

12 sued for robbery at jewellers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Two cases have been filed in connection with Saturday's robbery at two jewellery shops in the port city that also left a person dead.

Rapan Kanti Dhar, owner of one of the shops, Gini Gold Jewellers, filed a case with Kotwali Police Station in the early hours of yesterday against 12 people, among whom 10 were named. The other case, in which two people were accused, was filed by police with Pahartali station.

The alleged prime suspect Imtiaz Uddin alias Babul, who was arrested in a raid near Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium area hours after the robbery, was accused in both the cases, said Assistant Commissioner (Kotwali Zone) Shah Mohammad Abdur Rauf.

Around 9:00pm Saturday, a gang of robbers stormed Gini Gold Jewellers and Aparupa Jewellers in a market in front of Bangladesh Bank, cleaned out the showcases, and fled exploding bombs.

The explosion killed Md Syed, a 45-year-old street hawk. Later that day, police found the microbus, used in the robbery, abandoned in Madarbari area, said AKM Mohiuddin Selim, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Rapan Kanti in his case claimed the robbers looted gold ornaments worth Tk 4.40 lakh from his shop alone.

Two other robbers, injured in the explosion, were being treated at Chittagong Medical College Hospital and would be arrested later, the OC said.

"Police are trying to arrest the other accused," he added.

Close river

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The government should have engaged members of the army and the navy to deal with the situation, he said.

Dr Atiq Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, said the authorities could have contained the oil spill to a certain area, and then remove the oil from water.

Prof Abul Bashar of Dhaka University said the oil spill has harmed the forest's genetic resources that are unique in the world.

The Silent Nemo

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programmed to swim on its own. The unmanned underwater vehicle is able to make tight turns and move through the water quietly, making it ideal for surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

The Navy hopes it could be used to inspect the hull of a ship, check waters for threats such as mines or protrusions, deliver payloads including sonar and guidance packages, and access otherwise denied areas.

Over the past several weeks, Boston Engineering's tuna-sized device, also known as Ghost Swimmer, has been gathering data on tides, varied currents, wakes, and weather conditions for the development of future tasks.

"GhostSwimmer will allow the Navy to have success during more types of missions while keeping divers and Sailors safe," said Michael Rufo, director of Boston Engineering's Advanced Systems Group.

The GhostSwimmer was developed to resemble the shape and mimic the swimming style of a large fish.

At a length of approximately 5 feet and a weight of nearly 100 pounds, the GhostSwimmer vehicle can operate in water depths ranging from 10 inches to 300 feet.

"It swims just like a fish does by oscillating its tail fin back and forth," said Rufo.

Its bio-mimicry provides additional security during low visibility intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions and friendly hull inspections, while quieter than propeller driven craft of the same size, according to Navy Warfare Development Command (NWDC).

The robot is capable of operating autonomously for extended periods of time due to its long-lasting battery, but it can also be controlled via laptop with a 500-foot tether.

UN climate talks

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imposed too heavy a burden on emerging economies compared to the rich.

"We've got what we wanted," said Indian Environment Minister Prakash Javedekar, who said the text preserved a notion enshrined in a 1992 climate convention that the rich have to lead the way in making cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

It also satisfied rich nations led by the United States who say it is time for fast-growing emerging economies to rein in fast-rising emissions. China is now the biggest greenhouse gas emitter ahead of the United States, the EU and India.

US Special Climate Change Envoy Todd Stern said that a joint US-China deal last month to curb emissions had helped show new ways to bridge a standoff between rich and poor. "The announcement of a few weeks ago came in handy here," he said.

"This is a good document to pave the way to Paris," EU Climate Action and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete told Reuters at the end of the talks about limiting more floods, desertification, heat waves and rising sea levels.

Some environmental groups, however, said the deal, reached at a tent city on a military base in the Peruvian capital, was far too weak.

"We went from weak to weaker to weakest," Samantha Smith of the WWF conservation group said of

successive drafts at the Lima talks.

The idea of a UN deal with obligations for all nations marks a shift from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which obliges only the rich to cut emissions.

Christiana Figueres, the UN's climate chief, said Lima found a new way to define the obligations of rich and poor. "That is a very important breakthrough," she said.

"What we are seeing is a new form of international cooperation on climate change where all countries participate with a new set of rules," said Jennifer Morgan of the World Resources Institute think-tank.

