

## Long arm of criminals

### Most wanted ringleaders control public tenders from prison, hideouts overseas

ZAYADUL AHSAN

They may be in jail or abroad, but the long arm of the criminals still mince millions from different public-sector contracts.

Two top criminals, one of them now in prison and the other in Kolkata, are still controlling much of the construction tenders.

In recent times, Sweden Aslam, a top criminal now in the Dhaka Central Jail, and Subrata Bain, another most wanted criminal absconding in Kolkata, grabbed a number of project works of the Roads and Highways Department and the Health Directorate, using their operatives.

Besides, many of these most wanted criminals are now in the city. Others have camped in the USA, Kolkata and Sweden.

According to intelligence sources, the work for the Dhaka-Kaliganj bypass road was negotiated at the Gulshan office of a BNP lawmaker last month. In that meeting, the work for group No. 9 of the project was allocated to Zahiruddin Babar, popularly known in the underworld as Chapati Babar. Subrata Bain played a pivotal role in getting Babar the Tk 2.58-crore contract. During the negotiation, Babar claimed that if he got the job, it would virtually go to Subrata.

Later, Babar sold the same

contract to another contractor for Tk 40 lakh. Thereafter, he also bagged two more work orders for the Patuakhali-Amtali road construction and Jessore-Satkira road construction costing Tk 36 crore through Subrata Bain. The Patuakhali-Amtali road is financed by Danida.

The negotiation for the two projects was held at the Grand Azad Hotel in the city this month. Babar sold the work orders in the same meeting to another contractor for Tk 90 lakh.

Some contractors present at the meeting said Babar not only used the name of Subrata but also boasted of having link with the home

ministry and the Hawa Bhaban.

According to intelligence sources, Chapati Babar is now acting as the toll collector of Subrata. He has sent around Tk 2 crore to Subrata in Kolkata over the last three months.

According to sources, Babar, a resident of Nakhapara, started his underground life as a mugger and extortionist, operating in the Farmgate area. He used to carry a machete (chapati). He also bears marks of machete wound on his face, a reason for his nickname in the criminal world.

He was once tagged with the

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## Chetia gets 7-yr RI for possessing sat phone

COURT CORRESPONDENT

United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) leader Anup Chetia and two of his associates were yesterday sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment for possessing a satellite telephone set.

The First Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka also fined the three Tk 10,000 each.

Chetia, Babul Sharma and Laxmi Prasad Goswami were found guilty of possessing a satellite telephone set.

Judge Abu Syed Dilraj Hossain said charges brought against the accused had been proved beyond doubt and the verdict against them was given considering the nature of the offences, evidences gathered

and importance of the charges.

The verdict will be effective from the date of their arrest, December 21, 1997, the court said.

The prosecution and the defence sides completed hearing arguments in the case on August 11. The court recorded statements of 10 out of 11 prosecution witnesses.

Charges against the accused were framed by the court on June 30, 1998.

The investigation officer of the case submitted charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, on March 18, 1998. The case was later transferred to the session's court for disposal.

When contacted on the court premises, Chetia and his associates said they would file an appeal with

the higher court against the verdict.

Anup Chetia and his associates were arrested from a house at Adabar in Mohammadpur area of the city on December 21, 1997 on charges of possessing currencies of 16 countries and a satellite telephone set. Later, four cases against them were filed with Mohammadpur Police Station.

Meanwhile, three other cases were disposed of earlier and they were awarded various terms of imprisonment.

The CMM's Court, Dhaka on October 25, 1998 awarded six years' rigorous imprisonment to Chetia and the two others in two cases, one for possessing forged passports and the other for illegal stay in

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## BUET reopens Sept 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) reopens on September 28.

The BUET halls will open at 9:00am on September 27 for resident students who have been asked to show their identity cards on entry.

The decision was taken yesterday at a meeting of the academic session review committee with Vice-chancellor Dr Alee Murtuza in the chair.

