

ILLEGAL HOARDING

Mobile court seizes rice in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A mobile court yesterday raided five warehouses in Palashbari and Sadullapur upazilas and recovered 112 tonnes of rice hoarded illegally.

On information, the mobile team raided the warehouses owned by rice trader Harun-ur-Rashid, proprietor of Khandker Traders, seized the rice and sealed the warehouses. The team also seized Tk 10.59 lakh in cash from the warehouses.

The rice trader had been a hoarder for a long time, said the executive magistrate who led the mobile drive.

The trader could not produce any documents in support of hoarding the rice in his warehouses for long, said officials at the district food office.

The mobile team was comprised of executive magistrate SM Ashik Reza, Rahima Khatun, UNO Sadullapur, Tofazzal Hossain, UNO Palashbari, Amjad Hossain, DC (food), Farhad Emrul Quaesh, OC Sadullapur, and Nabiul Islam, OC (investigation), Palashbari.

BNP dismisses

FROM PAGE 1

Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain.

He said Hasina placed a five-point proposal, including setting up of safe zone in Myanmar for Rohingyas, before the United Nations General Assembly as part of solution to the Rohingya crisis.

The party urged the prime minister to refrain from repeating the phrase "safe zone" as the concept did not work in many countries, said the BNP leader.

He, however, offered no explanation why the idea would be bad for Bangladesh.

Mosharraf also announced a four-point recommendation to get solution to the Rohingya crisis.

The recommendations are: the government will have to forge a national unity to face the Rohingya crisis and to mount pressure on Myanmar to take back its people.

The Rohingyas, who have fled to Bangladesh in the face of persecution, will have to be recognised as refugees, he said.

Diplomatic pressure in association with the UN will have to be mounted on Myanmar so that it gives citizenship to the Rohingyas.

The Rohingya crisis will have to be solved in the light of the Repatriation Act inked during the tenure of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman in 1978.

Mosharraf was addressing a roundtable on "Genocide in Myanmar and The Role of Bangladesh" at a hotel in Gulshan where diplomats from different countries, including the US, the UK, Canada, Spain, Saudi Arabia, European Union, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan, and representatives of many development partners were present in the discussion. Former ambassador Serajul Islam presented the keynote paper.

In his inaugural speech, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir blamed the Myanmar army for carrying out ethnic cleansing against the Rohingyas. "It is genocide. The entire world became vocal against it."

He said, "It is a big challenge for us to face the Rohingya crisis. We think this disaster will create humanitarian, social, economical and political crisis. But the government's role in this issue is in question -- they are still in a dilemma."

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, another standing committee member of the party, said, "Prime minister's statement in the UN about safe zone is nothing but a fallacy. We all know that the safe zone concept did not work in Bosnia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Iraq."

Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna said, "The Rohingya crisis is increasing. It is spreading across the country. I think that the BNP as a main political party of the country should take a political stance to mount pressure on the Bangladesh and Myanmar governments and international community to resolve the crisis."

Prof Mahbub Ullah, former governor of Bangladesh Bank

Salehuddin Ahmed, former foreign secretary Hemayet Uddin Ahmed, former secretary Mofazzal Karim and a number of Dhaka University teachers, among others, also spoke.



Shanik Monwar Lance Corporal Zakirul Sergeant Altaf

3 Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 1 African country on Saturday and fended off them successfully.

"While returning to the camp after discharging their duty, they [Bangladeshi peacekeepers] were ambushed by criminals again yesterday. Again they foiled their offensive successfully and courageously," read the release.

"At one stage of the fight, an improvised explosive device went off, leaving three peacekeepers dead and four wounded."

Director of the ISPR Lt Col Muhammad Rashidul Hasan said they were trying to collect details about the incident and the victim peacekeepers.

Some 1,418 Bangladeshis are now working in the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali.

Merkel wins fourth term

FROM PAGE 1

electorate torn between a high degree of satisfaction with Merkel and a desire for change after more than a decade of her leadership.

