

42 bombs

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Masudur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of DMP, said police, acting on a tip-off, conducted a raid at Jubo Dal activist Ataur Rahman Litu's Meerhajirbagh house at about 9:30am.

They recovered the explosives from a sand-pile lying beside the stairs on the ground floor of the multi-storied building, he said.

Law enforcers arrested Belayet Hossain, 40, manager-cum-caretaker of the house, as the building owner Litu was on the run, said the ADC.

Petrol bombs and cocktails were wrapped up with red scotch tape, witnesses said.

Detectives were quizzing Belayet to find out reasons for keeping the bombs at the house and their sources as well. "Police are trying to arrest Litu," ADC Rahman added.

ADB wants

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Thevakumar.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said the World Bank had made allegations of irregularities in four projects taken during the tenures of the last caretaker government and the BNP-led four-party alliance government.

The minister was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day regional conference on Public Investment Management. Planning Minister AK Khandker chaired the conference titled "Improving the Efficiency of Public Investment Management".

Of the projects taken by the present government, only the Padma Bridge project has come under question from the World Bank, said Muhith.

The World Bank, the largest donor and coordinator of the project, has recently asked Canadian police to investigate allegations of corruption against SNC Lavalin, a Montreal-based company, for getting selected as a consultant of the Padma Bridge project.

"We have not yet received any document about the allegation of irregularities involving the project but the government suffers from the pitfall of the allegation," said Muhith.

On allegation against the Canadian company, the minister said consultant for the Padma Bridge project has not been appointed yet.

He hinted that the Canadian company's bid for consultancy on the project could be cancelled.

Other parties can be considered for the job as the complaint has been made against a single company, said Muhith.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are probing the allegation of corruption against SNC Lavalin that allegedly violated the Canadian law in pursuing the company's bid for consultancy work of the Padma Bridge project.

Viqarunnisa

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In the case, allegations were also brought against Husne Ara Begum, the principal of the school and college, and Lutfur Rahman, in-charge of the Bashundhara branch, that they tried to cover up the incident and delayed taking action against the culprit.

Yesterday's ruling came after the victim's father submitted a no-confidence petition challenging the dropping of the names of Husne Ara and Lutfur Rahman from the charge sheet.

Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station and also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet on August 11 dropping the names.

The school authorities fired Porimol on July 5 following widespread criticism and agitation from students and other quarters. He was arrested the following day.

On July 11, Porimol confessed to raping the student.

DGFI meddled

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d' affairs of the US embassy in Dhaka Geeta Pasi said in a cable that reporters have "minders" who shadow their movements and routinely call or send text messages to the reporters with "advice" on stories to report or suppress as well as on the tone of coverage.

In another cable, she said pressure on the journalists, however, eased and military interference in their coverage reduced, particularly since late May 2007.

Referring to editors of different newspapers, one cable said pressure on them in January and February 2007 has resulted in increased self-censorship.

"Electronic media, however, still need to provide advance information on political programming," said the 2007 cable.

In the aftermath of the August 20-22 nationwide anti-government agitation in 2007, the DGFI told TV stations to halt all talk shows, which had become the country's most popular and free-wheeling from the public disclosure, it added.

In September 2007 the office of the then information adviser Mainul Hossain distributed guidelines for the resumption of TV talk shows that included numerous restrictions to prevent anti-government comments being made on

BDR carnage trial

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Shakil Ahmed were among the 74 people killed in the carnage at Pilkhana. The body of Shakil's wife was also retrieved from one of the mass graves.

The court yesterday reminded the defence lawyers not to ask irrelevant and repetitive questions to the witness. But the lawyers continued to do this.

"It is not cross-examination, rather it seems it is a programme of lawyers to appease their clients," the court then remarked.

The court also asked the prosecution to make copies of relevant chapter of the Evidence Act, and distribute those among the defence lawyers to teach them how to cross-examine.

The defence counsels mainly questioned the complainant, former officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station, about the 74-hour delay in filing the case and shifting it to New Market Police Station, and content of the First Information Report.

