

Gold worth Tk 1cr seized

UNB, Dhaka

Customs officials seized smuggled gold bars worth about Tk one crore from a toilet at Zia International Airport in the city last night.

The customs super said the smugglers might have abandoned the gold bars in the toilet to avoid trouble as the customs officials were on alert beforehand.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of customs officials took position at strategic points after a flight of Emirates Airlines from Dubai landed at the airport at 8:07pm.

Their suspicions were aroused when they noticed that some passengers entered the toilet in the immigration area and came out of it several times.

The officials then searched the toilet and recovered 50 gold bars, each weighing about 10 tolas.

ROUNDTABLE ON UPCOMING ELECTION

'Fine aspirants who daubed public places with graffiti'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called upon the authorities concerned to fine aspiring candidate Tk 10 lakh each who has daubed public places with graffiti in order to get nomination from the party.

They also urged all intending candidates to take vow with their holy books in their hands during the election campaigns that they will not embezzle public money if they are elected in the upcoming parliamentary election.

The roundtable titled 'Next election: Public concern' was organised by Bangladesh New Society Movement at the National Press Club in the city.

Criticising the parliamentary democracy in the country, Panna Chowdhury, a member of the society, said except three general elections

there was no nourishment of democracy in 15 years after the overthrow of Ershad's dictatorship.

In a written statement, he alleged that no government had taken significant steps to separate the judiciary from the executive and set up an independent anti-corruption commission during the period.

Panna also blamed major political parties for 'nomination business' ahead of the national election.

"A large number of lawmakers engage themselves in recovering the money that they spent before the election for nomination and campaign just after getting the chance of entering parliament," he added.

Brigadier General (Retd) Shakhawat Hossain, a defence specialist, said there is no possibility of ending political confrontation among the leaders.

He called for self-refinement of

political leaders and parties to help end the present crisis.

Shakhawat congratulated Dr Muhammad Yunus for winning the Nobel Peace Prize and said the achievement is a message of hope amid the deadlock created by the political leaders.

M Sajjad Hossain, executive president of the Centre for National and Regional Studies, urged the political parties to place all their demands and grievances in parliament.

The other speakers expressed concern over the ongoing conflict between the two top most political parties.

Saiful Haque, general secretary of Workers' Party, Sadek Khan, columnist, Sabih-ul-Alam, an artist, and representatives from civil society also spoke on the occasion.

SAIC governing board meet begins tomorrow

The 20th meeting of the governing board of Saarc Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) will begin in the city tomorrow, says a press release.

Kazi Abul Kashem, secretary to the agriculture ministry, will inaugurate the meeting as the chief guest at the conference room of BARC while Pema Lhamo, programme director, Information and Communication Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Bhutan, will preside over the meeting.

Members of the governing board from the Saarc countries -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka -- will take part in the three-day meeting.

Directors from the Saarc Secretariat, Nepal, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, government of Bangladesh, will also participate in the meeting.

The meeting will consider the activities of SAIC and finalise the programmes and budget provisions for 2007.

One murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Body of an unidentified person was recovered from near a drain at Babar Road at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

Police found the body aged about 35, wearing half shirt and jeans pant, was lying near a drain at Babar road.

Traces of strangling were found in the body, Dhaka Medical College Morgue sources said. There were also marks of injuries in the body, morgue sources added.

Mohammadpur police suspect that the victim was killed somewhere in the city and dumped near the drain.

A case was filed with the Mohammadpur Police Station in this regard.

Country savours Prof Yunus achievement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political, socio-cultural and human-rights organisations as well as commoners and beneficiaries of the Grameen Bank across the country continued to hail the Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus amid joyous processions with welcome slogans and drum beatings.

Saying that Dr Yunus has made the nation proud, the speakers in these processions, rallies and press releases also noted that receiving the prize would also boost the efforts to build a poverty-free developed nation.

The statements also termed the achievement as one of the greatest in the history of the nation, which has also brought joy and glory amid the severe ongoing crises in the country.

Those who sent congratulatory statements include Bangladesh Awami League, Bangladesh Jatiya Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Transparency International Bangladesh, Liberation War Museum, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), National Poetry Council, Bangladesh Scouts, Muktijodha Ojka Parishad, Sammilita Sangskritik Jote, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB), Bangladesh Medical Association, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalist (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) Jatiya Press Club, Bangladesh Photographic Institute, Dhaka Club Limited, Teachers Association of Bangladesh Engineering University, Bangabandhu Lekhak Parishad, Sarak-O-Janapath Diploma Prakaushali Samity, Bangladesh Buddhist Federation, Bangladesh NGO Sammilan, Proshika, ASA, Library Association of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Mahila Samity.

