

Harris Chy's luxury SUV

FROM PAGE 1
Khan's business enterprise.

The Range Rover was being used without registration. The Range Rover -- currently one of the most expensive SUVs on the market at a retail price of roughly \$77,250 to over \$155,000 -- was imported on July 2 last year under duty-free provision for members of parliament (MP).

Upon information about a large covered up vehicle being suspiciously parked on the government employees' staff quarter premises at Kalabagan in the capital, a team of Rab reached the scene at around 4:00am and seized the black 5,552cc (5.6-litre) V8 engine Infiniti QX56 (Dhaka Metro Gha 11-6516) owned by Harris Chowdhury, security sources said.

Harris Chowdhury, one of the 50 corruption suspects listed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), could not be arrested during the seizure of the SUV.

Only two left-hand-drive Infiniti SUVs were imported in the country by chief of Orion Group Obaidul Karim, said Rab sources. Obaidul Karim is known to have given one of the vehicles to Harris Chowdhury as a gift. The law enforcers had long been on the lookout for the two Infiniti.

Infiniti brand luxury vehicles -- Japanese automobile manufacturer Nissan's luxury brand -- are currently available only in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Middle Eastern countries, South Korea and Taiwan. Infiniti will not be released in the United Kingdom and Japan until 2008.

According to the official website of Infiniti USA, retail price of an Infiniti QX56 ranges from \$49,950 to \$58,030.

The Rab team arrested the driver from one of the staff quarters after quizzing the security guards there.

The arrested driver, Salam, admitted that although he is still a listed driver in the government transport pool, he had been working for Harris Chowdhury as his personal chauffeur.

The driver voluntarily told Rab

Newmooring

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under the SOT system will largely help reduce pressure on Chittagong Port and infuse dynamism into the country's trade and business.

The meeting was informed that no further government money would be required to operate the terminal under the new system.

The council of advisers was informed that activities at Chittagong Port increased significantly with the introduction of three shifts for loading and unloading of cargo, and discipline was restored there following effective steps taken by the government.

Shipping Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) MA Matin gave a presentation on the activities of Chittagong Port at the beginning of the meeting.

Besides, the council of advisers discussed the power generation and management.

During the discussion, the advisers were informed that nearly 50,000 illegal power connections were snapped by the mobile courts and about Tk 134 crore outstanding bills were realised.

The meeting was told that 17 mobile courts are operating in the city to snap illegal power connections and take lawful action against the bill defaulters.

CI sheets

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In Benapole, Rab men recovered 20 CI sheets from Jubo Dal leader Shafigul's house in Narayanpur village yesterday morning.

In Lalmonirhat, joint forces seized 17 CI sheets from the house of district BNP leader and former assistant public prosecutor advocate Habibur Rahman at Namatari in the town yesterday noon.

Earlier the forces seized eight CI sheets from a rice shop at Goshala Bazar in the town and arrested shop owner Pintu, who is also a worker of Jubo Dal.

The joint forces arrested Chapa Babu alias Maker Babu, a close aide to former deputy minister for food and disaster management Asadul Habib Dulu, from the gate of Lalmonirhat jail yesterday noon when he was getting out of the jail on bail.

Army men arrested Babu, who is facing several criminal charges, a month ago.

A Sylhet court yesterday placed city BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury and Moulvibazar Pourashava Chairman Fozul Karim Moyun on one-day remand for interrogation in an extortion case filed by contractor Nuruzzaman.

One of the 50 corruption suspects, Ariful Haque surrendered to the Army camp at Sylhet stadium on February 25 and was sent to Sylhet central jail the same day.

Moyun was sent to jail on February 20 when he surrendered before the Sylhet Sadar Magistrate's Court in connection with the case.

Nuruzzaman filed the case on February 17 against Naser Rahman and seven others including Ariful Haque, Moyun and some officials of Roads and Highways Department.

that Obaidul Karim gave the car to Harris as a gift after Belhassa Accom and Associates Ltd, a concern of Orion Group, was awarded the work of Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover construction project.

Following the leads gathered from the driver, Rab later arrested Harris' two brothers-in-law -- Zafar and Masum -- from their home.

The law enforcers further quizzed all of the arrestees and raided several other locations in the city to capture Harris, but without any success. Security sources however were confident that Harris has been hiding somewhere in the capital.

The vehicle along with the three arrestees was later taken to Rab 2 office in Moghbazar. The Task Force Intelligence was supposed to interrogate them last night.

The ACC on February 18 disclosed names of 50 corruption suspects and asked them to submit their wealth statements by February 25. Instead of appearing before the ACC in person, as required by the corruption watchdog, Harris sent a lawyer to the ACC to submit his wealth statement on his behalf. The ACC rejected the statement.