The UN Climate Change Secretariat says that the combined pledges by all nations likely in Paris will be too weak to achieve a goal of limiting warming to an agreed goal of 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times.

Under the Lima deal, national pledges will be added up in a report by Nov 1, 2015, to assess their aggregate effect in slowing rising temperatures.

But, after opposition led by China, there will not be a full-blown review to compare each nation's level of ambition.

And the text lays out a vast range of options for the Paris accord, including the possibility of aiming for zero net global emissions by 2100 or earlier in a drastic shift from fossil fuels towards renewable energies such as wind and solar power.

Passage of bill

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December 23.

If the bill to operationalise the agreement is not considered and passed in the ongoing session, then it has to wait till the long budget session expected to begin sometime late February next year.

The bill needs to be passed by two-thirds majority of the members in both Houses of Indian parliament — Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha.

Since a consensus has emerged among all the major political parties concerned with the bill, including ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, main opposition Congress and Trinamool Congress, the passage should not be a problem.

The consensus is reflected in the "unanimous" report of the parliament standing committee submitted to parliament on December 1 which recommended the passage of the constitution amendment bill.

The committee, headed by Congress lawmaker Shashi Tharoor, has members from BJP, Congress and Trinamool Congress, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other parties.

However, right now it appears that during the ongoing winter session, the priority of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is to focus on passage of bills relating to Indian domestic economic reforms.

The bills may include Insurance Bill that seeks to enhance foreign direct investment limit in the capital-starved insurance sector and Companies Bill which aims at enhancing ease of doing business.

The official statement said that the bills proposed by the government for consideration and passing in Lok Sabha during the remainder of the session also include Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014 and Anti-Hijacking (Amendment) Bill.

The bill relating to the implementation of LBA was placed in Rajya Sabha in 2013 by the then Congress-led UPA government, drawing strong opposition from BJP which was then in the opposition.

However, BJP has taken a U-turn with Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself declaring more than a week ago that the bill was in India's long-term security interest.

HC summons heads

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which the institutions had taken extra fees from SSC candidates for 2015 academic year, Deputy Attorney General Biswojit Roy and Mahfujur Rahman Roman, lawyer for a high school in Kishoreganj, which is a party in the rule, told The Daily Star.

The institutions are Motijheel Ideal School and College, Milestone College, Viqarunnisa Noon School, Mirpur Bangla School and College, Dhaka Residential Model College, National Ideal School and College, Udayan High School, Raihan College, Lalbagh, Alimuddin High School, Mirpur, Mohammadpur High School, Government Laboratory High School, New Market, Armanitola Government High School, West End High School, Anandamoyee Girls High School, Holy Cross Girls High School, Siddheshwari Girls High School,

Ahmed Bawani Academy, YWCA School, Monipur High School, Mirpur Adarsha High School, Mirpur Shaheed Smriti High School, Jannat Academy Mirpur, and Haji Billat Ali Adarsha High School, Azampur, Advocate Mahfujur Rahman said.

Earlier on November 10, the same bench ordered the government to immediately stop charging of additional exam fees at schools across the country.

The court also issued a rule asking the government to explain why charging of extra examination fees should not be declared illegal.

It issued the rule following a report published in the Bangla daily Jugantor, which said the exam fee for an SSC student had been fixed at Tk 1,400 by the government, but the candidates had to pay eight times more.

The court also ordered the education board to submit a probe report in this regard.

JOURNALIST ZAGLUL CHY Tk 2 lakh bounty for driver, helper of killer bus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road transport and bridges ministry has announced a Tk 2 lakh award for providing it with correct information about the bus and its driver and helper responsible for the death of senior journalist Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury.

The announcement, made in a press release issued by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) yesterday, mentioned 5:00pm of December 22 as the deadline for sending information.

Zaglul fell on a road near Sonargaon intersection at Karwan Bazar on November 29 while trying to get off the bus. But the vehicle recklessly pulled away, leaving him critically injured. The renowned journalist later died at a private hospital.

The press release requested all to send the information to BRTA website -- www.brta.gov.bd/index.php/queries-complaints or email it to info@brta.gov.bd.

The BRTA can also be contacted by post or on mobile number 01712635465.

The statement said the information can also be sent to BRTA director (administration) through telephone number 02-9113133 or deputy director (administration), telephone number 02-9114088. Interested people can also give information to the BRTA after going to its office in the capital's Tejgaon area.

