

CYBER HEIST Investigators to visit three countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators looking into the Bangladesh Bank cyber heist will visit the Philippines, the US and Sri Lanka after analysing the information they are collecting from Bangladesh.

"We think we will have to collect information from at least four countries to complete the investigation," Mirza Abdullah Baqui, special superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), said yesterday. "It is a transnational crime."

Bangladesh Bank, Federal Reserve Bank in the US, Pan Asia Banking Corporation in Sri Lanka and Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation in the Philippines are all connected to heist, he told reporters at his office in the capital's Malibagh.

"Some of the investigation abroad can be done through the local police or the Interpol, but physical presence is needed in some cases."

They would go abroad only after completing their investigation in Bangladesh, he said, adding that he was hopeful about identifying and arresting the "real culprits".

Talking to The Daily Star later, Baqui said intelligence officers from different units of police along with cyber experts were working on the case. Experts outside the police department would be hired, if necessary, he added.

The investigators may also seek assistance from international organisations like Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to deal with the crime, he said.

A CID official preferring anonymity said they had already communicated with cyber experts in other countries.

Meanwhile, yesterday's meeting between the CID and US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was rescheduled for tomorrow.

"We will discuss our needs and what sort of assistance they [FBI] want to give us," said CID official Baqui.

Recently, hackers stole \$101 million from a BB foreign currency account with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. However, \$20 million were recovered later.

Rizal manager

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Santos Vergara," and "Enrico Teodoro Vasquez." Cruz, Lagrosas, Vergara and Vasquez are allegedly fictitious names according to the AMLC.

Deguito and the others are required to appear before the DOJ on April 12 and 19.

"Under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by law, you are hereby directed to submit your counter-affidavits and other supporting documents or affidavits of your witnesses, if any to be sworn to before me on April 12 and 19, 2016," the subpoena released yesterday stated.

Assistant State Prosecutor Gilmarie Fe Pacamara warned that failure to comply with the subpoena shall be considered a waiver of their right to present their defence and the case will be submitted for resolution based on the evidence submitted by the complainant.

Deguito and the others are facing a case for violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Law.

Based on the complaint filed by the AMLC Compliance and Investigation Group, Deguito approved the opening of the bank accounts of the four "John Does," which, upon investigation, the documents presented to the RCBC Jupiter branch turned out to be fictitious.

"Not only did respondent Deguito failed to verify the identities of the respondents within nine months from the time the accounts were opened, she even allowed respondent John Does to withdraw money stolen from Bangladesh Bank," the complaint stated.

AMLC said when Deguito allowed the withdrawals, she already knew that the money was stolen from the BB because there was already a request for RCBC to stop the payment.

"Despite that, respondent allowed and facilitated the withdrawal transaction of respondent John Doe," AMLC said.

FBI warns

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The FBI also warned that criminals may latch on to online vehicle software updates by sending out fake messages that trick users into "opening attachments containing malicious software".

Both General Motors and BMW have recently issued security updates to mitigate the risk of remote attacks that would have allowed hackers to open doors and, in the case of GM, start the engine.

Fiat Chrysler was forced to recall millions of vehicles after Wired magazine demonstrated how hackers could remotely take control of car functions, including steering and brakes.

However, there has not yet been a real-world example of such hacking.

Ex-asst manager clears Deguito

Cries harassment from RCBC executives over cyber heist of BB fund

THE INQUIRER, Manila

The resigned assistant manager of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) branch at the centre of the \$81-million money laundering scheme came to the defence of manager Maia Santos-Deguito yesterday and cried harassment from RCBC executives.

In an interview over radio dzBB, Angela Torres of the RCBC branch on Jupiter Street in Makati City belied the claims of former customer service head Romualdo Agarrado who testified in the Senate blue ribbon committee probe on the alleged money laundering scheme on Thursday.

Agarrado said during the hearing that he personally saw the P20-million cash, believed to be part of the \$81 million stolen funds from Bangladesh Bank, placed in a paper bag and being loaded to Deguito's car last February 5 when the inward remittance in the name of businessman William Go, one of the businessmen linked in the laundering, came in.

