAs claimed are yet to be fulfilled.

These include - appointing assistant judges for the vacant posts, giving the district and sessions judges the status of joint secretary and appointing 50 percent of the High Court judges from the lower courts.

BJSAs President Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, also District and Sessions Judge of Dhaka, told the press that earlier the Judicial Service Commission recommended appointing 70 assistant judges but the government appointed only 25 of them.

The law ministry recommended for appointment of 140 assistant judges as thousands of cases could not be disposed of due to the vacant posts, but the appointment of judges has been stopped since 1998, the BJSAs president added.

All the district judges are given salary equal to that of a joint secretary but they are not provided the status of that rank, Rafiqul Islam said.

Niko agrees

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Petrobranga free of charge, up to a maximum of 20 percent of three BCF gas," said a Niko letter.

Replying to Petrobranga's December 6 compensation claim, the Canadian energy junior in the letter sent on Monday sought "detailed scientific and analytical analysis" so that its "advisors and experts can review" other claims.

Niko said it "understands the basis for volumetric calculation of three BCF", but pointed out that it does not have any information on the methodology or scientific and analytical analysis used by Petrobranga to determine the magnitude of the claimed volumetric loss.

Apart from proven three BCF gas burnt, in the compensation letter, the state-run oil, gas and mineral corporation, asked Niko to make more payments or to agree to compensate for other damages.

Petrobranga says the Canadian company will have to pay over Tk 84 crore for damage to environment.

According to Petrobranga, Niko will have to unconditionally accept to compensate if it is found that 45 BCF gas was burnt in Tengrafla. The Petrobranga also wanted a bank guarantee for the 45 BCF gas.

In reply, Niko said: "We do not accept the requirement for a bank guarantee or otherwise for any of the claimed losses. If it is finally determined that Niko's liability for the claim is either more or less than three BCF then Petrobranga and Niko will make the appropriate adjustments.

Furthermore, the Petrobranga asked to compensate 5.89 BCF gas burnt in the sub-surface level of Tengrafla from Feni from where Niko has been supplying gas to the national grid.

In response, the Niko referred to joint venture agreement (JVA) and said the JVA does not permit any setoff for any claims and specifi-

cally does not provide for a setoff for liabilities of one field for the other.

As Petrobranga asked Niko to agree to make all compensations in future, if further damage is found, the Canadian company wanted to know about the additional claims.

The Niko proposed that the "dispute resolution provisions of article 18 of the JVA be utilised to allow for a fair and transparent resolution in the interest of all parties." It also requested to meet the government and hold discussion.

6 former

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order in this tender. But the accused, in league with Alstom, changed the contract in violation of tender rules and then pushed the PDB to approve a 'variation order' to legalise this irregularity.

The officials then bypassed a PDB board decision and a directive of the power division secretary and the PDB's Technical Committee and issued the variation order.

The case was filed under section 418 of the CrPc (code of criminal procedure) and section 5(2) of 1947 anti-corruption law.

Natore arms

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Nazrul with them. When they reached Ratal Dighipara area, Nazrul's accomplices opened fire on the Rab men, prompting them to retaliate.

Rab said Nazrul was shot as he tried to flee during the shootout. He was rushed to Singra Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

Nazrul was convicted and charge sheeted in a number of cases including three for murder, according to Rab press release.

A shutter gun, three bullets and five cartridges were recovered from the scene.

Bandarban Rohingyas

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areas are close to the Myanmar border.

Bandarban Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Dipak Chakraborty, who is coordinating the preparation of the new voter list, also did not refute the allegation.

"We have received complaints from people in Kodhukhola, Sualok and Bhagyakul areas of Sadar upazila," he told The Daily Star.

"We are careful about the matter as the home ministry has sent written instructions not to enroll the Rohingyas in the new voter list," he said, adding that the assistant registration officers (AROs) are probing the matter.

When contacted, district Election Officer-in-charge Nazrul Islam Chowdhury said, "The home ministry has given written orders to the deputy commissioner, superintendent of police and Election Commission officials so that the Rohingyas are not enrolled as voters."

If any Rohingyas are listed by mistake, their names will be struck off when the lists will be submitted for publication, he added.

During a visit to Langi Para, Noor Para, and Sluice Gate areas in the Sadar upazila on Sunday, local people told this correspondent that many Rohingyas had their names listed as Bangladeshi citizens.

