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SWINDLE BY PK HALDER

So far, it is Tk 10,200cr

Ongoing ACC probe finds; he, his associates embezzled the money from 4 NBFIs and laundered it to Canada, India, Singapore

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The amount of money embezzled by Prashanta Kumar Halder alias PK Halder and his associates from four non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) might leave you baffled.

It's neither Tk 2,500 crore nor Tk 3,500 crore --- figures which have been reported by the media lately.

Investigators now say they have so far learnt that the amount is at least Tk 10,200 crore or \$120.36 crore.

With the money, at least seven structures like the capital's Mouchak-Moghbarz Flyover could have been built in the country.

Using 30 organisations, owned by Halder and his associates, Halder misappropriated



loans of Tk 10,200 crore from the NBFIs and laundered the money to Canada, Singapore and India, according to the investigators.

Sources in Bangladesh Bank also confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

They said Halder, who is now in Canada, embezzled Tk 2,500 crore from International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL), Tk 2,200 crore from FAS Finance, Tk 3,000 crore from Peoples' Leasing and Tk 2,500 crore from Reliance Finance.

The allegation of embezzlement against Halder surfaced after the Anti-Corruption Commission launched an enquiry into the

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People about to travel out of the country, mostly to join their workplaces in the middle eastern nations including Saudi Arabia, waiting at Dhaka North City Corporation kitchen market for their turn to get tested for the coronavirus. Thousands of expatriates, whose jobs and residency in foreign lands were at the stake due to flight shortage, have finally got hold of plane tickets. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

COVID-19 Test Many Saudi returnees on edge for tight flight schedule

RASHIDUL HASAN

From early morning to around 2:30pm yesterday, the situation seemed normal at the Dhaka North City Corporation Market at the city's Mohakhali as the Bangladeshi expatriates -- mainly Saudi Arabia and UAE-bound workers -- stood in the queue for Covid-19 test.

Medical and other related staffers were prioritising those whose flights were scheduled to leave from Dhaka within the next 48 hours.

But after 2:30pm, around 20 to 30 expatriate workers entered there hurriedly and requested the medical officials to collect their samples immediately and give them the test

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Unpunished crimes led to horror like this

MC college principal tells The Daily Star

GOLAM MORTAZA

DS: If there is a rape incident at the college dormitory, the responsibility falls on you as the principal. I would like to know your reaction to what happened on your campus last night.



Saleh Ahmed

It is true that as the principal I am responsible for everything in this college. But I cannot predict if something is going to happen before it happens. You know the situation of our society, of the entirety of Bangladesh. The gate of our college was closed. The dormitories too were closed -- sometimes the gates are locked, sometimes they are not, because many teachers, staffers and their families live there.

Perhaps the gates weren't locked when the incident happened and the perpetrators went into the dormitory. There was also construction going on, on the fifth floor of the building.

There is also a hillock right behind the

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RAPE IN MC COLLEGE

6 accused BCL men moved with impunity

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Six Chhatra League activists have been accused of raping a woman at the hostel of Murari Chand College in Baluchar area of Sylhet on Friday night. The accused have been controlling the hostel for years and prime accused Saifur Rahman used to live in a bungalow designated for the hostel superintendent.

Officers found a pistol, four sharp weapons and many iron rods at the bungalow early yesterday and filed another case against Saifur under illegal arms law.

On Friday night around 8:00, a married couple was visiting the college campus when the suspects forced both of them to the hostel and gang-raped the wife while keeping the husband tied with a rope.

Police rescued the woman around 10:00pm and got her admitted to a hospital more than two hours later.

The husband filed the case later that night with Shahporan Police Station accusing Saifur Rahman, 28, of Sylhet's Balaganj, Shah Mahbubur Rahman Roni, 25, of Habiganj town, Arjun Lasker, 25, of Sylhet's Zakiganj, Mahfuzur Rahman Masum, 25, of Sylhet's Kanaighat, Tarek Ahmed, 28, of Sunamganj town, and Rabiul Islam, 25, of Sunamganj's Derai upazila.

The husband also accused 2-3 unnamed men. No one was arrested as of last night.

As there are no committees of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in the college, Sylhet city and the district.

Of the suspects, only Mahbubur is a student of the college and a legal resident of the hostel. Saifur, Arjun and Mahfuzur are former students of the college and the rest have never studied there, officials said.

The complaint made by the husband mentions that Mahbubur is a resident of Room-205 at Block C while prime accused Saifur Rahman's

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BUSINESS

Incentives to boost digital payments

Say experts The government and the central bank should take initiatives to provide cash incentives to clients for adopting digital payments, experts said yesterday. A rise in digital payments during the pandemic has brought positive changes to the economy, they said at a webinar organised by Visa and The Daily Star.

STORY ON B1

Ensure vaccine for all countries

Urges PM at UNGA, says Bangladesh capable of mass-scale vaccine production

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the world community to treat the Covid-19 vaccine as a "global public good" and urged the United Nations to ensure its timely availability to all countries at a time.

"We hope that the Covid-19 vaccine will soon be available in the world. It's imperative to treat the vaccine as a 'global



public good'. We need to ensure the timely availability of this vaccine to all countries at the same time," she said.

The PM made the plea while virtually addressing the general debate at the 75th United Nations General Assembly

in Bangla like she did in previous years following the footsteps of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

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Rapid erosion by the Padma near Doulatdia ferry terminal in Rajbari's Goalanda upazila is likely to devour part of the terminal and at least 20 homesteads. The photo was taken on Friday afternoon.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

2m deaths 'likely' without collective action

Warns WHO as Covid-19 pandemic re-escalates

AGENCIES

Coronavirus deaths could more than double to two million without collective action against the pandemic, the World Health Organization has warned, as resurgence of cases across the world forced governments around the world to impose fresh curbs.

The number of cases worldwide has soared past 32 million, with deaths approaching one million, the global economy devastated, and major cultural and sports events disrupted.

"One million is a terrible number and we need to reflect on that before we start considering a second million," the WHO's emergencies

director Michael Ryan told reporters on Friday when asked how high the death toll could go.

"Are we prepared collectively to do what it takes to avoid that number?"

"If we don't take those actions... yes, we will be looking at that number and sadly much higher."

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 993,438 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December. At least 32,622,490 cases of coronavirus have been registered.

On Friday, 9,050 new deaths and 325,900 new cases were recorded worldwide.

Based on latest reports, the countries with the most new deaths were

Argentina with 3,901 -- a sharp increase due to a change in its counting method -- followed by India with 1,089 and the United States with 887.

The United States is the worst-hit country with 203,782 deaths from 7,033,925 cases. After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 140,537 deaths from 4,689,613 cases, India with 93,379 deaths from 5,903,932 cases, Mexico with 75,844 deaths from 720,858 cases, and Britain 41,936 deaths from 423,236 cases.

The pandemic has spurred worldwide efforts to develop a vaccine to help defeat Covid-19, as well as efforts to try to ensure fair and

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