### 'Tk 45cr venom' seized in city; one arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives seized around 5.5kg (12 pounds) of "snake venom worth Tk 45 crore" and arrested one in this connection in the capital's Dhanmondi on Tuesday night.

The venom was illegally brought into the country mainly to sell it to different pharmaceutical companies, which use it for producing medicine, said Abdul Baten, joint commissioner of the Detective Branch of police, at a press briefing at Dhaka Metropolitan Police media centre yesterday.

Calculating the price given on glass jars in US dollar, the police official said the value of the venom would be Tk 45 crore. "We will send this liquid to a laboratory to check whether this is actually snake venom."

The arrestee is Solaiman Azad, 61, a resident of Dhanmondi.

Acting on a tip-off, the Narcotics Defence Unit of DB (East) raided a house in Dhanmondi around 8:00pm and seized the venom kept in six glass jars from the possession of Solaiman, said Baten.

Solaiman, who was a garment trader before, had been involved in SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



capital's Dhanmondi area Tuesday night. A man was also arrested.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

#### attacker' held STAR REPORT Police claimed to have arrested an accomplice of Mustafa Kamal, who was arrested in connection with attack-

Accomplice of

'prison van

ing prison vans in Gazipur, in a madrasa of Narsingdi Sadar upazila on Tuesday night.

The arrestee, Minhajul Islam, 19, is a Kamil (equivalent to masters) student of Jamia Emdadia Arabia Madrasa at Shekherchar in the upazila. He is from Kachikata village under Monohardi upazila, reports our Narsingdi correspondent.

Mustafa was caught "red-handed" with bombs during Monday's attack on prison vans.

Based on his information, Tongi police with the help of Narsingdi police arrested Minhajul in the madrasa around 10:30pm on Tuesday, said Amena Begum, superintendent of Narsingdi police.

Police yesterday produced Minhajul before a Gazipur court and sought a 10-day remand for him, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Judge of Gazipur Judicial Magistrate Court-4 granted three days' remand for Minhajul.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

### IS attack kills 38 at Kabul hospital

FROM PAGE 1

flee... I had to jump over the barbed wire to escape." At least two other loud explosions -including what the defence ministry

"They shot my friend but I managed to

called a car bomb in the hospital's parking lot -- were heard as Afghan special forces launched a clearance operation that lasted around six hours.

The attackers were gunned down after special forces landed on the roof of the hospital in a military helicopter.

"The attack in the capital's central Wazir Akbar Khan neighbourhood has killed 38 people and wounded more than 70," the Italian-run Emergency hospital said in a statement, adding that a seven-year-old boy was among those seriously injured.

"Most of the victims are patients, doctors and nurses," defence ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri told AFP. CRIMINALACT

The raid highlights how Afghanistan's warring parties, including government forces, have repeatedly targeted medical facilities, decimating the country's fragile health system and preventing conflict-displaced civilians from accessing life-saving care.

"This egregious and morally reprehensible attack targeted people at their most vulnerable, while they were receiving treatment in the hospital, and also targeted the medical staff caring for them," said the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

"This cowardly attack reflects a fundamental rejection of the most basic principles of humanity. Without question, it amounts to an atrocity, and the perpetrators must be held account-

Islamic State jihadists claimed the attackvia a verified Telegram account.

The more powerful Taliban said they were not behind the raid. The militant group, Afghanistan's largest, is known to distance itself from attacks on medical facilities or those that result in high civilian casualties.

The assault comes just a week after 16 people were killed in simultaneous Taliban suicide assaults on two security compounds in Kabul.

Dozens of others were wounded as a suicide car bomber struck an Afghan

police precinct in western Kabul and a five-hour gun battle ensued after another attacker sneaked in.

In the second attack last week, a

suicide bomber blew himself up at the gates of an Afghan intelligence agency branch in eastern Kabul. The carnage underscores rising insecurity. The country is bracing for an

intense fighting season in the spring as the government's repeated bids to launch peace negotiations with the Taliban have failed. Afghan forces, already beset by record casualties, desertions and non-existent

"ghost soldiers" on the payroll, have been struggling to beat back insurgents since US-led Nato troops ended their combat mission in December 2014.

Kabul last month endorsed US General John Nicholson's call for thousands of additional coalition troops to hold off the militants before the spring offensive.

Extra troops were needed to end the stalemate in the war, Nicholson, the top US commander in Afghanistan, told the US Congress in what could be President Donald Trump's first major test of

# SL in front

FROM PAGE 1

run-out which surrendered the visitors' initiative after a century-plus opening stand.

At the end of it all, Sri Lanka had their noses decidedly in front with a first innings total of 494, powered by Kusal Mendis's 194, after resuming on 321 for four and then getting Bangladesh to 133 for two at stumps -a lead of 361 runs. Bangladesh are not completely out of it however, as they have skipper Mushfigur Rahim batting with Soumya Sarkar, who was unbeaten on 66.

