

STEALING OF SEIZED GOLD

ACC to sue 3 policemen

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission will file a case against three policemen and two others arrested Monday night in connection with stealing 165 gold bars seized from smugglers.

The arrestees are Sub-inspector Manjurul Islam and constables Wahidul Islam and Akash Chowdhury of Rampura Police Station, their source Sajib Shikder and Mahfuz Alam Rony, a driver.

A Dhaka court yesterday sent them to jail after Fazlul Haque, an inspector of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, produced them before it with a forwarding report.

In the report, Fazlul said the five were involved in the alleged misappropriation of 165 gold bars.

He appealed to the court to keep them in jail until a case under the ACC Act was filed against them, the DB official said.

Detectives Monday night held the five in connection with taking the gold bars.

Of the bars, 149 were recovered

from the homes of the arrestees and their relatives in Gazipur, Bogra and Narayanganj. At least 16 bars are still missing.

On March 13, a gang of smugglers abandoned 235 gold bars in a car in Banasree area of the capital after being chased by a police team. But Rampura police recorded seizure of only 70 gold bars.

Surprisingly, the driver of the car, Samir Biswas, along with alleged smuggler Jahid Hossain went to Rampura Police Station to get their car back four days after the incident, said Joint Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Monirul Islam at a briefing at DMP Media Centre on Tuesday.

When police arrested the duo, Samir claimed that there had been a total of 235 gold bars in the car, not 70.

After this, police high-ups closed Officer-in-Charge Kripa Sindhu Bala and OC (investigation) Nasim Ahmed of Rampura Police Station.

An investigation was launched which led to the arrests of the police-

Denmark

FROM PAGE 1 Arab Emirates or a consortium comprising more than one country should be awarded the job.

The committee yesterday sat at the PMO and discussed merits of the proposals of the three countries.

PMO Secretary Abul Kalam Azad chaired the meeting.

"Denmark has shown interest in the deep-sea port project and was supposed to make a presentation before the committee today [yesterday]", said Principal Secretary to the PMO Abdus Sobhan Sikder, who is also the chief of the committee.

He said the Danish team has deferred the presentation and for this they could not make a final decision. The Danish team would make a presentation soon.

PMO sources claimed that the Danish prime minister was supposed to visit Bangladesh to talk about the port project with the Bangladesh prime minister but the visit has been postponed.

Jamal Abdul Naser, chief executive officer of the Deep Seaport Cell at the shipping ministry, told The Daily Star after the meeting, "We evaluated the proposals of the three countries at the meeting. But no decision was made."

Naser, also an additional secretary of the ministry, said a team from the Netherlands had reached the country and held a meeting with the shipping secretary on April 1 about the deep-sea port project.

Subhan must

FROM PAGE 16 secretary of Pabna Peace Committee which was formed in May 1971.

In July that year, he became vice-chairman of the anti-liberation organisation and organised the Razakar Bahini, an auxiliary force of the Pakistan army, in Pabna.

He was elected unopposed as a member of the National Assembly of Pakistan in 1971 when the nation was engaged in a life-and-death battle against the Pakistan army and its local collaborators, said Simon.

"The role of accused Maulana Abdus Subhan in 1971 and his collusion with the Pakistani army were evident from the information published in the East Pakistan Police Abstract of Intelligence," he said.

Simon also told the tribunal that Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, who also hails from Pabna and is facing a war crimes trial, had good links with Subhan during the war as both were "close associates of Pakistani army for their anti-liberation stances."

Nizami was the chief of the Jamaat's then student wing, Islami Chhatra Sangha, and alleged commander of Al-Badr Bahini, an auxiliary force of Pakistani army.

The most notable of the nine charges brought against Subhan is killing of 300-400 people, including Hindus by the Pakistani army and its

local collaborators under his leadership at several villages in Satbaria union of Sujanagar upazila on May 12, 1971.

As the then chief of the Jamaat in Pabna, Peace Committee's vice-chairman and an alleged organiser of Razakar Force in 1971, Subhan will have to shoulder joint and individual criminal responsibility under section 4(1) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, Simon said.