At Noor Para in Ward No. 9 under Bandarban municipality, locals named many such Rohingyas: Mariam Khatun, wife of late Noor Ahmed; her sons Md Younus and Md Rashid and their wives Rashida Khatun and Senoara Khatun; Abdur Rahim, son of late Md Hossain, and his wife Nasima Khatun; Anwar Hossain, son of Md

Islam, his mother Farida Begum and wife Hasina Begum; Nurul Huq, Khairul Amin, Abdus Salam and Nurul Islam.

At Thana Para in Alikadam upazila, Rohingya settlers Abdul Karim, Elon Khatun, Noor Mohammad, Noor-us-Salam, Sona Ali and Nurul Islam were also enrolled in the new voter list.

Meanwhile, about 100 Rohingyas of 22 families at Saber Miah Para of Alikadam upazila who had been in the previous voter list were allegedly dropped from the new list. They include Nabi Hossain, Rabeya Khatun, Gul Bahar, Jahura Khatun, Nurjahan Begum, Fatema Begum and Nurul Huq.

Locals also said apart from the Muslim Rohingyas, many Buddhist people of the Rakhain, Mro, Tripura and Tanchangya communities, who came from Myanmar and have been living illegally in Bandarban hills, have also recorded their names in the new voter list with the help of the local Union Council leaders.

Around 3,000 Rohingyas have been living in Kuhlalong, Sualok and Rajbila areas of Bandarban Sadar and in Betchhara of Roangchhari upazila for the last few years, locals said.

The repatriation of about one lakh Myanmar Rohingyas who entered Bandarban as refugees in 1991-92 is going on but about 25,000 are still living in Bandarban, Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. Many of them are employed in different sectors.

Allegations also have it that the Rohingyas collect citizenship certificate from the local Union Councils through bribes and influence of local political leaders.

Power secretary

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An official from outside the administration cadre can have such promotion under the president's quota once only, they mentioned.

The establishment ministry and the Cabinet Division objected to the unusual practice in case of Akhtar.

According to service rules, if an official from outside the administration cadre is promoted to the rank of joint secretary, he must serve for three years before qualifying to become additional secretary. An additional secretary must serve for one year to become secretary.

But Akhtar has not served for three years as joint secretary and one year as additional secretary, and he has been promoted using the president's quota twice, the establishment ministry sources pointed out.

This is why the establishment ministry had objected to his appointment while the Cabinet Division suggested that his case be placed before the Superior Selection Board for promotion as per service rules. But under pressure from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the establishment ministry had to recommend his case, which was later vetted by the

Manpower Export

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officials said last night a series of meetings were held on the subject and opinions of various ministries and relevant organisations have been included in the policy to make it an effective one.

A comprehensive policy is needed to explore new markets for manpower export and retaining the existing ones. The initiative for such a policy was taken in 2003 but the process of finalising it was very slow, they mentioned.

When contacted, State Minister for Expatriate Welfare Mohammad Quamrul Islam said his ministry prepared the draft in accordance with the policies of other manpower exporting countries like Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

The policy would help the ministry take measures for expanding Bangladesh's manpower export market, he said. "The matter took so much time because it is a very complicated one."

The draft policy says its main objectives are to explore, promote and develop overseas employment opportunities through institutional coordination and cooperation among the relevant ministries and international organisations and establishing transparency and discipline in manpower export sector.

Punitive action would be taken against expatriate Bangladeshis workers if found guilty of committing crimes, breaking discipline and calling strike in a host country. The action would include fines, blacklisting, warning, disqualifying them for overseas employment and suspension for a certain period.

More than 40 lakh Bangladeshis now work abroad and send over \$4 billion to the country in remittance.

Officials at the expatriate welfare ministry said manpower export suffered a lot due to lack of a proper policy even 15 years after formal manpower export started.

Cold claims

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Poursabha, Babu Miah, 72, of Shulbur Bazar, Ayesha Begum, 70, of Debicharan village, Bashanti, 50, of Shinghamari, Mohsin, 70, Safat Ali, 60, Baechari, 70, of Sakoa village, Jashoda Rani, 54, Khodeja, 55, of Nagawari, Seafaran Begum, 68, of Rourmari and Zahran Bawa, 60.

