

Robbers tunnel

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lockers. Some of them said they even kept ornaments of their relatives in the lockers.

The bank officials also said the robbers did not however steal any passport, savings certificate, or any other document from the lockers.

Police detained four Nidmahan staff on Sunday for interrogation, suspecting their involvement in the heist. Police also said they are intensively interrogating the detainees Shah Alam, 30, Supon Barua, 20, Sujan, 18, and Monir, 18, but have yet to get any lead from them.

Renters of the lockers came to know about the incident yesterday morning and started rushing to the bank immediately. They were seen bursting out in anger, as in their words, the Bank management is trying to shrug off its liability for the stolen materials. Some of the renters were seen very depressed while some were even in tears.

Wasim Chowdhury, a staff of hotel Nidmahan, housed on the second, third and the fourth floors of the building, said three persons aged between 40 and 45 rented a room on the third floor on December 1. A day later they shifted to the second floor renting two rooms there right above the locker room of the bank.

The three registered themselves as Salam, Abdul and Jalal at the front desk and mentioned that they were from Hathazari in Chittagong.

Police suspect before the final heist, other members of the gang rented four other adjacent rooms on the second floor to create a buffer zone for the noise of cutting through the floor. Police recovered a packet of a hand drill from the hotel room containing the hole on the floor.

Wasim also said detained Sujon, who works as a janitor in the hotel, told him that the suspects used to keep at all times something on the spot of the floor where the hole is now, and never allowed him to clean that spot saying they themselves would clean the spotter.

After the heist had been detected the hotel staff found a box of around two feet by two feet covering the hole.

Around 6:00am on Sunday the three suspects left the hotel with the stolen goods, said the frond desk clerk of the hotel.

Law enforcers recovered a receipt of sales for the hand drill suggesting that the thieves had bought it from a shop at Nababpur in the old part of the capital. They also recovered some gold ornaments and paper documents from the hotel room above the lockers.

Officials of the bank suspect the heist might have taken place sometime between the midnights of Thursday and Saturday.

Abdur Rahman Sikder, head of marketing and corporate affairs of BRAC Bank Ltd, said they came to know about the heist on Sunday after the bank had opened.

He said one of their staff found out the heist when he entered the locker room on Sunday morning after a renter had gone to the bank to access her locker.

He then informed the management, who soon informed the law enforcers.

"We then informed the law enforcers about the burglary who later visited the bank collecting finger prints and other evidence,"

Sedition case

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When contacted, Md Lutfor Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tejgaon Police Station, told The Daily Star, "The complainant should have obtained government approval before filing the case. As a policeman I know that this type of case requires government approval before it is filed. For this reason I did not take the complaint as a case."

"I also sought instructions from the CMM court in this regard but it did not give any directive," he added.

In an instant reaction last evening, Advocate Shahdeem Malik told The Daily Star that the police deliberately proceeded in such a way that the court had no option but to dismiss the case.

"But the police must answer why they did not take approval from the government," he said adding that it is certainly the responsibility of the police as a complainant is unable to get government approval.

"I would expect an investigation by the police department itself as to why the law enforcers did not take government approval in this regard," Shahdeem Malik said.

After the case was filed against the three, Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hosein said an individual cannot file a sedition case.

Mohammad Fazlur Rahman, a freedom fighter of Keraniganj, filed the sedition case against Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid, its Assistant Secretary General Abdul Quader Molla and Jamaat sympathiser and

Abdur told The Daily Star.

He said, "As per the terms and conditions signed between the clients and the bank, the bank is not liable for stolen goods." He however said, "The bank's top management will take the final decision regarding the matter."

Section 8 of the terms and conditions the clients had signed, reads, "The Bank will not be held liable or responsible for any loss or damage to any article, document, or valuables deposited in the locker as a result of theft, robbery, fire or any other incident or pilferage."

"We kept the valuables deposited in the bank and for that we pay the bank, so it must be liable," said an affected locker renter.