As per the Emergency Power Ordinance 2007, property of those who did not submit their wealth statements can be seized with permission of court.

The joint forces are now investigating the source of funds for importing these vehicles.

Following numerous reports of selling of duty-free car permits by MPs, the interim government is planning to scrutinise all motor vehicle imports by MPs during the previous BNP-led coalition government's regime.

Babul's bail

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detention after he was produced before the Court of Chief Metropolitan the next day.

Gulshan police accused Babul, owner of Bangla daily Jugantor, of anti-state activities, causing financial losses to the country and illegally grabbing public and private properties.

He was on the ACC's list of 50 people, who were asked by the commission to submit wealth statements within 72 hours after receiving notifications.

OC closed, 3 SI

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forced to give bribe for their release.

Sources said the five men, who happened to live in the inspector general of police's (IGP) home upazila, informed the IGP about the matter and he launched an investigation.

The four policemen allegedly retuned the money taken from the five in order to evade conviction, the sources added.

Serbia makes

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The brothers had strayed from Kosovo into Serb-controlled territory in late June 1999 days after NATO occupied Serbia's southern province following 78 days of bombing to drive out Serb forces accused of atrocities in a two-year war with guerrillas.

They were imprisoned for 17 days for illegal entry. On their release they were picked up by secret police, taken to another location and shot dead, their hands tied behind their backs with wire, according to the indictment.

Their bodies were found only in 2001 when reformers who had ousted late president Slobodan Milosevic in 2000 unearthed mass graves in Serbia containing the bodies of over 800 Kosovo Albanians. They were killed in the province and trucked north to conceal evidence of atrocities.

The police chief at the time of the killings, Vlastimir Djordjevic, is suspected of having ordered the Bytyk killings. He has been indicted by the U.N. war crimes tribunal in The Hague and is believed to be hiding in Russia.

ISD call

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With another 16 countries, the BTB call charges with code '012' through any land or fixed phones have been fixed at Tk 7.50 per minute and through any mobile phone at Tk 18 per minute, the press release said.

These countries are Argentina, Armenia, Czech Republic, Finland, Japan, Laos, Mongolia, New Zealand, Panama, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Togo, Turkey, Venezuela and Zambia.

The BTB in its first phase introduced the Economy ISD call facilities with 10 countries in December, 2004 and expanded those with another 15 countries in April last year.

"Now the subscriber of the BTB will enjoy the Economy ISD call facilities for making ISD calls through the land or fixed phones and mobile phones to a total of 55 countries under the code," the press release said.

Car bomb

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to bridge some of their differences on Iraq.

"Our hope is that this will be an ice-breaking attempt for maybe holding other meetings in the future. We want Iraq, instead of being a divisive issue, to be a unifying issue," Zebari said by telephone from Denmark where he was on a visit.

Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, a leading figure in Iraq's Sunni Arab minority, met Iran's ambassador on Wednesday and his office said he would visit Tehran in early March.

The State Department would not rule out the possibility that U.S. officials might hold bilateral talks with Iranians on the sidelines of the conferences -- a mid-level meeting in March and a ministerial meeting that may be held in April.

But the White House played down the chances of such talks, stressing its position that Iran first suspend uranium enrichment that the United States believes is aimed at developing a nuclear weapon, a charge Tehran denies.

2 fake Rab

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Rohinga refugees, who hailed from Mongdu in Myanmar.

According to sources, Aman and Ibrahim along with two others in guise of Rab picked up the victim Yunus Sarwar on January 28 on charge of carrying 'hundi' (money sent through informal channel) money while returning home after drawing Tk 4 lakh from a bank on Station Road.

Following a case filed by Yunus, Rab-7 members arrested the two from Ibrahim's residence in the city's Sugandha Residential Area at around 4:00pm.

Kamal's detention

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detention of Kamal Majumder and three others under the Special Powers Act.

Kamal Majumder and three others were arrested by the army-led joint forces. On January 11. Later, they were sent to jail with a 30-day detention order.

Within a couple of days, close relations of the detainees filed habeas corpus petitions with the High Court, challenging the detention orders.

After hearing the petitions, the High Court declared their detention illegal.

Khaleda's house

FROM PAGE 1
Security personnel on Tuesday detained two of Tarique Rahman's aides and have also been looking for others. Ashik, Apu and Shakil are three of them, said the source.

Patients

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since common cold and respiratory infections have invaded the child populace.

Meanwhile, child specialists suggest that parents should take their kids to a hospital or see a doctor if their children are having difficulty breathing, a fever for more than a day or two, wheezing, or audible lung congestion.