Torres said it was not true that the P20-million cash was loaded to Deguito's vehicle, adding that it was not contained in a paper bag but in a box smaller than a "balikbayan" box.

Almost all of Mr Agarrado's statements in the Senate hearing were lies. The cash was not put in a paper bag, instead it was placed in a box and was loaded to William Go's Lexus. Agarrado was not telling the truth when he said that the money was loaded to Ms Maia's car, she said.

"It is also not true that our guard was logging the names of the clients who enter [our branch] that's why I was surprised by what he said. He has involved many people who are not supposed to be in the story, that's why we don't understand it," said Torres.

Agarrado said he saw Jovy Morales, the bank's messenger, load the money to Deguito's vehicle with the help of Torres.

Asked about Go's dollar account, Torres said it was her who called the businessman and confirmed that he would be opening a dollar account, adding that the client personally signed the withdrawal slip of P20 million before her.

Go's camp earlier claimed that his signature was forged by Deguito and that the latter admitted that she opened an unauthorised account under the businessman's name in a meeting on February 23 in a Taguig restaurant.

Torres said, "William Go signed the withdrawal slip of P20 million before me. I was the one who called him and confirmed to him that he would open a dollar account. Ms Maia did not fabricate it. We just opened William Go's dollar account as he instructed."

She added that the RCBC head office confirmed that the remittance that came in was supposedly valid.

Torres said she does not understand why the RCBC management was pinning them down, adding that she has been receiving threats from the bank's executives.

Denying that she had personal gains in the transactions, Torres said she was willing to testify before the Senate to speak of nothing but the truth.

The Senate will resume its probe on March 29.

On Thursday, Romualdo Agarrado, formerly a customer service head of RCBC's Jupiter business centre and now a reserve officer at the Manila office, testified at the Senate blue ribbon committee that he was offered by

Maia Deguito P5 million apparently in exchange for his silence on the withdrawal from the branch of the \$81 million.

He said Deguito made the "offer" at the Forbes Park home of another bank officer on February 12.

The offer was made apparently after Agarrado witnessed P20 million in cash withdrawn from the supposed bank account of William Go -- one of five bank accounts where the stolen \$81 million was deposited -- being loaded into the car of Deguito and her leaving the bank with the money.

RCBC officials are accusing the branch manager of being behind the facilitation of the withdrawals of the stolen money.

Agarrado, in his Senate testimony, recounted how the P5-million offer was made to him by Deguito.

He said he helped count the P20 million cash order made by Angela Torres, Deguito's aide, on February 5. The money was withdrawn from the account of William Go, who later accused Deguito of opening the account without his knowledge and consent.

The money was placed in a box and brought to the room of Deguito, who at the time was talking to someone on the phone, Agarrado said.

He said he saw the P20 million being loaded by a bank messenger, Jovie Morales, into the car of Deguito.

"I clearly saw it because I was sitting in front of the glass main door," Agarrado said, of the money being loaded into the branch manager's car.

On February 11, he said there were recall orders for funds sent to the branch by the head office and he informed Deguito about this. But the branch manager just "stared blankly" at him, Agarrado said.

Later on, Agarrado said Deguito called him and Torres, and told them she had to process the transaction.

EU leaders discuss how to handle Libya migrants

AFP, Brussels

Leaders from six EU nations led by Britain were holding talks yesterday on how to tackle migration from Libya at a Brussels summit focused on dealing with an unprecedented influx of people fleeing war in Syria.

British Prime Minister David Cameron was hosting a meeting with leaders from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Malta and Federica Mogherini, the European Union's foreign policy chief, his spokeswoman said.

Libya descended into chaos after longtime dictator Moamer Gaddafi was ousted and later killed in 2011, leading to a massive increase in the number of migrants trying to reach Europe from the North African nation.

Around 330,000 have come to Italy via Libya since the start of 2014 while more than a million have reached Europe, landing in Greece via Turkey.

