

Gold smuggling gang busted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday said they had busted a gold smuggling gang arresting 10 including its ringleader and seized 70 gold bars weighing eight kilograms and worth around Tk 3.6 crore.

Nine people of the gang except ringleader Nazrul Islam Liton, 46, were scheduled to fly for Malaysia Sunday evening, said Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam of Detective Branch (DB) of police at Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) media centre in the capital.

The nine were arrested near the Boarding Bridge-2 at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport with nine passports and currencies of different countries worth Tk 35 lakh, he added.

Acting on the information they had provided, the detectives arrested ringleader Liton raiding his house at Purana Paltan in the city a day later, he informed.

The law enforcers recovered 70 gold bars, Tk 3 lakh in cash and 5,000 Saudi riyals from Liton's possession.

The estimated price of eight kg gold bars was worth around Tk 3.6 crore, said DC (Media) of DMP Masudur Rahman.

Monirul said after a seizure of 106 SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Gold bars seized at Paltan in the capital and passports and foreign currencies seized at Hazrat Shahjalal Int'l Airport yesterday are displayed at the Detective Branch office on Minto Road.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Girl injured as abandoned bomb goes off

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A girl sustained injuries yesterday when an "abandoned crude bomb" went off near the village home of a High Court judge at Mahidipur village in Senbagh upazila of Noakhali.

Injured Farzana Akter, 12, daughter of rickshaw-puller Belal Hossain, was admitted to Senbagh Upazila Health Complex with injuries to her left hand, face and some other parts of body, reported our Noakhali correspondent.

She went to collect firewood around 8:00am near the house of Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, now a member of the International Crimes Tribunal. At that time, she saw a ball-like object that exploded as she struck it with a machete, police sources said.

The policemen, who were guarding the judge's home, rushed her to the health complex with the help of local people.

Mominul Islam, officer-in-charge of Senbagh Police Station, said police were investigating the incident.

Earlier, a petrol bomb was hurled allegedly by Jamaat-Shibir men at Jahangir's village home on December 13 last year, a day after the execution of war criminal and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah. No one, however, was hurt by the bomb that landed on the kitchen roof.

Contempt rule

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issued against him on the basis of a report published in English daily The Daily Star on May 18 under the headline "No rule of law".

Huda was relieved of the rule after he had expressed "sincere sorrow" and The Daily Star offered unconditional apology to the court through swearing affidavits.

He appeared before the HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain as per a court order on May 18.

The newspaper published the actual statement of Huda on May 29, and apologised to the judiciary for misquoting him in its May 18 report.

The media should remain cautious about publishing reports so that the image and dignity of the judiciary is not damaged, Justice Reza-Ul Hoque said during yesterday's proceedings.

Justice Altaf Hossain said the statement of the former CEC had changed the public perception of the judiciary, and that such a statement was harmful for all. Huda had not made such statements when he was in the office of CEC for five years, the judge added.

Dr Kamal Hossain appeared for Huda and barrister Tanjib-Ul Alam argued for The Daily Star.

PM sees

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Elected uncontested to the House from Narayanganj-5, Nasim died in India on April 29.

Paying rich tributes to the late legislator, the leader of the House said there are some families and individuals who have been targeted by some vested quarters time and again since the tenure of Yahya Khan in Pakistan and the successive governments in Bangladesh after 1975.

"Their [families and individuals] small offences are always magnified. But there are many people who commit major crimes, which are always overlooked by the vested quarters," noted Hasina.

She said if anyone commits a crime, that person will have to face trial. "And the law will take its own course.... But the nation will have to be careful so that no family is belittled politically and destroyed by conspiracies."

Describing Nasim's glorious role during the Liberation War and after the assassination of Bangabandhu, she said the nation will remember forever his rebellious role after the assassination of Bangabandhu.

The PM added: "He [Nasim] sacrificed his happiness, future and newly-wed wife only to avenge the murder of the Father of the Nation."