On a pitch that is getting slower but is still placid, Tamim and Soumya put on 118 runs for the first wicket, Bangladesh's fourth century-plus opening stand in Tests, before Bangladesh's habit of losing the plot close to the end of a session reared its head. With 10 overs to go to the close of play in the 36th over, Tamim, batting on 57, missed a ball down the leg side from left-arm Chinaman bowler Lakshan Sandakan and the ball brushed his pads on the way to keeper Niroshan Dickwella, who caught it and immediately went up in appeal to umpire Aleem Dar, who seemed unimpressed. Tamim, for reasons he knows best, decided to set off for a run and Dickwella was only too happy to run him out.

Mominul Haque then gave false promise with a lofted four off Sri Lanka captain Rangana Herath, before ill-advisedly playing back to a ball from off-spinner Dilruwan Perera that pitched on middle from around the wicket and straightened sharply to be out leg-before for seven.

The two wickets were huge letdowns at the end of the day precisely because Soumya and Tamim were looking completely in control for most of their time together after they walked out with around 45 minutes to go till tea. Soumya, whose foot move ment early in the innings was minimal to say the least, benefited from a dropped chance at gully by Perera when on four in the third over bowled by Suranga Lakmal, but he put his head down thereafter and looked

solid. He unfurled a few classy shots, but the best one was a shimmy down the track off Perera in the 26th over which deposited the ball dead straight back over the bowler's head. He reached his 50 with a single to long-off off his

86th ball in the 30th over. Tamim's stroke of luck came when he was on 28 in the 18th over when Dickwella dropped an edge off the bowling of Perera, but either side of that Tamim looked completely untroubled by the pitch and the

bowling, until his brain-fade. He was in a mood to dominate the spinners as he hit Perera for a pair of down-thewicket fours over mid-on and mid-off when the off-spinner was introduced in the sixth over of the innings. Earlier, Sri Lanka, resuming play

on a dominant 321 for four, were all

out for 494 an hour after lunch after

at one stage being 398 for four. Those numbers hint at a spirited comeback from Bangladesh, but it was Sri Lanka who let the visitors' back into the match with a raft of rash shots. Only one wicket, that of Herath, fell to a defensive stroke as he became Mustafizur Rahman's second victim

when a slower off-cutter reared

sharply and caught the edge of the bat on way to Soumya at first slip. The rest fell to irresponsible shots and brain-freezes. Overnight batsman Dickwella made his intentions clear early in the day when he hit Subashis Roy's fourth ball for six over midwicket. Mustafizur then trod on the ropes, completely avoidable if he had been aware of his position, when catching a top-edged Mendis hook at

fine leg. In the 104th over, Mendis's charmed life came to an end when he lofted Mehedi Hasan Miraz to long on where Tamim caught the ball, threw it up before momentum carried him over the boundary and stepped back to complete the dismissal. Mendis ended his innings on 194 off 285 balls with 19 fours and four sixes.

Dickwella too, when he had the bowlers at his mercy and batting on a run-a-ball 75, threw his wicket away by slogging across the line off Mehedi, whose turn deceived the lefthander, resulting in an outside edge caught at point in the 110th over. Even with these two losses, Sri Lanka went to lunch in a strong position at 443 for six. Herath's wicket followed after the break but the next one -- Lakmal's runout after he sprinted for a non-existent run without even looking at partner Perera in the 126th over -- proved that the heat gets to the home side too.

Perera then swiped across the line off Mehedi's bowling and was trapped in front for 51, before Bangladesh's best bowler of the day with four for 113 helped end the innings by running from mid-off to cover to take a fantastic catch to dismiss Sandakan and give Shakib A Hasan his first wicket.

The pitch itself is not one that facilitates good cricket, and there is a sense of anticipation for the pitch to become more bowler-friendly over the next two days, as it often does in Galle.

### **Victims**

FROM PAGE 1

"Such prisoners should be freed immediately. Steps have been taken to get those individuals released with the support of some non-governmental organisations and government bodies. The process is on.

"The government has taken measures for quick disposal of these cases so that the accused don't languish in jail without trial for long," Hasina said. The government is trying to deter-

mine the actual number of people who have been in prison for a long time, she mentioned. The issue of detention without trial for a long period came to the fore late

last year after a private TV channel reported that a person named Md Shipon had been in jail for more than 16 years without trial. Following the report, the High Court on October 30 asked the lower court concerned to provide it with the

case records and ordered the jail authorities to produce Shipon before it to hear his statement. On November 8 last year, Shipon, arrested in a murder case in 2000,

finally got bail from the HC, which directed the trial court to complete the trial proceedings in 60 working days. As there were more media reports that many have long been in jails

without being convicted, the Supreme Court Legal Aid Office (SCLAO) on November 16 last year sent letters to the authorities of all the 68 jails across the country, seeking names and particulars of prisoners whose trials have been going on for long.

The letters said the SCLAO would provide legal assistance to those financially insolvent.

In response, the Office of the Inspector General of Prisons submitted a report to the SCLAO in December

According to the report, 462 prisoners have spent more than five years in jail with their cases still pending with different courts, a SCLAO official told

#### The Daily Star.

PM ON GENDER REPORT In response to a question from Treasury Bench Lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder, the PM said Bangladesh ranked sixth in terms of political empowerment of women in

the Global Gender Gap Report 2016. "Out of 144 countries, Bangladesh secured the 72nd position, which indicates that the situation is better here compared to other South Asian

countries," she said. Responding to a query from Awami League Lawmaker Ayeen Uddin, Hasina hoped the new Election Commission would function in line with its constitutional obligations and hold free, fair and acceptable elections in future.