The Jamaat, its then student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha, Peace Committee, Razakar, Al-Badr, Al-Shams fall under his [Subhan] organisational superstructure, he claimed.

Simon also read out the nine charges brought against Subhan.

After a 17-month-long probe against Subhan, the war crimes investigation agency submitted its final probe report to the prosecution on September 12, 2013.

Three days later the prosecution submitted the formal charges. The tribunal indicted him on December 31.

Meanwhile, the defence yesterday filed a petition seeking exemption for Subhan from appearing in court during the trial on health grounds. The court will hear the petition on April 7.

Subhan, son of Sheikh Naimuddin and Nurani Begum of Sujanagar upazila in Pabna, was arrested on September 20, 2012.

UK minister

FROM PAGE 16 development programmes," said Duncan at the end of his three-day visit to Bangladesh.

About the current status of BNP Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman in the UK, he said any decision on repatriating the BNP leader will be made as per British law.

The UK minister said he has respect for Bangladesh's political system and its polls results. However, the last national election was of course unusual as a major party did not contest it, he mentioned.

Proper democracy, he added, requires election of people in a free, fair and trusted election to govern the country. Those who are elected are entrusted with the power to govern but are held accountable for the way they govern, noted the UK leader.

Duncan said he would tell Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that political stability is important for the economic growth of this country and it is time to look ahead, not to focus on a political battle.

The prime minister should ensure an enlightened government for the good of the people and she has opportunity to do so, he observed.

He stressed the need for a free press which is an essential part of democracy. "You [journalists] are part of that free press. And given the unusual structure of an election, it gives you an even greater responsibility for running reports and analysis in your newspapers."

Lanka face West Indies

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The first women's semifinal will also take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur with Australia taking on the West Indies, in a repeat of 2012's knock-out game in Sri Lanka. Both teams finished with six points after the group stages and it too promises to be an exciting encounter.

The men's teams' journeys to the semis have been equally intense. Sri Lanka began by scoring a five-run win over South Africa and then routing the Netherlands for just 39. They batted well against England too and had it not been for a special century from Alex Hales, they would have confirmed a spot with a match in hand.

Instead they got themselves in a do-or-die position against New Zealand; a game they would have lost had it not been for Rangana Herath's heroics. The Lions, however, will be counting on that momentum generated from the win against the Black Caps.

The West Indies have witnessed a similar terrain, having twice come back from the grasps of defeats. Their captain Darren Sammy has been their man-in-form, averaging an astonishing 101 in four matches. His hits at the death of the innings have almost single-handedly taken the West Indies across.

In what is expected to be a battle between the spinners today, Sammy's hits, on a turning wicket in Mirpur, towards the end can prove to be a crucial aspect in the game. Spinners Samuel Badree and Sunil Narine will be the other players the team will be counting on. Badree, who has opened the bowling for them, has so far taken 10

wickets and has been an absolute killer upfront. Narine, who has so far bowled at an economy rate of 4.50, plugs in the runs later on.

The Lankans, on the other hand will be in a dilemma regarding their spin attack. While off-spinner Sachitra Senayanake will hold one end, whether it will be Herath or Ajantha Mendis from the other is an aspect that they might be dwelling upon.

The conditions in Chittagong, which saw plenty of dew in the evening and a bit of grass on the wicket, probably could have been the reason why they did not play Herath until the game against New Zealand, in Dhaka, with a friendlier outfield and a more turning wicket might be ideal for Herath's slow-left armers.

While the spin-attack may battle neck and neck, Sri Lanka's pacers though will have the edge over the West Indians. With the underrated Nuwan Kulasekera and the red-hot Lasith Malinga in their ranks, they might as well prove to be the key. Malinga might face the important job of restricting Sammy towards the end of the innings.

For the West Indies, it's been Krishmar Santokie's medium pacers that have been working out well so far.

Even the batting line up seems to be evened out with both sides having aggressive openers, a comparatively sober middle-order, and high-flying finishers. Come this evening, the semifinal contest could well be the best game that the tournament will have seen thus far.

