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Five held for blocking traffic on road

Dacoity at Haji Selim's shop

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 13: A joint team of district Detective Branch and Fatulla police today arrested five FIR-named accused in the case filed under PSA for blocking traffic on Dhaka-Narayanganj Road for more than six hours on Monday.

A sub-inspector of Fatulla thana filed the FIR. He mentioned the name of ruling party MP Haji Selim as instigator of the barricade programme that disrupted traffic on the road.

The MP instructed his men not to remove the barricade although senior police officials asked Haji Selim several times to have it removed. Rather, the lawmaker said "The road blockade will continue until the robbers are caught," the complainant alleged in the FIR.

A gang of armed men allegedly got inside Madina Trading Corporation, the cement trading house of Haji Selim MP, at Munsikhola in Fatulla and took away about Tk 15 lakh in cash around 1 pm on Monday. Following the incident, accomplices of Haji Selim and local traders put up a barricade on the road.

Meanwhile, the platoon commander of the Ansar camp which came under attack by the

MP and his followers soon after the incident, lodged a case with the city's Shyamprutha thana accusing about 150 people, including the manager of Haji Selim's trading firm.

The Ansar camp is on a nearby land that belongs to Haji Nurul Islam, father of Shegufa Tasmin — a woman MP. Haji Selim and his men allegedly attacked the firm on this land in 1993. A case was filed with the city's Demra thana at that time, accusing Haji Selim and his accomplices.

Police identified the arrested as Mirza Sahed Ali Sardar, Asraf Ali Pramanik, Mokbul Hossain, Nurul Islam and Buh Mia.

Local people said the arrested five are local Ghat Sardar and known as employees of Haji Selim MP.

They were produced before court yesterday. The court placed four of them on a four-day remand.

CID officials from Dhaka have started investigating the incident of robbery at the MPs Trading House. Five people have so far been arrested in connection with the dacoity.

Haji Selim filed a case with Fatulla thana on Monday accusing a local AL leader and others.



A barren Kakrail crossing typified the dawn-to-dusk hartal in the city yesterday.

Star photo: Sk. Enamul Haq

BSMMU still awaits report on prison wing

By Staff Correspondent

The hospital management committee of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) is yet to submit the probe report on its prison wing where a number of under trial prisoners have been staying for 'suspiciously long period' allegedly in collusion with some doctors of the hospital, officials of the hospital said.

Prof. M. A. Kaderi, vice-chancellor of the university, earlier ordered the committee to launch an investigation following a Daily Star report on February 16 that four under-trial prisoners of Dhaka Central Jail (DCJ) were staying at the wing for months and even for years.

BSMMU has so far sent one of the four prisoners back to DCJ since the report was published. Aziz Ahmed Michel alias Titu, a notorious criminal of the city and an accused in a number of murder cases, was sent back to the jail on February 19 after he stayed at the wing for eight months and ten days.

The other three prisoners are Capt. (ret.) Nurul Huda, an accused in Serniabat murder case, Syed Sajjad Mahiuddin Hasan, an accused in Shazneen murder and rape case, and Runtu, an accused in a case filed with Singair thana.

BSMMU has nothing to do in the case of Capt. (ret.) Nurul Huda as he was shifted to the wing in August 1997 following a High Court order. BSMMU informed the court twice over the last one and half years that Nurul Huda no longer needs to stay there. Both BSMMU and DCJ authorities are now waiting for High Court order.

Runtu has been at the wing for the last nine months.

Hasan was shifted to the prison wing from DCJ about 16 months ago, on January 7 in 1999 following on advise of the jail doctors. He was then under the supervision of associate professor of medicine department Syed Atiqul Haq.

Later, Hasan was put under the supervision of Prof. M. A. Sobhan of department of psy-

chiatry soon after reports were published in a number of national dailies about the misuse of the prison wing of the BSMMU. Reports hinted at political influence in such cases. The hospital management committee has asked the supervising doctor of only Hasan to inform them about the condition of his patient. "We have asked the supervising doctor of Hasan to inform the committee about his patient since Hasan's staying period in the hospital is the longest," said an official of the committee.

In the meantime, DCJ issued a letter to BSMMU on February 27 requesting details about Hasan's condition. In the letter DCJ mentioned that Hasan's stay at the wing has become a threat to the security of the wing of the hospital itself.

In a reply on March 2, the supervising doctor of Hasan said that a medical board examined him on January 24 and that Hasan has been suffering from depression and anxiety coupled with other physical problems.