Meanwhile, our correspondents from Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Rajshahi report that Dr

Yunus's winning of the Nobel Prize has sparked off tremendous jubilation and people from all strata of life celebrated the glory along with different social, political and cultural organisations by bringing out processions and holding rallies.

In Chittagong, the metropolitan city authorities arranged a procession joined by members of different socio-cultural and political parties and civil societies, including the staff of the Grameen Bank.

Our Khulna correspondent says that the entire metropolitan city was overwhelmed with joy as leaders of political parties and business community brought out procession in the streets. Officials and employees of the Grameen Bank issued a press statement hailing Dr Yunus and later, brought out a procession.

Heads of 36 non-government organisations (NGO) of Khulna, Bagerhat, Sathkira and Narail also

held a meeting at the office of Rupatar in the city.

Our Barisal correspondent reports that the employees and beneficiaries of the Grameen Bank hold gleeful rallies followed by a procession that marched the main city thoroughfares and ended at their office.

Barisal Reporters' Unity, Press Club and confederations of NGOs and socio-cultural-organisations also gave statements hailing the great honour and the achievement of Dr Yunus and Grameen Bank for introducing the success of Bangladesh in poverty elimination attempts.

UNB reports that a jubilant procession was brought out from the Grameen Bank Zonal office in the Rajshahi participated by people of all strata of life who also sang and danced in joy.

Mystery shrouds 6 murders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mystery shrouds the murder of six people in the city on Friday evening as the law enforcers and intelligence agencies are yet to find out any clues to the incident.

Owner of the house Kazi Sirajul Huq filed a robbery-cum-murder case with Pallabi Police Station in the early hours of yesterday.

He filed the case accusing six to seven unnamed criminals for looting 10-12 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 1.2 lakh in cash. Relatives of four domestic helps took their bodies from Dhaka Medical College Morgue yesterday.

The morgue sources found no sign of injuries on the bodies except slaughtering.

The law enforcers said top terror Shahadat and his gang might be

behind the incident for creating panic in the area.

Shahadat has become aggressive as 10 of his associates were caught by Detective Branch (DB) of police with arms and ammunitions in mid-September.

"Shahadat may be behind the murder to threaten the locals to give him toll," said a neighbour.

"He had demanded toll from me for three times in last 15 days," he added.

Seeking anonymity a good number of locals said extortion has increased in the area in last one year.

The murder might be a trick to amass toll, they added.

The law enforcers said they are also trying to find out whether any incident of Chuadanga, the home district of Sirajul Huq, has led the killing of his domestic helps.



PHOTO: STAR

TIB Trustee Board Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a roundtable on 'Corruption and harassment in providing passport services: Way to overcome' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman. (Story on Page 1)

LALBAGH FIRE Victims demand road expansion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The victims of Thursday's Lalbagh fire incidents yesterday demanded expansion of roads in the area so that fire service vehicles can easily reach the scene during the incident.

They were talking to a group of journalists at Pusta. They said if the roads are not expanded, the extent of damage will increase further during such incidents.

Huge properties are gutted due to incidents of fire every year. With this, three incidents of fire took place in the area this year.

The fire victims called upon all section of people, including government, politicians and well to do people, to help rebuild their burnt houses.

The plastic factory owners also sought help, including bank loan, from the authorities concerned to restart their businesses and assistance from the government.

DHAKA TODAY Roundtable Citizens' Right Movement will hold a roundtable on 'Open letters to two general secretaries'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am. Workshop Brac Advocacy and Human Rights Unit organises a workshop on 'Role of livestock resources in improving the lives of the ultra poor'. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 9:30am. Discussion Projonmo 71 will hold a discussion on liberation war. Venue: Purbachal, 3/11 Asad Avenue, Mohammadpur. Time: 6:00pm. Festival The inaugural ceremony of 'Korean cultural festival 2006' organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:00am. Prize giving ceremony The prize giving ceremony of 'Anannya Eid Fashion Competition 2006' organised by Anannya, a fortnightly magazine, will be held. Venue: Hotel Abokash. Time: 3:00pm.

Large empty rectangular box, likely a placeholder for an advertisement or another article.

Large empty rectangular box, likely a placeholder for an advertisement or another article.

Vertical column of empty rectangular boxes, likely a placeholder for a list or sidebar content.

Vertical column of empty rectangular boxes, likely a placeholder for a list or sidebar content.

Large empty rectangular box, likely a placeholder for an advertisement or another article.

Large empty rectangular box, likely a placeholder for an advertisement or another article.