A new unity government in Libya backed by the United Nations said on Saturday that it was taking office but it is struggling for political legitimacy and still has no fixed base, with rebel militias controlling the capital Tripoli.

Islamic State (IS) jihadists have also gained ground in Libya since Gaddafi was overthrown after international military intervention led by Britain and France, and backed by Nato.

EC orders

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Jahangir Hossain, be removed for harassing him and not prosecuting those bothering him.

The OC denied the allegations.

PABNA

At least 10 houses were torched in Bharara union in the morning with the Pabna Police Station OC, Abdulla Al Hasan, apprehending it might be connected to a rivalry between Sultan Mahamud, who is seeking AL nomination, and the present chairman, Abu Sayeed.

Locals said supporters of Sayeed, from the AL, were angered as Sultan hung posters seeking nomination. Sultan claimed to The Daily Star that Sayeed's men set fire to the houses which he said belonged to his supporters. Talking to local journalists, Sayeed denied the allegations, saying he was not aware of the matter.

JAMALPUR

AL's sadar upazila unit expelled two leaders of Titpolla union parishad, Harun-or-Rashid and Sohrab Hossain, for seeking candidacy in the upcoming polls by going against the party decision, informed the unit president, Dr Abdul Mannan.

Elections to 732 union parishads will be held on March 22 in the first phase, 643 on March 31 in the second phase and 680 in the third phase on April 23. Some 2,200 more will go to polls in three other phases until June.

IT expert still traceless

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

IT expert Tanveer Hassan Zoha still remains traceless after going missing from Dhaka Cantonment area on Wednesday.

The 32-year-old information technology expert was allegedly picked up by plainclothes men while he was returning to his Kalabagan house with his friend Yamir Ahmed by a CNG-run auto-rickshaw around 1:00am on Wednesday.

His abduction came a few days after he talked to the media over the cyber heist of Bangladesh Bank reserve. He then identified himself as an official of the ICT division.

The ICT division, however, dismissed reports of his affiliation with it. Following the incident, the family went to three police stations to file a general diary but the police allegedly refused to accept it.

Tanveer's uncle Mahubul Alam told The Daily Star early today, "We have no clue to his whereabouts. We are waiting for his safe return."

"He worked for the law enforcement agencies and in the greater interest of the people. Now we are seeking their [police's] sincere help for his return," he said.

"The condition of Tanveer's ailing mother, Maksuda Hassan, has deteriorated. She now faints frequently." Tanveer's wife Kamrunnahar, a physician, sought the prime minister's intervention in rescuing her husband.

Mirza Abdullah Hel Baqui, special superintendent of Criminal Investigation Department, which is investigating the Bangladesh Bank heist, said they would investigate the matter if they were given the charge of it.

Redline may

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without the approval from Ecneec or the purchase committee since it is an emergency project and it is being done for the sake of the country."

Headed by Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon, the seven-member committee includes the prime minister's security adviser, senior home secretary, PMO secretary, secretaries of the civil aviation and foreign ministries, and the Caab chairman.

British envoy Alison Blake and other UK delegation members during the March 13 meeting suggested hiring a foreign company for security management at the airport as Bangladesh "failed to meet" some international security requirements.

The meeting took place days after the UK government imposed a ban on direct air cargo from Dhaka to London on security grounds, and the British prime minister wrote to his Bangladesh counterpart, asking for foolproof security at the airport by March 31.

In the March 8 letter, David Cameron called for a visible improvement of airport security by the deadline to avoid further measures like banning of direct passenger Biman flights from Dhaka to London.

Conspirators

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against the Padma bridge project because of its utmost honesty.

"One can speak loudly if he or she is honest," she noted.

Reiterating her government's commitment to build Bangladesh as a peaceful nation, Hasina said there is no place for terrorism and militancy in the country.

"We want to ensure two meals a day for every person as well as every family's access to housing, modern education for every child and healthcare service for every citizen which was the lifetime desire of Bangabandhu," added the AL chief.