Rejoinders & our reply

Retired Secretary T Hussain has contested a report published in The Daily Star on April 6 under the headline, "2 six-storey buildings escape demolition."

Hossain said he has valid documents for Plot-314 at Dhanmondi (Road No. 15a). The plot has not encroached the Dhanmondi lake and this has been admitted and confirmed in writing by the Housing and Works Department, he said. The report that "the building in the plot occupies more than half of Dhanmondi lake, narrowing the lake to just 15 feet," is not correct.

"According to the Master Plan of Dhanmondi Residential Area, made in April 1956, the lake adjacent to Plot-314 was really very narrow at that time as it is now and Plot-314 was wholly outside the configuration of the lake," Hossain said.

Our Reply: In the report, The Daily Star did not dispute the validity of documents of T Hussain's plot. Although DCC included Plot-314 at Road 26 (Road 15a) in its initial list of

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Prayer Timings		
April 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:30
Juma	12:15	1:20
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:25	6:28
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

French aid flow down to trickle

By Rafiq Hasan

Bangladesh did not get French assistance for development projects over the last two years though France sits in the development partners' meet in Paris every year which decides the volume of aid for the country.

Finance ministry sources said the government of France did not provide any grant or financial assistance for development projects in Bangladesh for the last two years due to a major change in its foreign aid policy.

Bilateral negotiations for financial assistance to Bangladesh also remained suspended since 1998 for the policy change.

France, however, continued to provide food aid to Bangladesh and the volume is around 25,000 tonnes a year, worth about 4.75 million US dollars. Earlier, it provided financial assistance of over 60 million dollars annually. The latest French commitment for project aid was for 42 million dollars in 1998, the sources said.

When contacted, a top official in the finance ministry said the French government

Demolition of illegal bldgs along highways continues

By Staff Correspondent
Police demolished several illegal buildings along the country's highways on the second day of the government's crackdown on toll collectors yesterday.

The drive focused on collection centres on the highways from Tongi to Mymensingh, Dhaka to Narshingdi, Sunamganj to Brahmanbaria and Khulna to Jessore.

No incidents were reported during the demolition. The home minister gave workers until midnight Tuesday to remove illegal structures or face legal action.

Police took steps to prevent serious traffic jams. The Bangladesh Rifles backed up police in all regions except Rajshahi.

has reduced financial assistance to Bangladesh recently. "It is not only France, but many other European countries are also diverting their aid to other regions".

A significant aspect is that the French government while providing aid is now preferring countries which were their colonies in the past, he noted.

A Trade Commission official at the French Embassy in Dhaka admitted that French bilateral assistance to Bangladesh remained suspended since 1998, but its contribution to on-going projects was continuing.

The official, however, could not say how many French assisted projects in Bangladesh were at the implementation stage. He only referred to Saidabad Water Treatment Project in the city.

He said Bangladesh government can take suppliers' credit from France as it has an export credit programme of 250 million French.

French government recently expressed willingness to support Dhaka Telephone Expansion Project.

But the terms and conditions of the loans are not acceptable, an official said.

Iktedar Ahmed made LC Secretary

By Staff Correspondent

Iktedar Ahmed, District and Sessions Judge of Sunamganj, has been made Secretary of the Law Commission, according to sources.

Meanwhile, Sunamganj District Bar Association has called for keeping Ahmed in his present post till he completes his tenure.

The call was made in a resolution adopted unanimously at an emergency meeting of the Association yesterday, chaired by its President Bazul Majid Khasru, a message received in Dhaka said.

The resolution said during Ahmed's 14-month stay here as judge, tens of thousands of people in the district have regained confidence in the judiciary.

Boat tragedy leaves 56 killed in Philippines

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines, Apr 13: A Philippine boat bound for Malaysia with scores of unauthorised passengers aboard capsized, killing at least 56 people, officials said today. More than 100 others were missing and feared dead, reports AP.

Nineteen people had been rescued as of Thursday morning, said Abdusakur Tan, the governor of southern Sulu province.

He said the wooden ship Ar-lahada capsized shortly after leaving Jolo, the provincial capital, Wednesday night. Many passengers were crowded on one side of the boat, causing it to tip and then capsize, he said.

Coast guard district com-

mander Capt. Heliberto Pascual said the boat was only authorised to carry cargo, not passengers. When it was cleared for departure from Jolo it had only nine crew members and 11 cargo agents on board, he said.

"This is a cargo vessel, not a ferry," Pascual said.