"If one is treated at the early stage, they might not develop pneumonia or bronchiolitis," Jahangir Chowdhury, an associate professor at the Khaleda Zia Medical College Hospital formerly known as Suhrawardy Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Law adviser

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ordinance. The minimum punishment under the ordinance will be a five-year imprisonment.

The ordinance also proposes to form a three-member advisory board to review appeals of people arrested under the ordinance.

Two incumbent judges of the Supreme Court and one joint secretary-level government official will comprise the advisory board and the government will appoint one of them as its chairman.

According to the draft, it will penalise those who indulge in terrorist acts in the name of religion and present themselves as heroes for such activities as well as those who assist in such activities. Spewing hatred against believers of different faiths will also be considered as terrorism.

According to the proposed law, any act that poses a threat to the sovereignty, unity, integrity, or security of Bangladesh is an act of terrorism. Use of bombs, dynamite, other explosives, inflammable substances, firearms, poisons, harmful gases or any other chemicals used in a way which may injure or kill people to create public panic will also be considered as terrorist acts.

Damaging public or private property, hindering supply of materials essential for people's life, taking any person as hostage, threatening one with death, assaulting one physically or creating public panic by such activities have also been defined as terrorist acts.

Besides, forcing the government to do or abstain from any act is included in the category of terrorist acts.

Damage of equipment used for the country's defence or any equipment used by government organisations will also be treated as a terrorist act.

AL for June polls

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Meanwhile, a delegation of Bangladesh Army in a presentation at the EC Secretariat yesterday afternoon said it is possible to issue identity cards to each voters within 10 to 12 months at an approximate cost of around Tk 300 crore through setting up three camps at each union parishes, sources said.

In defence of their proposal for a voter list with photographs, the AL delegation chief Abul Mal Abdul Muhith said it is possible to complete the preparation of a voter list with photographs within two months by visiting door to door while it will take a long time for voter identity cards.

Even the Election Commission of India has not been able to complete issuing identity cards to all the voters for a long time, Muhith told reporters emerging from the meeting with the CEC.

Introduced in 1993-94, the task of providing voter ID cards in India is yet to be complete.

"So, we are not in favour of the introduction of voter identity cards for the next parliamentary election," Muhith said.

"The Election Commission should specify the timeframe for holding the election after consulting with the caretaker government. The Awami League wants holding the election by June," he said.

Replying to a query the AL leader, also a former finance minister, said the CEC and two election commissioners listened, but they did not give any specific response to the demands for election by June.

In their first meeting with the reconstituted EC led by CEC ATM Shamsul Huda, the AL delegation also discussed the electoral reforms initiated by the EC.

"We are in favour of electoral reforms for holding the parliamentary election free from the influence of black money," the AL leader said, adding that they will forward a set of proposals for reforms to the EC.

About the meeting with the CEC, the AL delegation said they sought an appointment with the CEC soon after his assumption of office on February 5.

The AL delegation comprising Muhith, ST Imam, Faruq Chowdhury and Mokammel Haque informed AL chief Sheikh Hasina about the outcome of the meeting with the EC.

The EC, which is preparing a draft for electoral reforms, will hold a series of dialogue with the political parties to seek their opinion. But the EC has yet to decide when it will start holding discussion with the parties.

President for steps

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University on its campus. An honorary doctor of laws Degree was conferred on Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus at the convocation.

Expressing deep concern over session jams, mainly in the country's public universities, the president said: "Politics is not isolated from society. The universities and other educational institutions are also part of the society, but it is necessary to deeply think about at what level of the education sector the politics will remain."

"Despite differences of opinion and ideology among you (the politicians), you have no lack in patriotism. Working for the people's welfare is your aim. So, I request you to think about it (harmful sides of student politics) from the same point of view," said the president.

He stressed the need for formulating rules with caution involving teachers, students, employees and guardians for the development of the country's education.

"Though code of conduct, like the other institutions, is not needed for the universities, some cautionary measures should be taken so that people are not deprived of. Such code of conduct should be formulated through democratic process involving teachers, students,

employees and the guardians," he told the function.

He said the government must ensure the proper utilisation of money in universities as the big part of it comes from the people.

About the role of guardians in formulating rules, the president said judgment about a writer is never complete without the readers, and the teachers, though they teach, can not be the lone judges of education."

"If the teachers and employees claim that they are the only authorities to determine what is right and what is wrong, then the neutrality will be lost. Such attitude is bad for every institution. The welfare of the society lies in showing respect to the opinion of majority about the values of teachers and education," the president said.

He stressed the need for learning English as the international language for effective communication both at home and abroad.