The premier said the politics of killing gained ground in Bangladesh after the assassination of Bangabandhu. The nation witnessed about 19 coups when many freedom fighter military officers and soldiers were killed, she added.

She blasted Ziaur Rahman for inducting Razakars and anti-liberation elements into the cabinet. Zia had distorted the history of Liberation War and even prohibited uttering the name of Bangabandhu, said the PM.

Deputy Leader of Jatiya Sangsad Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury presided over the meeting. AL advisory council members Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta, presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Sahara Khatun and Satish C Roy, and party General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam addressed the meeting, among others.

2 Brac officials

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way to a project site in Afghanistan. She talked to Sirajul over the phone for the last time on Thursday afternoon.

"I don't know what will happen to him but I want my husband back at any cost," said a worried Lota.

Brac has been working in Afghanistan since 2002. Setting up around 400 offices in the country's 34 provinces, the NGO is providing education, healthcare, training, and development tools to the citizens of the war-hit country.

Target turnaround

FROM PAGE 1

The movements -- first to thwart the January 5, 2014 election boycotted by the BNP and its allies, and then to unseat the government on the polls' first anniversary last year -- were marked by widespread violence including mindless arson attacks on public transports that claimed scores of lives and crippled many more.

"We now want to focus on positive politics and this council will mark the beginning of that," said BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon.

"We will present the nation a new and positive BNP through the council," he told The Daily Star last night.

Khaleda Zia and her elder son Tarique Rahman have already been elected unopposed to the posts of chairperson and senior vice chairman. Their election will be endorsed by the councillors today.

The only major "challenge" the BNP chief faces is choosing a right person for the post of secretary general, according to party insiders. A number of top leaders are vying for the vital position.

Some BNP leaders said she is looking for a leader with a clean image and may choose Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, who is now the acting secretary general of the party, for the post.

However, Khaleda is most likely to not announce the name at the council. The same will happen in case of the party's national standing and executive committees where a number of changes are expected.

"Like at the previous council [in December 2009], the councillors this time too will vest the power in the chairperson to pick leaders for all the posts, including that of the secretary general," said Ripon.

The full-fledged committees would be announced two or three weeks later, sources said.

A few dozen amendments to the BNP charter are likely to be proposed at the council for approval.

Over 3,100 councillors, 8,000 delegates and around 1,000 guests -- including political leaders and eminent citizens -- are expected to attend the council.

'A PICNIC, NOT A COUNCIL'

A number of councillors have described the BNP council as "mere eyewitness" and "a picnic".

"All the major decisions have already been made. Getting us to say yes to those decisions is all that will be done at the council," said a councillor, wishing anonymity.

"We will say hi and hello to our party colleagues from different areas of the country, eat together and raise our

hands to support whatever proposed during the council ... It's like a get-together or a picnic," he added.

Shafiqul Islam Mona, general secretary of Khulna district BNP, thinks the council should be aimed at turning the party around from its current sorry state by electing dedicated and tested leaders.

"But the tradition is that we have to vest all the power in the party chief for selecting leaders in all posts and committees.

"We cannot practice our rights to elect the party leaders in true sense," said Mona, who too is a councillor.

ALL SET FOR COUNCIL

Visiting the IEB yesterday afternoon, these correspondents found the venue was all set for hosting the council. Decked out with flags and streamers, festoons and large banners, the entire area wore a festive look.

Many of the posters and banners highlighted Tarique Rahman, describing him as "a national hero" and "a statesman". With arrest warrants against him in a number of corruption cases, Tarique has been staying in London for about eight years.

Most of the councillors and delegates had already arrived in the capital. Some of them were found talking among themselves about potential changes in different committees.

Khaleda Zia has already finalised her speech for the inaugural session of the council, according to BNP insiders.

In the speech, she will focus on the existing political situation in the country, the "misrule" of the government and what the BNP will do if voted to power.

Khaleda will also call upon the BNP leaders and activists to unite in strengthening the party, which ended up with no representation in parliament for the first time since 1991 after boycotting the 2014 elections.