The ship then picked up scores of passengers at sea from small boats, he said. They apparently boarded from the same side, causing the ship to tilt.

Many passengers were trapped inside the ship's cabin after it capsized, officials said.

"We are still searching for the more than 100 passengers who are still missing," Tan said. "We don't know if they are alive or dead."

About 100 fishermen in the area were helping the navy search for the missing passengers, he said.

The ferry was headed for the Philippine province of Tawi-Tawi and then for Saba in Malaysia, he said.

There were no immediate reports of whether foreigners were on board. Jolo is at the southern tip of the Philippines and is close to Malaysia.

Ferries are the main form of transportation among the Philippines' more than 7,000 islands, but overcrowding and accidents are common. In the world's worst peacetime shipping disaster, the Dona Paz ferry collided with a tanker on December 20, 1987, killing 4,341.

Hartal halts civic life

From Page 1

front organisations brought out a procession from the party central office at about 10.40 am.

Led by party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, the procession paraded Kakrail, Bijoyanagar and Purana Paltan areas. BNP's central procession was brought out in the afternoon.

BNP processions in different areas of the city were led by party leaders including Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, Maj (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, Amanullah Aman, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Abdus Salam, Zainal Abedin Faruq, Rizvi Ahmed, ZA Khan and Ehsanul Haq Milon.

In the afternoon, the four-party alliance and seven-party combine held a joint rally in front of the BNP central office with city BNP chief Sadek Hossain Khoka MP in the chair.

The ruling Awami League also brought out anti-hartal processions in different parts of the city including Bangabandhu Avenue, Gulistan and Topkhana areas.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent said the hartal was observed partially in the district town while no hartal was observed in Rugganj, Aral-hazar, Sonargaon and Bandar areas. Most of the mills and factories including the Adamjee Jute Mills operated.

Our Staff Correspondent reports from Chittagong: The

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Our Staff Correspondent reports from Chittagong: The

C'wealth Secy Gen McKinnon due April 19

Secretary General of Commonwealth Donald C McKinnon will arrive here on April 19 on a two-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This will be McKinnon's first visit to Bangladesh since becoming the Commonwealth chief executive in the CHOGM held in Edinburgh.

During his stay in Dhaka, the former New Zealand foreign minister will hold talks with Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad. He will call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

McKinnon will address a press conference on April 20.



Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project

Institute of Fuel Research and Development

Dr Quadrat-e-Khuda Road, Dhanmondi

BCSIR

Dhaka-1205

Allocation of Taka 5000 for those who are interested in setting up Bio-gas Plant

The government of Bangladesh has taken up a Development Project titled 'Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project' in Institute of Fuel Research and Development at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (Science Laboratory) to solve the fuel crisis, organic fertiliser and preservation of organic cycle maintenance of ecological balance, development of health and environment, expansion of bio-gas as the alternative fuel. 5000 bio-gas plants across the country will be set up under this project. Preference for setting up bio-gas plant will be given to those who have the family consisting of 8-10 members and have a farm of at least 5-6 cattle or poultry farm (400-500 poultry birds). A bio-gas plant with the capacity of producing 3 cubic metre gas daily on the basis of cow-dung of 5-6 cows or excrement of 450 poultry birds can be used for cooking twice daily and for lighting a hajak at night. Such a plant will cost 12-14 thousand taka. Taka 5,000/- (five thousand) will be given as subsidy for setting up each plant under the project. This facility will be given till June 2000. Any branch of Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Krishi Bank may be contacted for additional finance for setting up plant for loan on soft terms.

In order to provide technical assistance for setting up such plants a total of 128 Sub-Assistant Engineers have been appointed across the country. Each Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineer has been entrusted with the responsibility of setting up bio-gas plant in 3-4 thanas. Entrepreneurs interested in setting up plant are requested to contact the Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineers appointed at thana level. Office of the Thana Nirbahi Officer/Office of Thana Livestock Officer/Office of Thana Public Health Engineering Department/Office of the Thana Agriculture Extension Officer/Office of the Local Government Engineering Department and the Office of BRAC can be contacted for the address of the Sub-Assistant Bio-gas Engineer for making contact. An entrepreneur may write to the undersigned, if he so desires. In that case the words 'Application for providing assistance to set up plant' will have to be written on the envelope. If anybody willing to set up a plant under Bio-gas Pilot Plant Project does not receive Tk 5000/- (five thousand) of the allocation, then he is requested to send a written complaint to the undersigned.

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Kazi Akteruzzaman
Project Director

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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