ZIA BACKED KILLERS
On the murder of Bangabandhu, she said it is true that a member of the Awami League Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed had killed Bangabandhu.

"But the killers of Bangabandhu -- Col Faruk, Col Rashid, Col Huda, Dalim -- got full support from Zia [Gen Ziaur Rahman]," she mentioned.

In an interview with the BBC, Col Faruk had said when they went to Gen Zia, they got his full support in the conspiracy of killing Bangabandhu, recalled the PM.

The first budget session of 10th parliament started at 5:05pm, with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

Earlier, the Business Advisory Committee at a meeting decided that the budget session will continue till July 3.

Mega projects the mainstay

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"This budget will pave way for what the government wants to achieve this term, which is visible progress for the country. The objectives for the term will be articulated this time and will be followed through in the remaining four budgets," he added.

Zahid Hussain, lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, welcomed the government's thought process behind the budget.

"It is good to see that the government has given more allocation to the ongoing high priority projects. The first part of the job is done," he told The Daily Star.

"Now the public wants to see the much-needed administrative attention such that the projects are implemented quickly."

Around Tk 80,315 crore will be allocated to the Annual Development Programme (ADP), 32 percent of which will go to 26 big projects.

The much-talked-about Padma bridge project, which will connect

the impoverished south-western districts with the capital, will receive Tk 8,100 crore, the highest allocation for any single project.

The bridge is expected to add between 1 and 2 percentage points to the GDP.

The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project will get Tk 2,006 crore, while Tk 4,557 crore will be allocated to nine big public sector power plants.

The long-delayed Dhaka-Chittagong four-lane project, said to be the economic corridor of the country, will get Tk 600 crore.

Another Tk 1,000 crore will be earmarked for the Metro Rail and Elevated Expressway projects, both of which will not only make the city dwellers' lives better but also contribute to economic growth, as traffic congestion eats up a huge amount of time and money.

The five water treatment plant projects in Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi cities will get Tk 2,200 crore and the Dhaka-Mymensingh four-

lane project Tk 400 crore.

Meanwhile, the size of the non-development budget is expected to rise 9 percent from the current year's revised budget to Tk 170,195 crore.

A finance ministry official said there would be nothing new in terms of non-development expenditure: the bulk of the allocation will be for salary and allowance for government staff, debt servicing, social safety net schemes and subsidies.

Interest payment will increase in the new fiscal year, as the government is borrowing more from domestic sources at high interest rates although \$19 billion of cheap funds from development partners are lying in the pipeline.

However, the spending on subsidy will be cut this year in a bid to keep budget deficit within the International Monetary Fund's limit. Electricity and fuel price may be hiked to cancel out the subsidy cuts.

The government has set the revenue collection target at Tk 183,535

crore, 17 percent higher than the current year's revised target.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is trying to collect about 81 percent of the target, which would be 20 percent more than this year's revised target.

The government will look to income tax and value-added tax to gear up revenue collections, with the two expected to rake in 76 percent of the desired sum.

The rich and the super-rich will be relied upon to hit the income tax collection target: the budget will introduce a new slab for high levels of annual income, where 30 percent tax would be imposed.

The NBR will also take special initiatives to collect more taxes from individuals owning more than one car and one house.

The budget will introduce 15 percent VAT in a number of areas as part of its preparation to impose the same amount of tax in all sectors from July 2015.

Big ammo haul along border

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The crime-busting force also found some cleaning kits from the spot.

The ammos were wrapped in polythene and there was nothing written about the manufacturing country on the shells, said Col Ziaul Ahsan, additional director general (operations) of Rab, who took part in the drive.

"As they were wrapped in polythene the ammos look new," he told The Daily Star by phone.

Acting on a tip-off, Rab personnel had been conducting a special drive

in the forest for the last few days, officials said.

Rab Media Wing Director Habibur Rahman flew there from Dhaka by a helicopter yesterday morning. He also took along with him at least four TV journalists.

