

TK 250CR LOAN SCAM
ACC quizzes
5 more Janata
Bank officials
as witnesses

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday interrogated five more senior officials of Janata Bank as witnesses in a graft case filed over Tk 250 crore loan scam.

ACC Deputy Director Jahangir Alam talked to the five officials for about five hours as part of its investigation into the loan scam at its head office in the capital, according to ACC sources.

The five witnesses of the bank are former deputy general managers--Ayat Ali and Md Nurul Alin--and former general managers --Md Serajul Islam, Nur Mohammad and Md Manzurul Islam.

On Tuesday, five other bank officials were also interrogated in connection with the loan scam.

On February 18, 2016, the ACC filed the case against four bank officials, including a general manager of Janata Bank, and another for allegedly swindling out over Tk 250 crore from the bank through opening letters of credit (LCs) to a fake company.

The case was filed against Janata Bank General Manger M Manzurul Alam, its former assistant general manger Shamim Ahmed Khan, senior executive officer of local office Mashuur Rahman, assistant general manger ASM Zahurul Islam and owner of M/s Dhaka Trading House M Tipu Sultan.

According to the first information report (FIR), five officials of the bank, including the four accused and former general manager Md Aminul Islam, opened seven LCs against a fake company, M/s Dhaka Trading House, for importing sugar and chickpeas during November 2010 to April 2012.

But, M/s Dhaka Trading House did not import any goods. And all the five bank officials along with the accused Tipu Sultan embezzled over Tk 250 crore released from the bank against the LCs. As Aminul Islam died, his name has been dropped from the case.

Govt served legal notice to start hiring 17,444 asst pry teachers in seven days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advocate Siddique Ullah Miah, a Supreme Court lawyer, yesterday sent a legal notice to the government, requesting it to take necessary steps in seven days to recruit assistant teachers to 17,444 vacant posts at nationalised primary schools across the country in line with a High Court directive.

The lawyer told The Daily Star that the government earlier informed the HC through swearing affidavit that there were 17,444 vacant posts of assistant teacher at the registered non-government primary schools, now nationalized primary schools, across the country.

Based on the government report, the HC on May 18 this year ordered the authorities concerned to take steps for recruiting teachers to those vacant posts, said Siddique.

But the government is now trying to say that the number of vacant posts is 5,000-6,000, alleged the lawyer.

Anti-adulteration

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Some surveillance teams of the industries ministry have also been tasked with ensuring sale of pure drinking water during the fasting month as a section of dishonest traders do brisk business by selling substandard bottled water illegally, the minister said.

Recently, BSTI tests didn't find presence of formalin in 68 samples of dates, mangoes, litchis, blood oranges (malta), apples and grapes.

"However, the findings of the tests don't mean that fruits are not treated with formalin. The scale of use of formalin might have dropped a bit due to different government and private initiatives," said the minister.

The BSTI, mobile courts and surveillance teams so far have fined some companies and traders Tk 4.73 crore in the current fiscal year.

"The amount is too low. The teams should have fined the food adulterators much higher to discourage them," Amu observed.

He said 796 mobile courts were conducted during the July 2015-May 2016 period. The courts filed 1,164 cases while another similar number of lawsuits were settled.

As many as 658 surveillance teams conducted drives and filed 665 cases against food adulterators, the minister added.

Human trafficking kingpin extradited to Italy

REUTERS, Palermo

An Eritrean man suspected of running a huge human trafficking network that sent thousands of migrants to Europe, leaving many to die on the way, was extradited from Sudan to Italy overnight, officials said.

Medhane Yehdego Mered, nicknamed "the General", had been heard on intercepted telephone calls boasting about cramming more people onto rickety boats to make the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean than other traffickers, prosecutors said.

"This shows an absolute indifference about the lives of immigrants," Italian magistrate Maurizio Scalia told reporters.

The 35-year-old was arrested in Sudan on May 24 on charges of human trafficking and abetting illegal immigration and faces up to 30 years in prison if convicted.