The president congratulated those who received Ph D and M Phil degrees, gold medalists and the graduates, and urged them to remain active throughout the life to maintain the quality of education in the country.

Gias Kamal blasts

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controversially allocated land. The government leased the railway land for BSEHR, which is an internationally reputed organisation, not for any minister or his wife, Gias said.

BSEHR Secretary General Sigma Huda remained a conspicuous absentee at the press conference while the organisation's Executive Director Elina Khan is in Denmark now. None of the 21 members of the national committee of BSEHR except Gias Kamal Chowdhury was present.

Asked about the process of scrutiny for leasing the land, the organisation's representatives failed to give any answer. They could not also tell anything about the reason of the absence of national committee members at the press conference.

About the prime minister's note to back the file to the ministry regarding the lease, Gias Kamal said, "It was a secretary-level matter. So the prime minister backed the file and then the ministry took the decision to lease the land."

"I urged the then prime minister to allot a house at Nayapaltan (house no 50) for an organisation named after late Maolana Bhasani...She also agreed but the then political secretary of the prime minister Harris Chowdhury did not reply us in three years," he said.

As a reporter reminded him that Dhaka city BNP is using that house as their office, Gias Kamal said, "They might be forcibly occupying

Dhanmondi

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Gulshan Link Road in Tejaon area today.

CHITTAGONG DRIVE
Our Chittagong office reported that Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) yesterday bulldozed additional structures of two buildings at GEC Intersection to ensure parking space.

The CDA demolished stairs and additional structures of Madina Tower and under-construction Yunesco Tower, which were illegally constructed at the parking space, sources said.

CDA Magistrate Tahera Ferdous led the drive while officials of both the CDA and Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) assisted her.

Crack develops

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documents away.

A few of the office goers had a sigh of relief finding their offices not too damaged while many others found everything in ruins.

Visiting the offices of ntv, Rtv and the daily Amar Desh yesterday, ntv MD Enayetur Rahman said, "The damage to ntv and Rtv offices is huge. It will not be possible to put the channels back on air any time soon."

He said ntv would require six months to a year to resume full-scale telecasting.

"The damage to daily Amar Desh office is not that severe," he added.

After visiting his office, Mominul H Khan, an official of Transnational Consultant Ltd which is on the third floor of the building, said, "Our office was not damaged that much."

However, Abdul Matin, deputy manager of Sadharan Bima Corporation, expressed disappointment after visiting the first and second floors for loss assessment.

"It looks like a coalmine," he said, adding that he needs more time to determine how much the loss is worth.

The BSEC has an insurance of around Tk 10 crore with Sadharan Bima Corporation, which has appointed two surveyors to assess the loss.

Two probe bodies--one formed by the home ministry and another by the ministry of industry--yesterday continued their work at the building.

They, however, declined to make any comment before completing their work.

Power plant

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about the problems due to use of the imported coal with no effective steps taken as yet in this regard.

Plant officials said it is now consuming coal much more than that in the past and producing much less power. Earlier, the plant used to consume 2,500 tonnes of coal a day compared to at least 3,000 tonnes now. Moreover plant machinery is developing trouble.

When contacted, Ramendra Nath Ghosh, managing director of the power plant, said local coal and that from Australia are suitable for use in the plant "But we had shortage of time to import such high burning coal from Australia or from any other country."

ACC list

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filed writ petitions seeking the High Court's permission to submit wealth statements through their representatives. Hearing of these petitions will take place on March 5.

Asked whether the government would now freeze properties of these seven persons, Delwar Hossain said the ACC has given a note to the government on the matter, and it would take the decision.

The seven are Maya, Nanak, Suja, Azam, Selim, Mockbul and Mohiuddin. All of them had sent their statements through representatives but the ACC refused to accept those saying that the suspects who were not in jail should submit those in person.

The ACC on February 19 published the list of 50 corruption suspects asking them to submit wealth statements within 72 hours. Of them, those not arrested were asked to submit statements to the ACC office in person.

Govt land

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process is not transparent, it denies the people's open participation in it and thereby harms the public interest.

According to the writ petition, Syed Salahuddin Ahmed obtained the lease of a land measuring 27 decimals owned by the ministry of communications at Mohakhali in the city for five years to set up a petrol pump and a service centre on an application for an annual premium of Tk 27,000.

In 1992, the lease was extended for 10 years with an annual premium of Tk. 54,000. But the lease was cancelled in 1993 by the authorities for not setting up the petrol pump. However, the order was stayed within a fortnight.