Another three parties cleared the five-percent hurdle to be represented in parliament: the liberal Free Democrats at around 10 percent and the anti-capitalist Left and ecologist Greens, both at about nine percent.

As Merkel failed to secure a ruling majority on her own and with the dejected SPD ruling out another right-left "grand coalition" with her, the process of coalition building was shaping up to be a thorny, potentially months-long process.

BREAKING TABOOS AFD TRADEMARK

Merkel, 63, whose campaign events were regularly disrupted by jeering AFD supporters, said in her final stump speech in the southern city of Munich that "the future of Germany will definitely not be built with whistles and hollers".

Merkel, often called the most powerful woman on the global stage, ran on her record as a steady pair of hands in a turbulent world, warning voters not to indulge in "experiments".

Pundits said Merkel's reassuring message of stability and prosperity resonated in greying Germany, where more than half of the 61 million voters are aged 52 or older.

Her popularity had largely recovered from the influx since 2015 of more than one million mostly Muslim migrants and refugees, half of them from war-torn Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the AFD was able to capitalise on a wellspring of anger over the asylum issue during what was criticised as a largely lacklustre campaign bereft of real clashes among the main contenders.

The party has made breaking taboos its trademark.

Gauland has called for Germans

Deported, man remains

FROM PAGE 1

of a co-passenger on a Malindo Airlines flight around 10:00pm Malaysian time (8:00pm Bangladesh time), minutes before the plane took off on July 19.

But he neither reached his home in Bogra nor contacted her. "My husband promised me to call again after landing in Dhaka whenever he gets the chance."

Last month, Rabbani's elder sister Nigar Sultana told this newspaper that her brother called her that night and only said he was coming back.

Contacted again yesterday, Nigar said there is still no trace of Rabbani.

According to Nazia, the family went to Malaysia on September 3 last year as her husband planned to complete his master's degree from a university there. They also wanted to ensure better education of their children.

She said they went there on tourist visas and later got their eldest son, eight-year-old Hossain al Jawad, admitted to a madrasa in Gombak area of Kuala Lumpur.

As Jawad became a student of a local educational institution, the authorities extended his visa till 2019. Rabbani also got his visa extended for the same period, she added.

Nazia returned to Bangladesh on November 1 with her two children and after a few months, they again went back to Malaysia.

Rabbani applied for admission to International Islamic University Malaysia and the university issued an offer letter.

They, however, asked him to surrender his dependant visa and get a student visa. The family visa is also called dependant visa in Malaysia.

When the couple went to the immigration office on July 3 for his student

to shed their guilt over two world wars and the Holocaust and to take pride in their veterans.

He has also suggested that Germany's integration commissioner Aydan Ozoguz, who has Turkish roots, should be "disposed of in Anatolia".

Law student Sabine Maier dismissed the AfD as "too extreme" as she voted in Berlin.

But she also criticised the media for lavishly covering the most outrageous comments by the upstart party.

"They aren't all fascists," she said. **MERKEL SEARCHING FOR PARTNER**

The SPD said its catastrophic result would lead it to seek a stint in opposition to rekindle its fighting spirit.

"This is a difficult and bitter day for German social democracy," a grim-faced Schulz, a former European Parliament chief, told reporters, adding that he hoped to remain party leader.

This would leave Merkel in need of new coalition partners -- possibly the pro-business Free Democrats, who staged a comeback after crashing out of parliament four years ago.

In theory they could join forces with the left-leaning Greens, who, however, starkly differ from the FDP on issues from climate change to migration policy.

Schulz, 61, struggled to gain traction with his calls for a more socially just Germany at a time when the economy is humming and employment is at a record low.

The SPD also found it hard to shine after four years as the junior partner in Merkel's left-right "grand coalition", marked by broad agreement on major issues, from foreign policy to migration.

In the final stretch, the more outspoken Schulz told voters to reject Merkel's "sleeping-pill politics" and vote against "another four years of stagnation and lethargy".