Hospital sources said the number of patients attacked with diarrhoea, pneumonia and other cold-related diseases is on the rise.

Tulow

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conference room of the Petrobranga that after testing the water from these bubble-prone areas at their research laboratory, they have become confident about discovering the first-ever oil mine in Bangladesh.

The meeting was participated by the representatives of domestic and international oil and gas companies working in Bangladesh, including Tulow, Unocal, Cairn and Bapex.

The Tulow officials said they will confirm the existence of oil in Bangladesh by October this year.

After the meeting, Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman told journalists that he is very optimistic about exploring the first-ever oil mine in Bangladesh at the place indicated by Tulow.

The French oil and gas company Total has expressed keen interest to work with Tulow in blocks 17 and 18 in St Martin's Island. The Total is the fifth largest company in the world and they perhaps do not come on mere study," he said.

He also dismissed the apprehension that the country's gas reserve would exhaust by 2015-20.

Ctg court blast

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decided to register formal objections against it. In his argument he said the charge sheet has many flaws and was submitted without his knowledge.

Five people had initially been accused in the charge sheet. They are Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman, Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh chief Siddique Islam alias Bangla Bhai, JMB military commander Ataur Rahman Sunny, JMB Chittagong head Mohammad alias Javed Iqbal alias Aman Ullah and JMB suicide bomber Abul Hossain. Because of Hossain's death, the court later asked the IO to drop his name from the charge sheet.

Barapukuria

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The plant, which is expected to operate for around 30 years, will consume at least 1,000 tonne coal a day to produce 250MW electricity, according to sources.

When contacted, Project Director of the Barapukuria plant Fazul Haque told The Daily Star that when in full operation, the plant will reduce the pressure on power in the region while it will also help eliminate systems losses in the sector.

Dhaka to seek

FROM PAGE 16
upgrade laboratory and other facilities, train doctors and vets and purchase protective equipment, he said.

There have so far been no reported outbreaks of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu in South Asia.

The virus has claimed more than 80 lives in Southeast Asia since 2003. Four children died in Turkey earlier this month.

Ctg arms cache

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seizure, one under the Arms Act and another under the Special Powers Act. The metropolitan sessions judge court on October 24, 2004 framed charges against 44 people including Hafizur Rahman alias Hafiz, Din Mohammad, Abul Kashem Madhu, Hajee Sobhan and Hajee Yakub as the prime accused.

Ten of the accused including the prime accused Din Mohammad and Hajee Sobhan are still on the run and 22 others are on bail. Only 12 of the accused are in jail now.

Hearing of the other case in connection with the same arms haul couldn't be held yesterday for lack of time, although two witnesses, police constables Mohammad Yousuf and Mozammel were present in the court.

Only two prosecution witnesses, OC Ahadur and Police Sergeant Mizanur Rahman, gave their depositions yesterday.

Earlier, an army team from the Chittagong cantonment led by Captain Mirza appeared in the court with four boxes of evidence related to the case and produced them before the judge, AKM Anwar Hossain, at about 9:30am.

Ronanga during the hearing dismissed OC Ahadur's claim of success in seizing the smuggled arms and told the court that it was actually the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) which first cautioned the Bangladesh government about the arms smuggling through the Chittagong port area.

"An indication of such an exchange of information was published in the British intelligence magazine Jane's Intelligence Review and a story on this matter was later published in a leading English newspaper in Bangladesh," the defence lawyer said.

Advocate Ronanga accusing OC Ahadur said, "The consignment of arms were smuggled from foreign land in a large ship owned by a politically influential quarter but you guys (police) orchestrated a drama to divert the real fact to show the world that those arms were brought in by two boats."

"This drama was staged only to harass some innocent people," the lawyer alleged.

OC Ahadur denied these charges too.

"I went to the CUFL jetty at about 12:55am that day, saw the unloading going on and immediately seized the arms and ammunition," Ahadur said.

Two cases were filed after the

seizure, one under the Arms Act and another under the Special Powers Act. The metropolitan sessions judge court on October 24, 2004 framed charges against 44 people including Hafizur Rahman alias Hafiz, Din Mohammad, Abul Kashem Madhu, Hajee Sobhan and Hajee Yakub as the prime accused.

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