Identities of the informers would be kept confidential, added the statement.

Zaglul was the former chief editor and managing director of the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha. Before his tragic death, he was serving as consulting editor of the Financial Express.

ACC quizzes cop over illegal wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday interrogated a police officer for allegedly amassing wealth beyond the known source of income.

ACC Deputy Director Hamidul Hassan grilled Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman, now posted at Mill Barracks in the capital as the commandant of Range Reserve Force.

During interrogation at the anti-graft body headquarters, Mizan denied the allegations of accumulating wealth unlawfully, saying his wife Nipa Mizan earned the wealth from doing different businesses, said a source at the ACC.

In 2012, the commission launched the inquiry against Mizanur on an allegation that the police official and his wife had a fixed deposit of Tk 1.5 crore with different banks in the country and Nipa owned two fertiliser factories in Savar on the outskirts of the capital.

Apart from these, the couple had several luxurious flats in the capital, according to the ACC source.

On December 8, Hamidul took charge of inquiry into the allegations after two other ACC deputy directors had conducted inquiries into the matter separately, and both submitted their reports recommending the anti-graft body for dropping the matter as they found no prima facie evidence to substantiate the allegations.

Not convinced by the reports, the commission assigned Hamidul for further investigation.

ACC Deputy Director Hamidul told The Daily Star that he was examining related documents.

Police raid house of Bodi's step brothers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police yesterday raided the home of two step brothers of Awami League lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi in connection with drug trafficking at Teknaf of Cox's Bazar.

Brothers Faisal and Shafique are listed as Yaba traffickers by the Department of Narcotics Control, claimed Officer-in-Charge Moktar Hossain of Teknaf Police Station.

The Teknaf police team that conducted the raid at their Teknaf home failed to arrest Faisal and Shafique. However, they found their maternal uncle Shamsul Alam Potia, who is a Rohingya of Akiyab in Myanmar, in their home.

Police later filed a case against Faisal and Shafique in connection with harbouring a foreign national who had illegally entered Bangladesh territory. They also filed another case against Shamsul in connection with trespassing.

CU student shot dead

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university's shuttle train was the reason behind most of the fights.

After one such turf war, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) high-command dissolved its CU committee on June 10.

Last month, Chittagong city AL President ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury along with other AL leaders sat with the BCL groups of CU at his residence to bring an end to the long-standing feuds.

Yesterday's incident proved the effort went in vain.

According to campus sources, activists of a BCL faction known as Choose Friends with Care (CFC) were returning after placing wreaths at Shahid Buddhijibi Chottor marking the Martyred Intellectuals Day around 11:30pm.

In front of Shah Amanat Hall, some BCL men belonging to Varsity Express (VEx) group, allegedly backed by the administration, hurled abuse and threw brick chips at the CFC activists, triggering the clash.

The CFC group, at one stage, took shelter inside the dormitory but kept retaliating by throwing stones.

Ashrafuzzaman, Rubel Dey and Sharid Shovo of VEx group, started firing at CFC men who were standing on different floors of the hall, witnesses said.

Taposh, also a student of the dormitory, was standing on the second-floor balcony when he was shot in the chest, said a student residing in his adjacent room.

Taposh, an active member of CFC group, collapsed instantly on the

balcony, he said, adding police and proctorial body of the university were silent onlookers when the armed BCL men started firing.

Taposh along with four other injured was taken to Chittagong University health centre. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he breathed his last around noon.

The body was sent to his village home in Sunamganj later in the day.

SM Alauddin, who was chopped during the clash, demanded fair investigation into the incident, exemplary punishment of the culprits and resignation of the VC and the proctor.

Later, police raided Shah Jalal and Shah Amanat halls and picked up 35 students for interrogation.

They recovered one shotgun, five cartridge and 30 lethal weapons from different rooms of Shah Jalal Hall and two sacks of stones from Shah Amanat Hall, said Md Shahidullah, additional superintendent of police of Chittagong (North).

VEx led by former general secretary of CU unit BCL Ershad Hossain, and CFC led by former vice-president Amit Kumar Basu have been at loggerhead over establishing supremacy on the campus, BCL insiders said.

The university authorities have formed a five-member committee to probe the incident.

Contacted, the proctor denied the allegation of backing VEx group and said, "It's not possible for us to keep vigil at all the halls to see what Chhatra League is doing."