Magistrates may eventually also

accuse him of homicide as their investigation continues, judicial sources said. There was no immediate comment from any lawyer representing him.

It is the first time a suspected trafficking kingpin has been tracked down in Africa, where many of the smuggling networks are based, and brought to face justice in Italy since Europe's immigration crisis started almost three years ago.

Mered is suspected of working with an Ethiopian, Ghermay Ermias, who is still at large, prosecutors said. Between them, they are accused of raking in huge sums by bringing migrants from Libya to Italy by sea.

Italy has jurisdiction over the case because it was the first point of arrival of most of the migrants. It is also leading the investigation into the sinking of a vessel off the southern Italian island of Lampedusa in 2013 that killed 359.

Landing of PM's flight

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The landing was put on hold until the objects were removed from the runway and the control tower gave the clearance, Mahbubur Rahman, public relations officer of the civil aviation ministry, told The Daily Star.

Around 30 minutes before the plane was expected to reach the airport, Special Security Force (SSF) members detected some metal objects on the runway.

When the control tower was noti-

fied about it, the officials concerned inspected the runway and removed the objects.

As the aircraft carrying Sheikh Hasina and her entourage reached near the airport and requested the control tower for permission to land, the control tower asked it to delay the landing.

Three committees were formed by Bangladesh Biman, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh and Shahjalal International Airport authorities to probe the incident.

US, India boost

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Modi made the remarks in an address to a joint session of the US Congress during a visit to Washington designed to build on improved ties between the world's two largest democracies.

A day earlier, the Indian premier met President Barack Obama at the White House. The leaders vowed to transform skeletal US-India security relations into an "anchor of stability".

Obama offered his guest a warm embrace, arguing it was "natural" that two of the world's largest democracies should cooperate.

Obama also backed India's entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). India's entry into these groups will give it easier access to technology for research and advancement.

The two leaders also finalized agreements on military logistics and sharing "terrorist screening information."

"The US-India defense relationship

can be an anchor of stability," a joint statement declared.

There was also a step toward better cybersecurity cooperation, which experts say is crucial to protect outsourced US information technology.

That public display of support is likely to be noted in Beijing, which has been skeptical about India's readmission.

Beijing sees India as a potential regional rival and closer India-US relations as a potential check on its power.

Obama also hailed an agreement for US firm Westinghouse to build six nuclear reactors in India.

When Obama entered the White House in 2009, Modi was effectively banned from visiting the United States for his role in anti-Muslim riots that killed hundreds. Obama's leaves office with Modi transformed from persona non grata to celebrated guest.

Concern over extremism

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Bangladesh should be improved to ensure protection and safety of all citizens.

Lawmakers of the European Parliament also expressed concern over the rising of violent extremism and shrinking of political space in Bangladesh.

The government needs to make sure that the situation does not worsen further, they said.

"There is a need for a 'new social and political consensus' in the country... It is now time for the government of Bangladesh and democratic parties together to engage in real dialogue," said Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders at a debate on Bangladesh in the EP in Strasbourg.

The present political situation might hamper the country's development and could be detrimental to the achievement in poverty reduction in recent years, in which the EU development funding has played a part, said Koenders, also Dutch presidency for the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs, Security Policy and vice-president of the European Commission.

The security situation in Bangladesh has "steadily deteriorated" since the boycott of January 2014 elections by the major opposition parties, he said, adding that democracy, human rights, freedom of expression and political liberty should be promoted and protected in the country.

"It is time to put an end to arbitrary arrest and harassment of opposition leaders to restore tolerance, open spaces for public and political debate," Koenders said.

Taking part in the discussion, Conservative Charles Tannock said freedom of speech and religious tolerance in Bangladesh are threatened "not by the government" but by Islamists.

"Concerns remain that more could have been done" by the government to protect people from attacks, said Dutch Liberal Marietje Schaake.