Her speech will include directives for the BNP men to refrain from violence and practice "positive politics", several BNP leaders told this newspaper last night.

Tarique too will address the council via videoconferencing from London, they said.

"This council will be very vital for the party as it has been passing the most critical time since its birth in 1978. Repeated mistakes in the last three to four years have put the party at stake," said Mahubul Alam Piaru, president of pro-BNP Jubo Dal's Sonadanga upazila chapter in Khulna.

"We will have to start the journey afresh with right leaders in the right posts to avoid repetition of past mistakes," he added.

Mission mother's safety

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The need for proper care of mothers before, during and after delivery struck Anjali after she herself gave birth to a son in 2006. She had been into labour for a day when no help was there nearby.

Having had such an experience, she said she wanted to give support to pregnant women.

Without any knowledge about issues involving pregnancy and infants in different phases, she began working voluntarily in 2007 with women who had long been giving services as midwives in the villages, Anjali, now 29, said.

She would go door to door with them and see how they helped women during their normal delivery and dealt with the issues before birth and afterwards.

The nearest healthcare, Hatibandha Upazila Health Complex, is around 17km away. The muddy and bumpy road takes more than one and a half hours to reach the hospital.

The unfavourable road condition discourages mothers, mostly poor, in the villages of Hatibandha from going to the hospital, villagers said. They instead seek help of midwives.

These so-called midwives do not have any academic qualification in medical science or childcare, rather they work with experiences gained over the years.

During her voluntary work, Anjali came to the notice of Eco-Social Development Organisation, an NGO funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Canada, and Plan International, a global development organisation, in 2012.

She was then given six-month training in birth-related issues under

Human Resource for Health Project run by the NGO, said Abdul Bari Sarker, technical officer of the project.

A year back, Anjali was recruited as birth attendant at Family Welfare Centre in Gotmari Union Parishad. She is paid Tk 3,000 a month, which is donated by community people, said UP Chairman Abdul Jalil.

"Anjali Rani is doing a great job, for which she is known as doctor apa in the union," he said.

She is playing a vital and positive role in society, said Harunur Rashid, deputy director of the family planning department in Lalmonirhat.

Anjali works at the centre for four days a week and visits homes in villages three days when she gives advice to mothers on how to take care of themselves and their babies.

She even advised 53 women in the last three years to go to hospital as their pregnancy had some complications, Anjali said.

"I am very proud of being able to help them [mothers and babies]. I will continue doing this for the rest of my life," she added.

Post offices

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service will be gradually expanded to those post offices which have more commercial importance.

This card will minimise the risks of carrying cash and enable customers to reap the benefit of encashment and remittance in post office counters and also ATM booths. This card may also act equally as Debit Card, Credit Card and Plastic Money.

The postal department has taken a project to strengthen the postal transportation system to provide e-commerce, m-commerce and logistic services to the rural people. Under the project, the department will procure 118 vehicles within June, 2017.

It has also taken another project to construct or repair 270 dilapidated post offices by June 2018.

Bangladesh Post Office is now implementing a project named "Process Automaton of Postal Department". This project primarily aims at automating the activities of 134 offices, including 71 head post offices and 13 main and sorting offices, through computer hardware and an integrated web based application software.

A plan has also been taken to construct ICT based 1,000 rural post offices and automation of 1,438 post offices by June next year.

Another project has been taken to reform post office services by June 2018 and construct central postal data recovery centre in Jessore by June 2018.

Typical

FROM PAGE 16

George W Bush had the least advanced level of grammar out of all the subjects. However, he and incumbent president Barack Obama had the same level of vocabulary.

Elliot Schumacher, one of the people behind the study, said the speeches of Trump and Hillary showed the greatest language variation, indicating that they worked harder to tailor them to appeal to particular audiences along the campaign trail.

Maxine Eskenazi, who also carried out the study, said: "Assessing the readability of campaign speeches is a little tricky because most measures are geared to the written word, yet text is very different from the spoken word."

"When we speak, we usually use less structured language with shorter sentences," she said.