US EMBASSY

Interview waiver for Bangladeshi visa applicants

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US Embassy yesterday announced an interview waiver programme for "qualified" Bangladeshi non-immigrant visa applicants.

This programme is not for first-time applicants and is only for certain applicants renewing their visas, said a press release of the US Embassy in Dhaka.

The programme permits consular officers to waive interviews for those who are renewing a visa, are citizens or residents of Bangladesh and are currently residing in Bangladesh, and are applying for the same type of visa as previously issued on or after January 1, 2008.

This means only those who have already been issued the US visa at least once and have not breached any US law or other visa conditions or have no change in their personal details submitted in the previous visa application, are eligible for the waiver.

The Embassy encourages anyone interested in the program to visit the page: http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/interview_waiver_program.html.

Admin, lawmen

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At the conference, the EGW disclosed its findings after monitoring 1,004 polling centres in 34 upazilas during the fifth phase of upazila election on Monday.

The voter turnout rate was around 63.7 percent and around 10 percent votes were fake, it claimed.

Besides, vote rigging, violence, intimidating voters, violation of electoral code of conduct and other sorts of irregularities occurred in around half of the observed upazilas, according to EWG's written statement.

It had found that many ballot papers were inside the ballot boxes before voting started in three polling centres of Laxmipur Sadar upazila.

Polling officers, in Sadar upazilas of Laxmipur, Satkhira and Tangail, sent back many voters from booths only painting their fingers with irremovable ink and said their votes were already cast.

In Belkuchi upazila of Sirajganj, law enforcers played silent role while a chairman aspirant's supporters forcibly entered the booths and put ballot papers in the ballot boxes after sealing.

In Sreepur upazila of Gazipur, some people forcibly entered the vote counting room and asked the presiding officer to write voting result as per their wish which the officer followed.

The EWG also raised questions about the accuracy of vote counting. Presiding officers in at least 12 percent polling booths in the upazilas did not hang voting result as per law, it claimed.

At least 47 EWG observers faced resistance in observing polls and vote counting process as presiding officers did not allow them.

EWG Director Abdul Alim and other top level officials of the organisations, among others, were present at the function.

HSC exams begin today

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equivalent examinations at 2,352 centres under 10 education boards.

The exams will also be held in five overseas centres in Doha, Abu Dhabi, Jeddah, Riyadh and Tripoli for 202 candidates.

"We have made all preparations to hold the examinations in a peaceful atmosphere," said the minister.

Of the 11,41,374 examinees, more than 9.24 lakh students will sit for the HSC exams under eight general education boards. Some 1.07 lakh students will appear in Alim tests under Madrasa Board and 1.04 lakh students will take Business Management exams under Technical Board.

Besides, 3,769 students of Diploma in Business Studies will also take the tests under the Dhaka Board, according to the data of Bangladesh Inter-Board Co-ordination Sub-Committee.

The HSC candidates will take Bangla First Paper on the first day while the madrasa students Quran Majid. The theoretical exams would end on June 5 with the practical exams beginning on June 7.

Of the total examinees, about 2.15 lakh are irregular, who either failed in

one or more subjects, while some 3,722 will take the improvement examinations, according to the data.

The minister said 25 papers will be held in the creative question method introduced at HSC level in 2012.

"We've given around five lakh teachers training on the method so that they do not face any problem," Nahid said.

Asked whether there has been a fall in the quality of education, the education minister said the students can correctly give their answers in the creative question method and therefore, they do well in the exams. "It's not true that the quality of education will decline if the pass rate increases."

"Now many students are taking part in the international competitions and doing well in the contests because we have been able to improve the quality of our education, at least quite a bit," he added.

Asked whether his as well as his officials' visits at the exam centres disturb the examinees, Nahid said, "We've also discussed the matter among ourselves. This time, a few people will visit the centres and leave in the quickest possible time so that

AL activist shot dead

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unit of AL, sources said.

The clash ensued when the factions, led by Hossain Mondol and Jalal Mondol of the village, met to settle a dispute centering on an earlier clash on March 31.