Explaining the delay, the complainant said collection of information, review of the whole situation and taking government approval in some matters were the reasons behind.

Two of the counsels told the complainant and first witness, former othat they think the mutiny was the result of conflict of interests among the army officers, but on instructions from the

Two killed

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man was run over by a passenger bus around 8.30pm when he was crossing Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

Enraged, people near the accident spot broke glasses of four vehicles including the bus. The driver and other staff of the bus fled the scene leaving the vehicle.

Mahubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station, said they seized the bus.

In Tejgaon, Monowara Begum, 50, a sweeper of Dhaka City Corporation, was hit by a van around 5:00am in front of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute.

Some co-workers of Monowara, who were also sweeping the place at the time, took her to DMCH where she succumbed to her injuries in the afternoon.

Sushma

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She stressed that Indian foreign policy was good for regional cooperation, and was drafted by the central government in the interest of India, no matter which party was in power.

She however said relations with China needs 'careful handling'.

Talking about the Bangladesh trip, she said it would have been better had West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accompanied Singh to Bangladesh.

Responding to questions, Sushma, who is in Singapore on an official trip said, "Relations between the two countries (India and Bangladesh) have strengthened. As for Teesta water sharing, it would have been better if the prime minister would have taken the chief minister of West Bengal along."

She added, "There was some communication gap that is why she (Mamata) did not join the delegation. Since she was not in the delegation, the prime minister thought it would be safe to just keep it aside for a later period. (But) That is not the end, beginning has been very, very good."

Touching on India's foreign policy and its relations with neighbours, Sushma Swaraj called for 'careful handling' of relationships with China. Asked to elaborate further on careful handling, Sushma, who was speaking to journalists after delivering a public lecture 'Building Bridges for Peace and Regional Cooperation India's role with its East Asian Neighbours' said, "I have used the word careful handling. Careful handling says everything."

Responding to questions on the recent media reports of an alleged incident between the Indian and Chinese naval ships in the South China Sea, she said the Chinese have contradicted it.

Sushma, however, quickly pointed out that there were complexities in relations between the two countries and the relations should be handled carefully.

In her lecture, he highlighted India's need to further act on its 'Look East Policy'.

Housing

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Mohammad Jahangir said they have heard that some people have illegally occupied the hill at Kolatoli and built some establishments. Grabbers used to raze hills during the day, but these days they are doing it at night, Selim added.

On Monday, police arrested 27 workers for hill cutting and filed a case against 29 people including Mujibur Rahman with Cox's Bazar Model Police Station under Environment Protection Law. All the arrested were later released on bail.

Joynal Bari, deputy commissioner (DC) of the district, visited the spot. "The microwave station may collapse anytime, disrupting the district's wireless communication," he said.

Set up in 1976, the tower maintains wireless connection and satellite transmission with the rest of the country.

The DC said a master plan is being implemented on 90,000 acres of land to build a planned Cox's Bazar. The Cox's Bazar Development Authority, which has been formed recently, will supervise the job, he added.

Anyone willing to build any establishment in the district will have to take permission from the authority, he said, adding that a drive will be launched to demolish all illegal structures in the district.

Illegal organ trade

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who interrogated the suspected chief of an organ-trading syndicate.

The syndicate lured over 200 people, from Joypurhat alone, into selling their organs for money.

The investigators' observations have been supported by the testimony of those who sold their organs by faking their identities.

None of the seven organ sellers of Joypurhat, whom The Daily Star interviewed, could recall that their identity was verified at least once.

Four members of Shaharul Islam's family, who sold their kidneys, said nobody ever asked for their identity.

"It was apparent that in no way I could be the recipient's kin. I was wearing ragged clothes while the recipient was rich enough to afford a costly liver transplant in a wonderful hospital," said Mehadi, 23, a rickshaw-van puller of Bamongram of Joypurhat who was lured into selling his kidney but ended up selling a lobe of his liver instead.

Mehdi, on his first-ever trip to the capital, was talked to by doctors of LabAid hospital, who only assured him that his liver would grow back.