The bunkers seem to have been built years ago.

Personnel from Rab headquarters and Rab-9 conducted the drive with the help of a dog squad and a bomb disposal unit.

"At one point of the drive, we found a hut made of hay. After dig-

ging several feet, a concrete slab appeared. Then we drilled a hole on the slab and found the bunker beneath the earth," Habib told this newspaper.

The drive was suspended at 5:00pm yesterday, but will resume this morning, report our Sylhet and Moulvibazar correspondents.

Locals said a clan of 20 to 25 Tripura families, the lone inhabitants inside the forest, live around half a kilometre from the place.

Sources in the law enforcement agencies said Indian separatist

groups, including National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), used the bordering forest area for shelter and as a training camp in the past.

On June 27, 2003, a truckload of ammunition was recovered in Bogra.

Investigators found links of NLFT and Ulfa (United Liberation Front of Asom) in that incident.

An investigator had told The Daily Star back then that the truck was loaded at Satchhari forest. He, however, could not say where the ammos



A Rab man looks up as he stands on a huge cache of ammunition, wrapped in polythene inside a bunker in Satchhari National Park of Habiganj.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Rossi's grandfather

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betrayed him. I'm going to support the US because there are traitors in Italy. It's upset all of us because we didn't expect it. Only two days ago, Prandelli had warm words for him."

Petrocelli continued: "[Prandelli's] not good enough to judge my grandson and there's nothing more I can say. I know that my grandson's fit and he has a medical certificate to prove it."

"Pepito is well prepared, he's in good shape and he didn't deserve something like this. My grandson has experience in other countries too."

8 months on

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top BNP leader had been leaked a day before the International Crimes Tribunal-1 delivered the judgement on October 1 last year, raising serious questions over the security of the highly protected tribunals.

Three days after the leak, detectives filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station against tribunal employees, cleaner Nayon Ali and office assistant Faruk Hossain, Salauddin's lawyer Fakrul Islam, his assistant Mehedi Hasan and several unnamed people under the Information Communication Technology Act, 2006.

The police arrested Nayon and Faruk the same day. Nayon in his confessional statement on October 10 said he had started delivering the draft using a flash drive to Fakhrul Islam's office from September 15 last year and earned Tk 500 to Tk 1,000 a day.

The police on November 20 last year arrested Fakrul but could not arrest Mehedi.

Mohammad Shahjahan, investigation officer of the case, told The Daily Star: "The investigation is now at the final stage, but we are waiting for the arrest of Mehedi Hasan."

Asked when they would submit the probe report, he said: "My higher authorities can say that."

Contacted last week, Deputy Commissioner of DB (South) Krishna Pada Roy, who is supervising the case, said: "I would not say it [investigation] is now at the final stage. Investigation is going on and it is not possible to tell the dateline.... We are trying to complete the investigation as early as possible," he said, adding, "You have to give us necessary time for conclusive disposal of the case."

He further said the evidence collected so far had proved the involvement of the three arrestees and Mehedi and they were looking for the latter.

Nasiruddin Mahmud said: "We [tribunal] are not satisfied with the progress of the investigation; actually, there is nothing to be satisfied with."

"The matter should be disposed of as early as possible for the sake of security of the tribunal," he added.

Tureen Afroz said the leak was an attempt to create a controversy over not only a specific case but also the entire war crimes trial proceedings. "So, the people involved in the incident must be detected," she said, adding, "But such delay is not expected."

Shahriar Kabir, executive president of Ekattarer Ghatik Dalal Nirmul Committee, said: "The investigation should not take eight months. It should have been done in seven to maximum 15 days."

Such incidents will occur again and the tribunal will fall under a security threat if the case is not dissolved properly, he added.

After the leak of Skype conversations between former ICT-1 chairman Justice Nizamul Huq and Belgium-based legal expert Ahmed Ziauddin in December 2012, war crimes trial campaigners had demanded an inquiry into the incident, but not much has apparently been done