The March 31 clash occurred between activists of the factions on the issue of the upazila parishad

election, said Abu Sayeed, chairman of Varara union parishad.

The meeting had been arranged at the residence of a local AL leader last evening, he added.

At the meeting, the two groups failed to reach an agreement on a solution to the dispute, which led to violence around 7:30 pm, locals said.

Activists of both groups used weap-

ons during the clash. Amzad was hit by bullets and later succumbed to his injuries at Pabna Medical College Hospital, said Sayeed, who is vice president of Pabna Sadar upazila unit of AL.

Kazi Haniful Islam, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, however, said the clash happened between the factions over the occupa-

Nato suspends

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government's decision to ditch a landmark EU association agreement.

Kiev also said on Tuesday that joining Nato was not a priority in a move that was also sure to satisfy Russia.

But tensions remained high more than two weeks after Moscow's takeover of Crimea, and Nato Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said the alliance was "suspending all practical cooperation with Russia, military and civilian".

He added however that "diplomatic lines of communication" remained open.

Rasmussen said he could not confirm Russia had pulled troops away from near the Ukrainian border as Putin pledged.

Ukraine and the United States have accused Russia of massing thousands of troops near the border and have expressed concern that Moscow plans to seize southeastern parts of Ukraine that are home to many ethnic Russians.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whom Russian President Vladimir

Putin had personally told of the troop pullback, said she had "no reason" to doubt his word.

With the conciliatory moves from Moscow, Nato stepped back from a floated idea to reinforce the alliance's military presence in countries bordering Russia, preferring for now to suspend cooperation and give more time to talks.

"I think everybody realises that the best way forward is a political and diplomatic dialogue," Rasmussen said, though he added Nato was "very determined to provide effective defence and protection of our allies".

One counter-measure apparently off the table for now is the idea to set up permanent military bases in Nato countries bordering Russia.

Eastern Nato members such as the Baltic states and Poland want a tougher stance against Russia and would welcome a deeper Nato presence within their borders.

However, Nato's supreme allied commander in Europe, US Air Force General Philip Breedlove yesterday

said Russia has massed all the forces it needs on Ukraine's border if it were to decide to carry out an "incursion" into the country and it could achieve its objective in three to five days.

Calling the situation "incredibly concerning", he said Nato had spotted signs of movement by a very small part of the Russian force overnight but had no indication that it was returning to barracks.

"This is a very large and very capable and very ready force," Breedlove said in an interview with Reuters and The Wall Street Journal. The Russian force has aircraft and helicopter support as well as field hospitals and electronic warfare capabilities.

He said Russia could have several potential objectives, including an incursion into southern Ukraine to establish a land corridor to Crimea, pushing beyond Crimea to Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odessa or even threatening to connect to Transnistria, the mainly Russian-speaking, separatist region of Moldova

Stalked, she takes her life

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Shaolin, Mithun, Al Amin, Masud and some others used to tease and stalk Shuva on her way to work.

On Tuesday around 9:00pm, Shaolin stopped Shuva on her way to a neighbour's house and asked her to spend some private time with him, said Liton.

Refused, the youth hurled abusive language at her and beat her up in public. The harassment caused her to commit suicide, alleged Liton, adding that Shuva told her father Sohrab Bapari about the assault when she had returned home.

After that it seemed she took the scope of the power failure to lock herself in room and hang from the ceiling fan. Within a few minutes, the family members noticed her absence and got her out breaking into the room, said Liton.

They had rushed her to a local clinic and then shifted her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 1:30am on Wednesday, he added.

Shuva died at 4:45am, according to the death certificate.

Sources at Dhaka Medical College morgue said it was a suicide case, but they could not confirm what exactly

caused the delay to her death.

Meanwhile, the stalker youths beat up Shuva's father and issued him threats not to file any case when Sohrab came home for money after admitting Shuva to the hospital, said a relative preferring anonymity.

Shuva's father yesterday filed a case in connection with eve-teasing and instigating someone to commit suicide with Kadamtoli Police Station.

Sub-Inspector Motaleb Hossain of the police station said they had arrested Masud and were trying to nab rest of the youths.