Tk 1,849cr Beximco loans

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regulator to forward the proposals to all seven banks that gave loans to the Group.

Janata Bank's board approved Beximco's proposal considering its contribution to the country's economy and employment generation, the bank's Managing Director Abdus Salam told The Daily Star.

Salam, however, said it would come into effect only upon the central bank's consent.

As per the rescheduling proposal, the bank would deduct 5 percent from each of Group's export proceeds which would later be adjusted in instalments, said a Janata Bank official.

The interest rate on the loans is 11 percent, much lower than the market rate of 13-14 percent.

But for the bank to reschedule the loans till September 30, 2025, the Group has to mortgage property worth more than Tk 1,000 crore in addition to its present collateral of Tk 113 crore, said the source.

The rescheduling time would include a grace period of two years, meaning the Group wouldn't pay any instalment till September 30, 2016.

However, the conglomerate would forfeit the rescheduling facility if it fails to pay any instalment.

Last month, Sonali Bank rescheduled Beximco Ltd's loan for 12 years till 2026 with an interest rate of 10 percent.

Both Janata and Sonali boards approved the loan proposals without taking any down payments from Beximco.

Wishing anonymity, a Janata Bank official said the Group's loans would be restructured, not rescheduled, implying that the provision of down payment is not mandatory in this case.

A number of bank officials and businesspersons said if Beximco is given such a benefit, other business groups may also demand similar

facility from banks.

Another Janata Bank official said the proposal was approved because they received it through the central bank. If any other business group wants to seek similar facility it must come through the BB.

However, several bank officials said the conglomerate lobbied high-ups of the BB and several banks to get the facility.

Abdus Salam said Beximco, one of the country's largest business groups, owes more than Tk 2,000 crore in loans to Janata Bank.

The bank considered the rescheduling proposal to make it possible for the conglomerate to repay its loans on time, he said.

In his letter to the central bank, Salman showed two reasons behind the Group's liquidity crisis -- politically motivated credit restrictions on the Group between 2001 and 2008, and repayment of Tk 800 crore in bank loans in the last three years.

Beximco Ltd, listed on the stockmarket, operates in textiles, real estate, hospitality, marine food, commodities trading, ICT, ceramics and aviation.

Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, former deputy governor of the central bank, told this correspondent that the BB would have to evaluate the rescheduling proposal cautiously before giving its consent.

On previous occasions, Beximco took loans from different banks resorting to irregularities, and later had those rescheduled using political clout, Khaled said.

According to the latest rescheduling proposal, the Group would get several facilities, including low interest rate, he said.

In the past, the Group availed itself of such facilities, and Bangladesh Bank would have to consider very cautiously whether it would give the conglomerate the same benefits over and over, said Khaled.

Anti-govt movement

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Mujibur Rahman, nayeb-e-amir of Jamaat-e-Islam, spoke at the 20-party alliance rally amidst a large showdown by Jamaat-Shibir activists carrying placards, festoons, balloons, and banners. They demanded the immediate release of Jamaat leaders facing war crimes trials.

The AL chief said Khaleda, her party and Jamaat-e-Islami were responsible for all killings in the country from 1975 to the present time including the 21 August grenade attack.

Terming the BNP-Jamaat alliance an agent party of Pakistan, Hasina called on people to remain alert so that this alliance could not come to power and resort to killings and torture like they did after assuming office in 2001.

The premier reminded everyone that BNP founder Ziaur Rahman had rewarded the self-confessed killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by rehabilitating them in politics and providing them with diplomatic posts in

Bangladesh missions abroad.

Khaleda Zia made razakars ministers and let them use the national flag on their cars, Hasina said adding that her party would not allow anyone to demean the national flag.

"If necessary I will shed my own blood," she said.

The prime minister alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance is conspiring to turn Bangladesh into a failed state and called upon the people to foil this plot.

Senior AL leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, AFM Bahauddin Nasim, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, and Sujit Roy Nandi, and Dr Nuzhat Chowdhury, daughter of Martyred Intellectual Dr Alim Chowdhury and Towhid Reza Noor, son of journalist Sirajuddin Hossain, also a Martyred Intellectual also spoke at the discussion.

While recalling her father Nuzhat Chowdhury broke down in tears at a point, creating a heart rending silence in the auditorium.