

'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

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Detectives seized these glass jars claimed to contain 5.5kg of snake venom worth Tk 45 crore at a house in the capital's Dhanmondi area Tuesday night. A man was also arrested.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Accomplice of 'prison van attacker' held

STAR REPORT

Police claimed to have arrested an accomplice of Mustafa Kamal, who was arrested in connection with attacking 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.

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IS attack kills 38 at Kabul hospital

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"They shot my friend but I managed to flee... I had to jump over the barbed wire to escape."

At least two other loud explosions -- including what the defence ministry 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 severely 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 accountable."

Islamic State jihadists claimed the attack via 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

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bowling, until his brain-fade. He was in a mood to dominate the spinners as he hit Perera for a pair of down-the-wicket 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 logging across the line off Mehedi, whose turn deceived the left-hander, 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 run-out 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 Al 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.

Where there is a will...

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parents being cousins and that we 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 Tambulkhana School as an assistant teacher in 2012.

"To be honest," says Shuly Das, also an assistant teacher at the school, "when we first met her we were wor-

ried. But from the first day of classes she proved that as a teacher she is meritorious."

"I often help her," says another assistant teacher Ruma Bormon. "She calls me if she needs to write something 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 enjoying my job."

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 science department of Eden College and her younger sister Ashia Akter, 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.



A bomb disposal expert of Chittagong Metropolitan 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 two arrested suspected militants who attacked a police checkpoint in Comilla on Tuesday.

'Neo JMB' den busted in Ctg

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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 and their four-year-old child in the other.

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

PHOTO: COLLECTED