

Contraband drugs worth Tk 1cr seized at Ctg airport: 3 arrested

BSS, Ctg

Customs officials seized a huge quantity of contraband medicines from three air passengers arrived here from Kolkata in a Biman flight Tuesday evening.

The customs officials at Chittagong Shah Amanat Airport said they recovered the contraband drugs worth Taka one crore from Alhaj Shakawath Hossain, Abu Sayed Abdullah and Mahbul Alam. They were later handed over to police.

Acting on a tip off, a joint team of customs and immigration officials raided the Biman flight and recovered the medicines of different types with brand names like Neuro, Human Alumin, Minirin, Busupan, Pelppept and Cinorite contained in nine bags.

Three bags were recovered from the passengers' possession but the rest six were claimed by none.

A case has been registered with Patenga police in this connection.

UPDF men abduct 5 construction workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, CHT

Armed activists of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) kidnapped five construction workers from village Dhanpatachhara under Khagrachhari district on Monday night.

The abducted workers are Amirul Islam, 25, Shuruz Ali, 24, Asmat Ali, 23, Protima Chakma, 22 and Shubhash Bikash Chakma, 27.

Informant

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him and shot his brother Abdur Rab. Being chased by the mill workers, the armed cadres of the ruling party came out of the mill and found police informant Abul Kalam Azad travelling in a rickshaw.

They opened fire on Azad. Azad received bullets in the head and chest and died on the spot.

Azad's wife Saleha Begum filed a murder case with Futullah police station yesterday, according to 14 people including Rahmat Ullah.

Bullet injured Abdur Rab, brother of Mozful Islam, was admitted to Narayanganj hospital in a critical condition. None was arrested in connection with the incident till 6 pm yesterday.

Janakantha

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date, headlined "Bidding for transfer of two DIGs and three SPs rises to nearly Tk 2 crore".

The government also set a deadline for sending the relevant evidences by 4.00 pm on July 10.

But getting no response from the Janakantha, the government sent another letter on July 11 requesting the daily to send the evidences by 4.00 pm on July 14.

In this letter, the government made it clear that the evidences to be supplied by the Janakantha would help the government establish transparency and accountability in the administration and hoped that the daily would play the role of responsible journalism by cooperating with the government.

On July 13, the government received a reply signed by Executive Editor Borhan Ahmed on behalf of the Janakantha, in which it was stated that the daily's role was successful as the government had given due emphasis to the published report. "We are doing what the newspaper should do in the public interest and shall continue to do so," the letter said. (Incomplete)

Foreign Trade Instt to be set up to boost exports

UNB, Dhaka

The National Committee on Export yesterday agreed to set up Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute as the government announced a set of measures for boosting exports.

This institute, under joint collaboration of the government and the private sector, will be imparting training to executives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Board of Investment and private trade bodies to enhance the efficiency of those involved in export trade.

Besides, the Institute will work as a think-tank and do research in trade potential. The government will soon form a committee to look into the nitty-gritty for formulating the plan and drawing the periphery of the proposed Institute.

The decision was taken at the ninth meeting of the National Committee on Exports, chaired by

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon.

The Prime Minister asserted that all possible measures would have to be taken to increase exports and produce goods of international standards to cash in on the duty-free market access being granted by different countries.

She emphasised on diversification of Bangladesh products as well as their market. The existing market has to be maintained as well as new ones explored.

"The challenges of 21st century are tough, but they can be faced and self-sufficiency achieved if the preparations are adequate," she told the meeting.

She noted that there was no alternative to attaining self-reliance "for our own existence".

The private sector can play an important role in this regard, she said, adding that in the present free

market economy one has to survive through competence.

Khaleda Zia said all public and private-sector organisation need to be furnished with skilled manpower. She stressed training for rearing a skilled workforce.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Jute Minister Maj (Retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman, State Minister for Commerce Barkatullah Bulu and PM's Political Secretaries Haris Chowdhury and Mosaddek Ali.

Representatives of trade bodies, top officials of ministries concerned and government agencies, and Bangladesh Bank Governor also attended the meeting.

Pay channels

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However, some operators are airing all the channels in certain parts of the city.