### 'Neo JMB' den busted in Ctg

other.

FROM PAGE 1 have been killed or arrested. Those killed include Bangladesh-born Canadian citizen Tamim Chowdhury, said to be the chief coordinator of the

checkpoint in Comilla on Tuesday.

A bomb disposal expert of Chittagong Metropolitan Police

two arrested suspected militants who attacked a police

prepares to destroy a bomb, inset. Police raided a house in

Chittagong yesterday and seized 29 grenades and bomb-making

materials. They ran the operation after getting information from

Briefing journalists around 1:30pm, the SP said it was Hasan who rented two flats at the building on February 1, introducing himself as a clothes trader at Jorarganj on Chittagong-Dhaka

Highway. Jasim used to stay with him. Once inside, law enforcers found no furniture in either of the flats.

The grenades were defused by the bomb disposal unit of Chittagong Metropolitan Police. Later both the flats were sealed, the SP added.

Maynul Islam Musa, a key leader of the outfit who escaped arrest during a drive at the capital's Ashkona on December 24 last year, used to visit the house, said a CTTC official, asking not to be named.

During interrogation, Hasan and Jasim gave misleading information about their identity and addresses. For example, Hasan told police that he was from Patiya upazila in Chittagong. But police found it to be false, said the SP.

Building owner Md Redwan, 45, said that while renting the flats Hasan said he and his brother would live in one flat while his sister, her husband

Redwan, also a former joint general secretary of Mirsharai municipal BNP, said he sometimes saw Hasan's "sister" and her "husband".

"But they remained inside the house most of the time ... I often talked to Hasan...he told me he was from Lohagara upazila in Chittagong."

During one conversation, Hasan told Redwan that he would bring his wife to the flat in March. On February 27, Hasan's sister, her

husband and their kid left their flat, said Redwan, adding, "The last time I spoke with him was on Monday when I gave him electricity bill."

Then around midnight on Tuesday, police knocked on his door and asked him to open the two flats Hasan rented. At the time, police closed the doors of the five other flats from

outside and opened those in the morning, said Redwan and a tenant.

Police took Redwan for questioning

around 11:00pm. On Tuesday, police came under a crude bomb attack when they stopped a bus at Kutumbopur checkpoint and their four-year-old child in the around 11:30am. The bomb did not explode and no one was hurt.

> The law enforcers opened fire, injuring one. He was identified as Jasim. Locals caught Hasan and beat him up when he was trying to flee.

> A backpack, containing several handmade bombs, was seized from Hasan's possession.

The two were later detained. TWO CASES FILED

Police yesterday filed two cases -- one over the recovery of the grenades and explosives and the other over the attack on law enforcers.

The first case was filed with Mirsharai police against eight people, including Hasan, Jasim and Musa, said Shairul Islam, officer-in-charge of the

police station. But he declined to disclose the identity of the other five.

Another cases was filed with Chandina police in Comilla against Hasan and Jasim for attacking the police, said Comilla SP Shah Abid Hossain.

# Where there is a will...

teacher in 2012.

would never see again."

With the help of MA Samad, general secretary of Faridpur Muslim Mission, the three sisters were admitted to the Baptist Church Integrated School in Dhaka's Mirpur 10. There they learnt to read Braille.

Later, Rokeya studied at Mirpur Ideal School and College, completing her Higher School Certificate in 2010. She was admitted to Eden College where, with the help of an appointed scribe, she participated in her exams. Although unable to complete her Bachelor of Arts degree, she joined

"when we first met her we were wor-

Tambulkhana School as an assistant "To be honest," says Shuly Das, enjoying my job." also an assistant teacher at the school,

ried. But from the first day of classes parents being cousins and that we she proved that as a teacher she is meritorious."

> assistant teacher Ruma Bormon. "She thing down, though actually she can do almost everything without assistance. We are really happy to have Rokeya as our colleague."

"A good teacher and a good person," reflects the school's head teacher Kakoli Saha. "She is very punctual and has an indomitable spirit!"

For Rokeya too, settling into teaching life required some adjustment. "At first I was nervous with my colleagues," she remembers. "I didn't know anyone. But thanks to their support I am now doing well and

In her family Rokeya is not alone in

coping well with blindness. Her elder sister Shekha Begum, now 29, is a Master of Arts student in the social "I often help her," says another science department of Eden College and her younger sister Ashia Akter, calls me if she needs to write some- now 25, is completing the second year of her Bachelor of Arts programme at Dhaka University's history department. Unlike Rokeya, both are married. "The only problem I have at work,"

reflects Rokeya, "is that the Braille books I need for teaching are very expensive for me and difficult to obtain, since I need to go to Dhaka to get them." It's yet another lesson. Rokeya is

more-than-ready for teaching. Simple initiatives to increase the availability of Braille texts at affordable prices would make the teaching profession truly ready for her.