Private hospitals including LabAid and Apollo, however, claimed that they had several doctors interview the donors to crosscheck their identities even though they had certificates of identity.

"We did everything in our knowledge and were guided by the rules of the country," said Director of LabAid Maj Mahub.

So far 18 kidney transplant surgeries were carried

out in Apollo Hospital while two in LabAid. Other private hospitals like United and Square did not disclose to The Daily Star the number of transplant operations they had done.

The nexus of interest between private hospitals and organ traders is evident from the fact that none of the sellers from Joypurhat were given any document that says they had donated their organs. The arrested suspects of the syndicate also confessed to have collaborated with doctors of private hospitals.

They also named two institutions--Columbia Asia Health Care and Trade Worth Ltd--that made necessary arrangements from fake relationship certificates to getting visa for the sellers to travel abroad for the surgery. The offices of these "institutions" are now closed and the police are trying to catch the people involved in the organisations.

Moniruzzaman, however, said, "It seems the private hospitals are not directly involved in the organ trade but becomes one of the main beneficiaries of the trade by carrying out the transplant surgeries at high cost."

Usually a private hospital charge between Tk 5 lakh and Tk 7 lakh for a kidney transplant surgery while liver transplants cost about Tk 30 lakh.

Kidney transplant surgeries cost no more than Tk 50,000 at the National Institute of Kidney and Urology, a public hospital. The hospital authorities said the operation should not cost more than Tk 1 lakh considering medical treatment patients receive in

Bar raised high

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Entrepreneurs must have an initial capital of Tk 400 crore to apply for setting up a bank, and an equivalent amount has to be collected through Initial Public Offer (IPO) in three years of the bank's inception.

The applicants seeking permission to set up new banks will have to meet 20 such conditions.

Another board member said one of the conditions stipulates that if anyone is accused in a case for defaulting on loan or tax, the person cannot apply for setting up a bank.

Another condition says sponsors are not allowed to buy stakes in the new banks with the money borrowed from any bank or financial institution.

The number of branches of a new bank has to be the same both in urban and rural areas. Minimum 5 percent of the bank's loan has to be disbursed in the agriculture sector and minimum 10 percent of the bank's net income must be spent on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Besides, Tk 10 lakh must be deposited with the central bank as application fees for

the proposed bank.

Sponsor shareholders with more than 5 percent share of a new bank must sign a capital maintenance agreement with a mention that if the new bank fails to maintain minimum capital in the future, the entrepreneurs will individually or jointly fill the deficit.

An entrepreneur can have a minimum share of Tk 1 crore and a maximum of 10 percent of the total capital.

Any individual, company or members of a family will not be allowed to hold more than a maximum of 10 percent of the total shares of a new bank. The bank's sponsor shares are not transferable in three years of the bank's inception without the central bank's permission.

Bangladesh Bank yesterday approved the revised guidelines with these conditions for setting up new banks.

Bangladesh now has 47 banks -- the highest in the subcontinent. The central bank did not allow setting up any new banks since 2001.

Coming under pressure from an influential section, the finance ministry recently sent a letter to the central

17 corrupt

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suspended until then, said communications ministry officials.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain took the actions yesterday evening. An order in this regard was sent to RHD last night, the ministry officials said.

Confirming the departmental actions, the minister said he will not tolerate any corruption in his ministry. "I invited Transparency International Bangladesh to see the activities of my ministry in a bid to ensure transparency," he told The Daily Star last evening.

The ministry also reshuffled 10 administrative officers yesterday to bring better discipline in its activities.

Forty-two RHD officers and employees voluntarily went to the truth commission during the two-year of the immediate past military backed caretaker regime, confessed to their corruption and got clemency by handing over small portions of the ill-gotten money to the government.

Yesterday's punitive actions came following a recent spree of media reports about corruption in the communications ministry and subsequent demand for actions from a cross-section of the population, according to ministry sources.

Although ruling Awami League in its election manifesto promised to fight corruption with a strong hand, until yesterday the government made no move against self-confessed corrupt officials in different ministries and departments since assumption of power. Instead, many corrupt officers were promoted to important positions.