Expressing their dissatisfaction over the partial airing of the satellite channels, the viewers said the operators have no right to deprive their entertainment in the name of a movement.

"We subscribe to cable channels to be entertained and to keep in touch with world events but we are being unethically and fraudulently deprived," said a resident of Banani.

A housewife of the Gulshan area expressed her disappointment and felt hostage to the cable operators. "The cable operators are dragging us into a boring situation as we have no other options for home-entertainment," she said.

Residents of other parts of the city including the DOHS, Baridhara, Uttara, Moghbazar, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Shukrabad, Lalbagh, Rampura, Mughdagan, Teigan, the Mirpur area and even the old parts of the city are all facing the same fate.

"Our only means of being entertained, is through the programmes aired by different channels, but we have been passing the last few days in misery," said some residents.

They demanded an immediate end to the present deadlock and urged the government to check the viewers' rights at any cost.

On Tuesday at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the city, the SCNOA and the COAB, jointly declared that unless their demands are met before July 30, they will again go for indefinite strikes.

Mir Akter Hossain, president of the SCNOA, told The Daily Star last night that they have refrained from showing most of the pay-channels, as distributors showed no interest to solve the present crisis.

"We are bound to continue our bargaining with the distributors as they have made our business uncertain," he said.

SM Anwar Parvez, president of the COAB, told The Daily Star that they are helpless to serve the subscribers with total sincerity, as the distributors had not sat to discuss matters with them.

"We have tried to speak to Abul Khair Litu, the owner of the Nationwide Communications Limited, but he refused to discuss matters with us" he informed.

The Nationwide Communications Ltd., and the Translink International are the only two distributors of pay-channels in the country.

Parvez also said they are conducting a "customer survey" to identify the pay-channels popular among viewers.

"From our primary survey, con-

ducted in some areas of the city, we found viewers have a selective choice about the channels" he said.

The COAB and the SCNOA jointly enforced a strike from Thursday noon to press forth their seven-point demand to the government. After a five-day deadlock, the operators called off their strike and resumed the telecast of all free-to-air channels, but refrained from showing most of the popular pay-channels. As per the assurance by the Information Minister Tariqul Islam, the operators called off their strike from Wednesday night and started their operation.

The demands include the withdrawal of the value-added tax (VAT) and the 15 per cent supplementary tax imposed on the cable business since the current fiscal. They also demanded the declaration of a tax holiday on the business for the next five years and the withdrawal of restrictions on unlimited imports of pay channels by the distributors.

The demands also include the formulation of a national policy for cable business, setting up of a 'Satellite Channel Censor Board' and the reduction of the license fee. At present, the government has fixed Tk 25,000 as the license renewal fee for cable operators.

Police law

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Noman, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Fisheries and Livestock Minister, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Home Minister Air Vice-Marshal (Retd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and State Minister for Home M Lutuzzaman Babar attended the meeting.

Cabinet secretary, home secretary, information secretary and Inspector General of Police also attended the meeting.

The home secretary told the meeting that out of the 162 decisions taken in the past 26 meetings of the cabinet committee, 91 have been implemented fully. The process are underway to implement the rest 63 others.

The implementation of eight decisions is at the primary stage. After discussions on the eight decisions, it was decided in the meeting that to resist extortion and snatching, police patrol would have to be enhanced all over the country, including Dhaka City.

At the same time activities of plainclothesmen would have to be increased at shopping centres and business establishments, the meeting decided.

It directed the police and the Department of Narcotics Control to launch joint campaign to prevent use of all narcotics, including phensidyl, which is smuggled into the country.

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protest the police attack. Soon, the entire campus turned into a battlefield as panicked students ran for cover.

At least 11 more students and a press photographer were also injured during the attack by police and the JCD men.

Campus sources said all the student organisations, excepting the JCD, demonstrated on the campus condemning the DU authorities and police for the 'barbaric act' at the Shamsunnahar Hall.

Main opposition Awami League's student front Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has called a strike at the DU today in protest at the incident. It held the Vice-Chancellor of the university Prof. Anwar Ullah Chowdhury and Proctor Prof. Nazrul Islam for the incident.

The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League also expressed solidarity with the BCL strike.