"The response of the security forces to killings, however, has also been disproportionate."

tionate." It is "disappointing" that the EU has not "been more vocal" on this issue, Schaake told the European lawmakers.

Cristian Dan Preda urged the Bangladesh government to shed light on the recent murders and attacks, ensuring punishment of the attackers.

Several members of the parliament, including Neena Gill, Amjad Bashir and Jean Lambert, took part in the hour-long debate.

Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders in his concluding remarks said the EP would continue following Bangladesh closely and would address their concerns through regular dialogue with its government.

Talking about Bangladesh's development goals, he said achieving the very ambitious target of becoming a middle income nation by 2021 will need involvement and determination of all citizens and institutions as well as support from Bangladesh's international partners.

The Dutch minister disagreed with the suggestion of formally suspending trade cooperation with Bangladesh. He was rather in favour of supporting Bangladesh to achieve its development goals, overcoming challenges.

N'ganj cops

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perpetrators responsible for the humiliation.

The education ministry had earlier submitted another probe report saying that the Piyar Sattar Latif High School committee forced Head Teacher Shyamal Kanti Bhakta to resign with unproven allegation that he had hurt the religious sentiment of the Muslims.

The allegation brought against Shyamal was not found to be true, the probe body said, adding that relevant rules were not followed in suspending him.

The probe body also recommended that he could be reinstated.

Teenage boy

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members that he would not return home and stay at the mosque.

Later, locals found Riyad's body in a field nearby his house yesterday morning.

Ruhul Amin, superintendent of police in Dinajpur, said Riyad came out of the mosque after getting a phone call. Criminals then killed him.

However, the motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

A case was filed in this connection. In another incident, some criminals tried to slit a BBA student's throat early Tuesday in Pirganj upazila of Rangpur, said his family members.

The victim is Sayan Mondal, 22, son of late Badal Mondal of Osmanpur village. He is a BBA student of a private university in the capital.

Family members said Sayan came home from the capital on Monday. He went out of his room around 2:30am Tuesday to respond to the call of nature. Crossing the boundary wall, three criminals entered their house complex and tried to slit his throat.

Hearing his screams, Sayan's family members and locals rescued him and took him to Pirganj Upazila Health Complex. As his condition worsened, doctors referred him to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Karim, officer-in-charge of Pirganj Police Station, admitted the incident.

Protesters

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Badsha, general secretary of the party. He also called for severing ties with Islamabad and canceling all the flights.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Muktiyoddha Somonnoy Committee organised a protest rally and also attempted to besiege the commission, which was foiled near Gulshan-2 intersection.

Lawmaker Capt (ret'd) AB Tajul Islam, Advocate Rahmatullah and secretary general of the committee Shafikul Bahar Majumdar Tipu, also addressed the rally.

Rogue monkey

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company is looking at ways of further enhancing security at all our power plants."

The Business Daily Africa website reported that businesses bore the brunt of Tuesday's blackout.

Many had installed generators as a result of previous blackouts, it said.

Key accused

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Police retaliated and it left one person injured with gunshots.

Kawsar was taken to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, Gazipur added.

Two constables Abu Raihan, 24, of Shibganj Police Station and Altaf Hossain, 26, of the detective branch were claimed to have been injured in the incident.

Police recovered a pistol, two bullets, five homemade bombs, two knives and one machete from the spot.

Police claimed that they came to know about Kawsar's identity from the photographs the law enforcers earlier found with people they had arrested in connection with the mosque attack.

On November 26, three gunmen stormed the mosque named Masjid Al Hussain at Shibganj and started shooting randomly at 30 to 40 people, leaving the mosque muezzin Moazzem Hossain dead and three others injured.

A police official seeking anonymity told The Daily Star that one of the seven arrestees, Yeasin Ali, confessed before a magistrate that Kawsar was one of the three people who sprayed bullets on devotees that day.