Later, Salahuddin applied for converting the petrol pump into a CNG filling station. The government made an inquiry and endorsed his application. Consequently, Salahuddin secured a licence of CNG filling station from the Compressed Natural Gas Authority.

When the matter was pending with the communications ministry in May 2003, the government leased out the land for setting up a CNG filling station to Faridur Rahman Khan for 15 years.

Aggrieved Salahuddin then moved to the High Court to have the government actions overturned. However, the land is still in possession of Salahuddin.

Advocate Ozair Farook with Sheikh Mohammad Morshed, SM Masud Hossain and Mohammad Sakhawat Hossain appeared for Salahuddin while Deputy AG Zaman Akhtar Bulbul stood for the government.

US shifts policy

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The Group of Eight also includes Japan, Canada, Germany and Italy.

"I would note that the Iraqi government has invited Syria and Iraq to attend both of these regional meetings," she said.

"We hope these governments seize this opportunity to improve their relations with Iraq -- and to work for peace and stability in the region," she said.

One of the administration's top critics on Iraq, Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, who heads the influential Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that the administration was "right to reverse itself and engage Iraq and Syria on Iraq."

"Right now, they are a big part of the problem, but they have an interest in becoming part of the solution to prevent chaos in Iraq."

Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid also supports the talks. "It's so important that we understand the war will be won diplomatically, not militarily," he said, adding: "They should have happened some time ago."

Analysts said that the tone and strategy of the Bush administration's regional diplomacy appeared to be shifting.

"We have not been meeting with the Iranians to discuss regional issues," said Jon Alterman, a Middle East expert with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"This is very clearly an effort to

bring the Iranians and the Syrians into a regional security discussion."

Justin Logan, of the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, said the regional conference proposal was a clear parallel to the Iraq Study Group recommendation.

"It sounds like a lot like the ISG proposal, the sort of regional conference. It certainly is a move in the right direction," he said.

Bush in the past has spelled out a tough line on the idea of even group talks with regional powers on Iraq including Iran and Syria.

"They need to come understanding their responsibilities to not fund terrorists, to help this young democracy survive, to help with the economics of the country," he said in December.

"If Syria and Iran (are) not committed to that concept, then they shouldn't bother to show up."

Washington did authorize US ambassador to Baghdad Zalmay Khalilzad to talk to Iran on Iraq in 2005, but talks have so far not materialized.

The administration has also stressed it is committed to using diplomacy to convince Iran to comply with a UN resolution calling on it to suspend uranium enrichment activities some believe are a precursor to producing atomic weapons.

Ailing Castro

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In Tuesday's phone call Castro came across as energetic and enthusiastic as he commented on the day's news.

"Hello there, illustrious and dear friend, how are you?" Castro asked Chavez at the start of his 25-minute telephone call on the Venezuelan leader's "Hello President" show.

"What joy hearing your voice, and knowing you are well," Chavez replied.

"I am making progress, I feel more energetic, with more strength and more time to study," Castro said. "I am have gone back to being a student."

The Cuban leader encouraged those concerned about his recovery to be patient.

"I urge everyone to be patient, calm, and to be happy, if everyone is calm, the country keeps moving forward, which is the important thing... I also ask for tranquility for myself to be able to get my new duties done," he said.

But "I cannot be talking every day and get into the habit of making news every day."

Still, Castro made a point of saying he was "very informed about the dangers of wars, climate change, food supply troubles, because as you (Chavez) have noted, millions of people are going hungry."

The two leaders discussed global warming and other news, including Venezuelan issues.

Chavez joked that Castro has turned him into "a sort of emissary or bridge -- whoever wants to know how Fidel is doing comes here, calls me, and I always tell them the truth," Chavez said.

Cuba's communist government has treated the state of Castro's health as a state secret.

The latest Cuban television footage of Castro, broadcast in late January, appeared to support official claims his recovery from surgery was going well.

The January 30 images show Castro in apparent good spirits and looking healthier than in the previous

Chief justice

FROM PAGE 1
"We hope we will be able to start our journey towards the light from the darkness."

On his last day, Mudassar Husain heard submissions of a case filed by the government challenging the recent HC verdict that declared the detentions of two politicians and two NGO activists illegal.

In his last verdict, Mudassar stayed the HC decision, which apparently angered former law minister and BNP leader Moudud Ahmed, counsel of one of the four detainees. Moudud did not attend Mudassar's farewell.

Mudassar in his farewell speech said, "I have noticed dissatisfaction among you [lawyers] about some issues. I do not think all of my judicial decisions or those of my colleagues will be appreciated equally. On the eve of my retirement, I would like to request you to refrain from expressing your grievances in a language that could give way for others to make sarcastic remarks about the judiciary."

Bashing the media,