Most of the students left Shamsunnahar Hall yesterday, while the female JCD leaders have gone back to the hall. Twenty platoons of paramilitary BDR have been deployed on the campus to avert further flare-up.

Attack on BCL procession

The BCL brought out a procession at about noon to protest the police atrocities. Police swooped on the procession in front of the Lecture Theatre and dispersed them at about 12:15.

The BCL activists reorganised and brought out procession again. When the procession went near the Madhu's Canteen, a group of unruly youths led by General Secretary of the JCD's DU unit Mostafizul Islam Mamin attacked them leaving Abbas, joint secretary of Sir AF Rahman Hall Students Union injured.

The JCD activists caught a female activist of the BCL and started beating her up. They swooped on the photographer of the Daily Prothom Alo Firoz Chowdhury when he was taking snaps of the incident. All this happened before Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka South Abdur Rahim and his forces, sources and eyewitnesses stated.

Police, however, fired gunshots and tear gas canisters to disperse the BCL activists.

Attack on JSD-BCL procession

The JCD activists aided by the police attacked a procession of the JSD-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League at about 12:20pm, leaving at least six injured. The procession was protesting the upcoming visit of Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf here. The JCD activists and police attacked them when the processionists arrived near the DUCSU Building. JSD leaders Reza Ahmed Razu, Yunus Rahman, Sajjad Hossain, Shafiq, Tony, Masum were injured in the attack.

Yesterday's police attack followed Tuesday's incident of locking the office room of Shamsunnahar Hall provost. Leaders of the JCD's Shamsunnahar Hall unit, including Luci, Shanta, Lili and Marina locked the office of hall Provost Prof. Sultana Shafi on Wednesday in a bid to have her replaced by a BNP-backed teacher.

But general students of the hall foiled the bid ousting JCD leaders from the hall. They also demonstrated on the campus and demanded of the vice-chancellor to take stern action against the JCD leaders. The JCD leaders who completed their study at the university years ago were staying at room No. 235 of the Shamsunnahar Hall after the BNP came to power last October.

Campus sources said the VC gave the JCD leaders the nod to return to the hall, an allegation he refuted.

Tension brewed up at the Shamsunnahar Hall immediately after the JCD leaders, reportedly responsible for many untoward incidents, entered the hall yesterday afternoon.

Their return created a serious repercussion among the general students as the JCD leaders started issuing threats to them. The students got furious and started demonstrating inside the hall demanding ouster of the JCD leaders.

As the situation got worse, hall Provost Prof. Sultana Shafi informed the VC and the proctor about the matter. The proctor and assistant proctors went to the hall in the evening but did not enter the hall fearing backlash from the agitating students.

Meantime, riot and female police were called in at the hall. At about midnight, police asked the agitating students over loud-speaker to go to their respective rooms. But the students refused to oblige and continued their agitation. They demanded ouster of the

JCD leaders who took shelter at room No. 235.

Inmates said at one stage, the students told the police and proctor that they would go back to their rooms if they asked the JCD leaders to get out of the hall.

The students also told the proctor to vacate the hall and then let the students in one by one by checking their ID. But the proctor asked the students to go to their rooms. As all the talks failed, the proctor left the hall for his residence.

At about 1:30am, riot police stormed into the hall breaking the gate. They went up to the floors of the hall, dragged the students out of their rooms and beat them up mercilessly.

"Even the male police beat up some students who were asleep," said a student of the hall.

Meanwhile, Shamsunnahar Hall Provost Prof. Sultana Shafi was yesterday replaced with Prof. Habiba Khatun.

People from all sections of society have strongly condemned and protested the police atrocities on the female students.

A seven-member probe body headed by acting pro-VC Prof. Rashedul Hasan was formed to probe the incident. The body has been asked to submit a report within five days.

All the examinations scheduled for today have been suspended due to 'unavoidable circumstances'.

What the VC says

VC Prof. Anwar Ullah Chowdhury denied that the male police entered the Shamsunnahar Hall and harassed the female students last night. "I have no information that male police entered the hall and tortured the students," the VC told the journalists at his official residence in yesterday afternoon.

About the harassment of the female students, the VC said, "I'm yet to receive any complaint, verbal or written, regarding the matter."