The police officials claimed that Kawsar was previously arrested at Joypurhat in August, 2005, following the countrywide bomb attack.

Sources in Joypurhat said Kawsar was a madrasa student and later he started managing livelihood by pulling rickshaws and working as a hired hand. "ROBBER" KILLED

In Jessore, an alleged robber was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Panchbaria area on Jessore-Magura highway early yesterday, reports our Benapole correspondent.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Ilias Hossain, officer-in-charge of Jessore Kotwali Police Station, said a gun battle took place between police and robbers around 3:25am when a police team was going to Isali village to arrest an accused of a case.

He claimed that as the team reached Panchbaria area, a gang of robbers who were robbing people on the highway, fired shots at police team.

The man aged around 35 died of bullet injuries on the spot.

The body was sent to Jessore Medical College for an autopsy.

Police claimed to have recovered a homemade gun and a bullet from the spot.

Ex-Shibir man held

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office, said DB sources.

Police have also arrested a former Islami Chhatra Shibir activist in connection with the gruesome murder.

Chittagong police suspect that a parked black microbus might have had the backup force for the killing of Mitu.

Analysing the footage, police found that the bike-riding assailants came from the GEC intersection, stabbed and shot Mitu and fled through Golpaha area of the port city.

The black microbus was seen following the motorbike when the assailants left the scene.

Talking to the media, Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner Iqbal Bahar said it appeared that the microbus was used as a backup force.

"We identified some spots where the



microbus stopped ...," said CMP Additional Commissioner (crime and operation) Devdas Bhattacharya.

During investigation, police learnt that the stolen motorcycle used in the attack belonged to a cook from Boalkhali. It was reported stolen from his home on May 8.

Police have recovered the bike.

On the fateful Sunday morning, Mitu reportedly received a text that said there would be an assembly at her son's school and her son should be there half an hour before the usual time.

The school authorities denied sending any text. Police suspect the assailants had sent the SMS to trick her, said a family member.

However, police are yet to be sure if such a text was sent to Mitu's phone as the assailants took her phone.

Investigators seeking anonymity

Clinton breaks

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gruelling primary season in 2008, Clinton expressed regret that she had been unable to "shatter that highest and hardest glass ceiling", the presidential nomination. As she at last celebrated her 2016 primary triumph with supporters in New York on Tuesday night, she returned to the metaphor, saying: "This campaign is about making sure there are no ceilings, no limits on any of us."

Clinton, 68, appealed to supporters of party rival Bernie Sanders, 74, to join her campaign. She said Democrats had been bolstered by his campaign for eradicating income inequality, which has commanded huge crowds and galvanized younger voters. Not yet ready to concede, Sanders vowed to fight on.

Clinton also harshly attacked Donald Trump, 69, her presumptive Republican rival in the Nov 8 presidential election, for using divisive rhetoric that belittled women, Muslims and immigrants. She took specific aim at his condemnation of an Indiana-born judge of Mexican heritage.

"The stakes in this election are high and the choice is clear. Donald Trump is temperamentally unfit to be president and commander-in-chief," Clinton said.

"When Donald Trump says a distinguished judge born in Indiana can't do his job because of his Mexican heritage, or he mocks a reporter with disabilities, or calls women pigs, it goes against everything we stand for," she said.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Tuesday showed Clinton leading Trump by 10 percentage points nationally as they launch their general election battle, little changed from a week earlier.

Clinton edged Sanders out in a rough-and-tumble battle that stretched over four months and 50 states. She won support, especially among older voters, with a more pragmatic campaign focused on building on the policies of her fellow Democrat, President Barack Obama.

Obama called both Clinton and Sanders on Tuesday. The White House said he congratulated her on securing the delegates necessary to clinch the nomination and would meet Sanders today at Sanders' request.

CNN and NBC projected Clinton would win in California. With about two-thirds of the votes counted, Clinton led Sanders 56 percent to 43 percent, avoiding what would have been an embarrassing loss in America's most populous state. The California win came on the heels of a decisive win in New Jersey and narrower victories in New Mexico and South Dakota in Tuesday's nominating contests. Sanders won Montana and North Dakota.