The university remained closed since June 9 for 83 days, with a brief period for classes in between, after the death of Sabequn Nahar Sony, a student, on June 8 in crossfire between two factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal on the campus. The university reopened on August 11 after a closure of 63 days.

Upon reopening, the BUET students started a movement under

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## Militants storm Gujarat temple, kill 23

AFP, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

At least 23 people were killed and up to 45 people injured yesterday when militants burst into a Hindu temple in India's riot-torn western Gujarat state and sprayed devotees with automatic gunfire, Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani said.

The dead included 13 men, six women and four children, Advani said in a national television address, adding that the attack was linked to controversial legislative elections in Indian-administered Kashmir.

"There are 37 to 45 injured," he said, adding that the security forces had rescued at least 500 people the

late afternoon attack by the militants on the revered Akshardham temple in the Gujarat capital Gandhinagar.

"Some terrorists entered the... temple and opened indiscriminate fire and threw a hand grenade. And, because of that, many people died and many were injured," Advani said.

"Terrorists are still inside, they are on top of the terrace of a cultural complex in the temple," he added.

India's chief Muslim cleric Ahmed Bukhari warned the bloody attack could again spark Hindu-Muslim violence in the strife-torn western state.

At least 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, died in Hindu-Muslim riots that started in February and raged for three months in Gujarat, one of India's most prosperous states.

"Riots can start, there is a distinct possibility of an eruption because just three days ago we saw communal violence in Gujarat," Bukhari said.

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PHOTO: STAR

Hawkers do a brisk business on the Indira Road after it was made off-limits to rickshaws for smooth movement of pedestrians and so do police who collect money for turning a blind eye.

## Rickshaw ban spells boon for police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ban on rickshaws on the eastern stretch of the Indira Road in the city's Farmgate area clamped to ease pedestrian movement has given way to encroachment on either side of the road with police allowing about

300 shops to do business there.

Each of these shops pays police between Tk 20 and 60 everyday. Farmgate is one of the busiest areas of the city. Thousands of people walk along the road everyday, negotiating the trash left by hundreds of illegal shops.

According to traders, a vegetable shop pays Tk 60 to a police informer named Adam Ali everyday, while a small stall pays him between Tk 20 and 50.

A cashier of the local Tejgaon Police Station, about 150 meters away from the road, collects the money from Adam Ali every evening.

Traders said they were happy to do business on this part of the road. When rickshaws used to ply the stretch of the road they created traffic jam on the road, preventing people from doing shopping. However, following the ban buyers freely move around and the busi-

ness thrives.

Footpaths of the entire Farmgate area are swarmed with several thousands illegal stalls paying the Tejgaon police between Tk 20 and Tk 150 everyday.

A senior constable of the Tejgaon Police Station, who is known as the cashier, is in-charge of collecting the money everyday and keeping an account of it. The 'cashier' never gets directly involved in collecting the daily 'fees' from the illegal traders. Instead, he 'employs' about half a dozen petty but 'trusted' criminal of the area who do the collection job.

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## Police to act against sly cab drivers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police will take stern action against taxicab drivers who refuse to go to places as desired by passengers or charge fare according to meter from September 28.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in a press release yesterday said the taxicab drivers are taking advantage of the temporary transport crisis following a ban on the two-stroke three-wheelers in the city. In some cases, cab drivers are refusing to go to places according to the wish of passengers and charging extra fares in violation of taxicab rules and regulations.

It requested passengers to contact the DMP over phone should any taxicab drivers flout the rules and regulations. The numbers are Traffic Control Room 017-0 0 0 9 9 0, D M P

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## Rally at Shaheed Minar on Oct 1 to protest seal-off rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political parties, socio-cultural organisations, student bodies, writers, litterateurs and other conscious citizens will hold a mass demonstration at the Central Shaheed Minar on October 1.

Organisers said they would go on with the programme defying any government move to prevent it.

Participants in the programme will gather either at the Shahbagh crossing or at Chankharpool and then march towards the Shaheed Minar. Besides, there would be

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