The VC also denied an allegation that the JCD leaders were responsible for the incident at Shamsunnahar Hall have taken shelter in his residence. But the journalists present at the briefing saw that Luci and Shanta, president and general secretary of Shamsunnahar Hall unit of the JCD, along with 10 other JCD activists were leaving the VC's residence by a university microbus.

Asked whether he will resign for failing to deal with the situation, the VC said, "There is no question of resignation. I cannot resign for the prevailing campus situation. But I will consider it if any situation is created."

The VC also read out a written statement for the reporters. The statement said since early this year a group of students of the hall has been accusing Prof. Sultana Shafi of corruption, irregularities, misdeemeanor and politicisation.

The VC said following the allegations he had frequently told the provost to refrain from such activities. But she did not listen to him, the VC claimed.

Prof. Shafi denied the allegations and said the authorities removed her from office to serve political ends.

The BCL at a press conference at the Dhaka University Journalists Association office blamed the DU authorities and the JCD for the "heinous" incident at Shamsunnahar Hall and the attacks on processions of different student bodies on the campus.

They demanded immediate resignation of VC and the Proctor for their failure to handle the situation.

JCD at a separate press conference at the same venue denied involvement of any JCD leaders in the incident at Shamsunnahar Hall. Refuting the allegation that the JCD men attacked the processions, President of the JCD's DU unit Monir Hossain said, "I myself chased away some youths who tried to attack a BCL leader."

Sources said some top JCD leaders met with the VC in the evening and asked him not to blame the JCD for the campus incidents.

They asked him to highlight "innocence" of the JCD to the media and the government policymakers.

CEC's resignation

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"He has once again proved that he cannot do anything against the ruling party hoodlums," the former foreign minister said. "The EC did not even take any legal action against them."

The AL central working committee reiterated that fair election was not possible under Syed.

The Sandwip incident "has justified our demand and he should immediately quit the constitutional body," said Azad.

Skirmish at Benapol

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between the headquarters of the BDR in Dhaka and that of the BSF in New Delhi in the evening.

Earlier, a flag meeting was held between the sector commanders of the BDR and BSF. The meeting was held in Petrapole on the other side of Benapole. The BSF commander regretted the incident and said there would not be a repeat.

An AFP report from Kolkata quoting Ramseh Singh, additional inspector general of the BSF, admitted that their personnel opened fire to scare away what he claimed a group of 20 Bangladeshi nationals trying to cross into India.

"Some bullets, however, hit a person killing him instantly and injured another," Singh was quoted as saying.

BDR sources however said the Bangladeshi national was killed four to six yards inside the Bangladesh territory and there was no question of any trespassing into the Indian territory.

The BDR said it fired back to thwart the BSF attack.

The bullet-riddled body was later collected by the BDR and handed over to the police.

Following the firing, tension gripped the area and cross-border trade and movement of travellers came to a halt.

Tension eased a bit later in the day and two direct buses between Dhaka and Kolkata passed through

the Benapole land port.

Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mabin Chowdhury said, "We condemn the killing of our national."

Sources said the spate of border killings has increased in recent months with over 100 Bangladeshi citizens reportedly killed in border firings in the last 10 months.

EC's UZ law

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city corporation.

Earlier, the EC immediately after the last general election initiated a move to hold the Upazila Parishad election and scheduled December 31 (last year) for the polls. But the move stalled, when ministers debated the issue.

The government also formed a high-powered cabinet committee to decide if there would be the Upazila Parishad or not. However, the government did not reach any decision yet.

The EC considers, among other proposals, that the candidates with criminal records -- wanted or charge-sheeted -- would not be eligible for contesting the polls, sources said. Also, a representative will not hold two public posts at a time.

After finalisation, the EC will put the proposals forward to the government for approval.

Bangladesh off track to help the hungry

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says the progress in achieving the millennium goals shows that 55 countries with 23 per cent of world population are "on track" to achieve three quarters of the goals, while 33 countries with 26 per cent population are failing to achieve more than half the goals.

Describing the situation in 34 Sub-Saharan countries as the gloomiest, the report said those countries are "slipping back" in achieving the UN goals. More than 40 countries with 28 per cent of the world's population are "not on track", it added. "This is the most disturbing finding in the review."