A total of 448 government officials and employees went to the truth commission, confessed to corruption, and got clemency.

The communications ministry is the first to take measures against such personnel, although it also had stalled on taking actions for quite a long time.

Meanwhile, the corrupt officials and those who were benefited by them strongly lobbied the government high-ups all through yesterday in a bid to thwart the communications ministry's move.

The communications minister received a number of telephone calls from different persons yesterday requesting him to refrain from the move, but he remained adamant about taking actions, the sources said.

About coming to the decision in the evening, a high official of the ministry said, "It took all day to come to the decision because we were busy plugging the loopholes, so the punished personnel cannot slip through."

The officers who were made OSDs are: immediate past chief engineer Shahab Uddin; Additional Chief Engineer Abdul Aziz Joarder; Superintendent Engineer Sohrab Hossain Mia; subdivisional engineers Golam Mohammad and Abdul Halim; executive engineers Manju Ahmed Bhuiyan, Khandake Golam Mostafa, Piar Ahmed, Jorjis Hossain, Sanaul Haq, Badrul Alam and Shafiqul Alam Bhuiyan; and assistant engineers Nurul Haq, Mostak Ahmed Chowdhury, Noor Alam, Abdur Razzak and Abdul Motin.

The two employees who were punished are Head Assistant Mazharul Islam and Work Supervisor Abdul Latif Biswas.

No extension

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At the press meet, the tax administration announced a six-day-long Income Tax Fair to be held in all divisional cities from September 17, 2011.

Among other services, people will be able to collect Tax Identification Number (TIN) instantly from the fair.

In Dhaka, the fair will be organised at the Officers Club on Bailey Road and open for visitors from 10:00am to 6:00pm on all six days.

In the last three years, the tax authority extended the time for submission of income tax returns although it had initially been strict about not extending the deadline.

Last year, NBR increased the time for tax return submission by a week following demand from the business chambers. In 2009, the deadline was extended for a month. And in the year 2008, it was extended twice - a month each time.

Out of 26 lakh TIN holders, only 9.0 lakh pay income tax, according to NBR.

Abul asks all to help TIB probe

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government body, chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission Ghulam Rahman said yesterday.

His comments came a day after Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain invited Bangladesh chapter of the international graft watchdog to probe if there is any corruption in his ministry.

The minister's unusual move came amid allegations of corruption in the bidding process of the \$2.9-billion Padma Bridge project.

The World Bank, the largest donor and coordinator of the project, has recently asked Canadian police to investigate a Montreal-based company for allegedly resorting to corruption to be selected as a consultant of the project.

WB Vice-president Isabel Guerrero dashed to Dhaka this week to convey the bank's corruption concern to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

The allegations are delaying the start of the construction of the 6.1 km long bridge.

Muhith told the WB official that the government would rather drop the companies accused of corruption from the bridge project than further delaying its construction.

In asking TIB to investigate his ministry's activities during the last two and half years Abul Hossain claimed that he is an honest man and has nothing to hide. He directed officials of his ministry to cooperate with TIB, he said.

"Transparency International Bangladesh is an international non-government organisation. An NGO like this does not have any authority to investigate corruption of a government institution and certify its transparency," said Ghulam Rahman, the top boss of the country's anti-graft watchdog.

Echoing the ACC chief, former caretaker government adviser Akbar Ali Khan said TIB is unable to act on the ministry's request legally and professionally.

"TIB is an organisation run by social scientists. It does not have specialisation in the act of investigation," he said.

The communications ministry copied to the ACC the letter it sent to TIB. The ACC said it is yet to receive the copy.

However, Ghulam Rahman said the commission is not "an institution to issue transparency certificate."

He said they would welcome if the minister provides specific information to investigate corruption.

TIB is giving a second thought to the invitation. "We cannot do it if the matter involves criminal investigation," said TIB Executive Director Iftekaruzzaman. TIB can carry out investigative research, he added.

Iftekaruzzaman, however, said TIB will get involved only after reaching a mutual understanding with the ministry on the terms and reference of its work.