A defeat in California would have reinforced doubts about Clinton's candidacy. Now, she can turn her

said the attack on Mitu bore the telltale signs of a militant attack. The findings suggested that it was well planned and was carried out in a well-organised manner, which militants had not done in their previous attacks, they claimed.

The CMP commissioner last night said they were investigating with all aspects in mind.

Admitting that the killing was well-planned, he said it was also true that the criminals might have had left some clue no matter how well planned the murder was. "There are obviously some mistakes and we are working with those," he told The Daily Star.

Investigators are having trouble identifying the bike-riding assailants as the picture of the CCTV footage was blurry.

Another camera installed at the adjacent Kalimandir (temple) was inactive on that morning. If the camera was active, the faces would have been clear, said a police official.

The CMP commissioner said they would investigate whether the camera of the temple was off due to technical problems or other reasons.

"We do not know why nothing was recorded ... We do not know whether there is any technical problem or other reasons," said Michael Dey, secretary of the temple.

On the day of the incident, police went to the temple after 8:00am. Examining the CCTV memory card, they found that there was no video stored, he said, adding that they have no permanent staff to run the cameras.

Apart from "militants' link", police are now focusing on possible involvement of Islami Chhatra Shibir and other connections in the killing, he added.

EX-SHIBIR MAN ARRESTED

Police yesterday detained an ex-activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir suspecting his link with the murder.

Tipped off, police detained Abu Naser Binnu, aged about 40, in Farhadabad area of Hathazari in Chittagong yesterday, said CMP's Additional Commissioner Bhattacharya.

He was involved in politics of Shibir since 1995 but had left for a middle eastern country, said the CMP official at a press conference held at its headquarters.

He claimed that Nasr, to hide his other activities, was working as a caretaker of a local mazar.

attention to healing her fractured party and drawing in Sanders' passionate supporters.

Clinton's credentials for office have not been a serious issue, but a scandal stemming from her use of a private email account while at the State Department hangs over her head as she enters the general election campaign.

She will also be running against the current of this election season, one that has favored outsiders like Trump and Sanders. In Trump, she has an unpredictable opponent who shreds the standard campaign rule book on an almost daily basis.

For his part, Sanders seems to have few options left.

Democratic Party elites are lined up squarely behind Clinton, including most likely Obama, who may endorse his former secretary of state as early as this week. Pressure will mount on Sanders to exit gracefully and throw his support to Clinton.

At a rally in Santa Monica on Tuesday, Sanders showed no interest in ending his upstart candidacy, telling cheering supporters he would go on campaigning through next Tuesday's primary in the District of Columbia and carry his political mission - although not necessarily his campaign - to the party convention in Philadelphia next month.

"We are going to fight hard to win the primary in Washington, D.C.," he said. "And then we take our fight for social, economic, racial and environmental justice to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."

Despite his decision not to drop out of the Democratic race, the Vermont Senator struck a conciliatory tone, saying he had received a "gracious" phone-call from Ms Clinton and congratulated her on her victories. And he had a defiant message for Donald Trump, saying "The American people will never support a candidate whose major theme is bigotry."

Prominent Democrats say that unifying the party now is the highest priority, and that if Sanders maintains his challenge to Clinton through the party's July 25-28 convention, Trump will benefit.

Even if Sanders does concede to Clinton, his supporters may not go quietly. Several told Reuters in recent days that they would have trouble supporting Clinton in a matchup against Trump, saying they either would not vote or would support a third-party candidate.

"People right now are talking if Bernie doesn't get the nomination, they are deregistering as Democrats," said Susan Hartley, 71, a lawyer from Northern California, who was part of the noisy throng of thousands at a Sanders rally in an aircraft hangar in Santa Monica. "People are really upset."