The HDR emphasised that aid from official and other sources is essential to accelerate the performance of countries "failing" to achieve the millennium goals and to help those countries "on track".

The report categorised the UN countries into three levels -- high, medium and low -- according to their standing in the development paradigm.

Of the 173 countries, 53 ranked with a high human development status, while 84 with medium human development and the rest 36 with low human development as per human development index (HDI), it shows.

Norway topped the comity of nations in the HDI ladder, followed by Sweden, Canada, Belgium,

Australia and the United States.

The HDR report defined the HDI as measuring a country's achievements in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income.

Showing progress over the years, the report said the HDI value of Bangladesh in 2000 was 0.478 and its rank in the previous year was the same, but it gained by two compared to 1990 ratings and by four in the index compared to 1975.

Bangladesh is lagging "far behind" in eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education, and the cutting down under-five mortality rate, but achieved success in supplying improved water. It is "on track" in its target for enrolling all children in primary education. This impoverished country, however, ranked 66th in gender empowerment measure (GEM) that measures women's participation in political decision-making, the report pointed out.

The UNDP report says that there is a moderate functioning democracy in Bangladesh. And about the rule of law and government effectiveness it says the country achieved more or less average performance.

"The scores for 'corruption perception index' and graft in Bangladesh are -- 0.4 (low perception) and -- 0.64 (just below average) respectively."

Of the 81 countries that embraced democracy in the latter part of the 20th century, the report pointed out that only 47 have gone on to become fully functioning democracies. Several have since returned to the authoritarian rule: either military, as in Myanmar or Pakistan, or pseudo-democratic, as in Zimbabwe in recent years.

The report called for a new emphasis on "deepening democracy" at the local, national and international level.

It warned against compromising human rights and democracy in the fight against global terror, and strongly disputed the notion that authoritarian regimes are better for political stability and economic growth.

Speaking at the HDR-launching ceremony, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, however, disagreed with the report, saying Bangladesh stands much higher than mentioned in the report.

"In 31 years time, the achievement of Bangladesh should not be negated," he said. The country established a reasonably accepted democracy, raised its food production, rolled back population growth and brought poverty down.

Moudud said good governance is there, but quality should be achieved for which the opposition has a great role to play.

On the judiciary, the law minister

Regulatory body

FROM PAGE 12
1995 and adopted in 1996 also recommended separation of the sector. He said the Private Sector Power Policy was developed and adopted to introduce competition, attract foreign investment and increase power supply.

He said as part of the unbundling process, the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Ltd (PGCB) and Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd (DESCO) were created in 1996. Both companies have meanwhile taken over a big chunk of transmission business of the PDB and DESA.

The state minister said Ashuganj Power Station, the second biggest power plant complex in the country, has already been made a corporation to make it commercially viable.

Besides making some distribution areas under the PDB as "profit centres", the 99-megawatt Haripur Power Station will also be converted into a "profit centre", meaning the areas and stations will be operated on their own income.

As part of the reforms in generation of electricity, the state minister

said the government is planning to separate all the existing power generating units through a corporatisation.

He said the transmission network would be owned, operated, planned and developed by a corporate body in the public sector.

Iqbal Mahmood said under the proposed reforms in distribution of power, the government would transform the existing distribution system of the PDB and DESA into a number of corporate entities.

It is planning to separate network from supply business and invite private participation in the supply business, he said.

Present installed capacity of the country's power system is 4,230 megawatt and the attainable capacity is 3,300 megawatt. The total transmission line is 3,730 kilometres and distribution line 185,000 kilometres.

The number of power consumers is 6 million. Thirty per cent of the population has access to electricity and overall system loss is 30 per cent.

Hartal on Aug 15

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programmes on August 15, the day country's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his other family members were assassinated 27 years ago.

The party, during its term in office had introduced national holiday on the mourning day, has chalked out an elaborate programme to observe the day with due respect. But, the BNP-led coalition government of corruption, irregularities, misdeemeanor and politicisation.

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Student politics

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Sources said partisan politics has so far dictated promotions, postings and other administrative affairs of these institutions.