Although the bank management claimed that they informed most of the renters over the phone about the incident on Sunday night and sent letters to all of them through a courier service, most of the renters gathered at the bank yesterday said venting their anger that they neither got any phone call nor did they receive any letter until noon yesterday.

Rezwana Khukumoni, an affected locker renter, said when she went to the bank around 10:15am on Sunday to access her locker, a bank staff who was accompanying her first entered the locker room, soon to come out of the room saying she would not be able to go inside due to some problems in the room.

The price of edible oil was stable. It rose by Tk 8-10 per litre in the last two weeks.

BDR gets

FROM PAGE 1
to keep the irrigation pumps operational throughout the Boro season.

Besides, it decided to form a high-level committee headed by the energy secretary to scrutinise the proposal for third round international bidding for hydrocarbon exploration in maritime Bangladesh.

The committee would be set up drawing representatives from the ministries of finance, planning, foreign and law, National Board of Revenue and Bangladesh Navy.

The Committee on Economic Affairs also approved a food ministry proposal for buying 2 crore pieces of jute bags from Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation without giving a mandatory 10 percent performance guarantee.

PIB organised the seminar on the eve of the caretaker government's one year in office. Oliur Rahman, senior instructor of PIB, presented the keynote with Information Secretary Jamil Osman in the chair.

"We're not trying to stick to power, we don't dream of retaining to power... We're trying to salvage democracy from ruination," said the adviser.

It is the responsibility of the whole nation to establish democracy, he said. "We need a partnership between the caretaker government and the people to reform democracy."

"If democracy is not safe, press freedom is not secured," he said, adding that the goal of both the government and the media is same -- democracy in the country.

Democracy and press freedom has to be uttered in one breath, Mainul quoted late journalist Obaidul Haq.

Saying that the present government should have good relations with the press, he asked newspaperers to work with responsibility.

The biggest criterion of press freedom is public interest, he said, asking journalists not to report whatever they see or come to their minds but to write with responsibility considering public interest.

Everyone can own a newspaper, but newspapers must be run by editors who are journalists, he noted.

Saying that the caretaker government doesn't need reforms for

roads of Dhaka cover only 5-6 percent.

According to the BoI proposal, the 52-kilometre subway will have six routes with 50 stations connecting almost 80 percent of the city area.

The underground rail system will have the capacity to transport on average 40 lakh passengers a month.

The first route would start from Gabtoli and end at Sayedabad via Mohakali and it would be connected with the second route, Uttara to Mohakali, at the Mohakali bus terminal.

The third route, Pallabi to IDB Bhaban, will be connected with the first route as well.

The fourth route will be from Shyamoli to Elephant Road, which will cover Shyamoli, Adabor, Mohammadpur, Dharmondi, Jagatola, Rayerbazar and Hazaribagh areas. It will be connected with the first route at Shyamoli and Elephant Road forming the first loop.

Starting from Sayedabad, the fifth route will end at Tejgaon Satrasta via Malibagh, Moga bazar and Kamalapur Rail Station. It will also be connected with the first route and it will form the second loop almost as long as the first loop in the network.

Completing the entire network, the sixth route from Sayedabad to Gulistan will connect all the entry points of the megacity.

The initiative to construct the subway in Dhaka was taken during the BNP-Jamaat government and a private company was primarily selected for the project.

After assuming power, the present caretaker government halted the work of the project and in February last year, it said that the next political government would complete the work.

Later in November that year, the government, however, shifted from its decision and made a fresh move about the project considering it as a priority work to ease traffic congestion of the capital.

Police have initiated investigations as well as an all out effort to locate the perpetrators of this crime and to establish the whereabouts of the stolen locker contents.

The affected locker holders of the bank have been informed of the incident and have been advised to provide all possible assistance to Mohammadpur police in connection with the ongoing investigations.

BRAC Bank will continue to make every endeavour to keep the concerned locker holders informed on all developments in this regard.

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Law Adviser Mainul Hosein

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