No refugee

FROM PAGE 1 law and order in the home ministry at the secretariat.

"We are registering them [Rohingya] for information, and we want that they will return to the place they have come from," said Amu, who is the committee chief.

He said a vested quarter was trying to instigate communal unrest using the Rohingya issue, but the law enforcers were on high alert to foil such attempts.

Amu alleged that the quarter was trying to mislead people, uploading fake information and photos on social media, especially YouTube.

He added that law enforcers took all necessary measures so that the Hindu community could celebrate their biggest religious festival peacefully.

Law Minister Anisul Haq, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and representatives of different law enforcement agencies took part in the meeting.

Kim Jong

FROM PAGE 16

tens of thousands of people attending an anti-US rally at Kim Il Sung square in Pyongyang.

The North's official KCNA news agency said more than 100,000 people gathered for the rally on Saturday and delivered speeches supporting comments made by Kim earlier in the week.

"We are waiting for the right time to have a final battle with the US, the evil empire, and to remove the US from the world," KCNA quoted Ri Il-bae, a commanding officer of the Red Guards, as saying. "Once respected Supreme commander Kim Jong Un gives an order, we will annihilate the group of aggressors."

UNPRECEDENTED

In an unprecedented direct statement on Friday, Kim described Trump as a "mentally deranged US dotard" whom he would tame with fire.

Kim said the North would consider the "highest level of hard-line countermeasure in history" against the United States and that Trump's comments had confirmed his nuclear programme was "the correct path".

Kim's comments came after Trump threatened in his maiden UN address on Thursday to "totally destroy" the country of 26 million people.

It was not clear from Trump's latest tweet if he was referring to Ri and Kim, or North Korea more broadly.

North Korea conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear bomb test on Sept 3, prompting another round of UN sanctions. Pyongyang said on Friday it might test a hydrogen bomb over the Pacific Ocean.

"It is only a forlorn hope to consider any chance that the DPRK (North Korea) would be shaken an inch or change its stance due to the harsher sanctions by the hostile forces," Ri told the UN General Assembly on Saturday.

BOMBERS

US Air Force B-1B Lancer bombers escorted by fighters flew in international airspace over waters east of North Korea on Saturday in a show of force the Pentagon said indicated the range of military options available to Trump.

Admirable

FROM PAGE 16

leaders and media personnel. Police are hardly ever seen taking any action.

Most of the VIPs caught red handed yesterday did not object to being penalised.

"They (VIPs) usually attempt to bend the rules and hamper our drive. But the situation was different today [yesterday]. They didn't even approach the police officers," said an officer, requesting anonymity.

Only a lawmaker from a Narsingdhi constituency tried to say something to police, but the officer did not pay any attention, the official added.

Police conducted the drive to curb a gridlock caused by vehicles on the wrong side of roads.

Anti-Corruption Commissioner Iqbal Mahmood, who was on the road at the time, stopped near the police check post and encouraged the policemen to enforce traffic rules, sources said.

Alauddin, senior assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), said the drive took place between 4:00pm and 6:00pm.

Seven vehicles were fined Tk 1200-1500, he added.

Mosleh Uddin, additional commissioner of DMP Traffic, said, "I will request all to abide by the traffic rules. With our 4,000 members in the department, we have been struggling to ease traffic jam in the city."

He also said they usually penalise 90-100 drivers for using the wrong side of roads every day.

PMO bins Indian media

FROM PAGE 1

now mostly freelance, was run by news portal lookeast.in, where he is an editorial director, with the headline "BNP-ISI nexus targets Hasina, but fails."

A day later, the CNN-News18 (formerly known as CNN IBN), a partnership between TV18 (one of India's leading TV broadcast networks) and CNN International, reproduced the report with the headline "Jihadi Conspiracy to Assassinate Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina Foiled In The Nick of Time." In the report, Bhaumik was credited as a contributor.

As if to give it more currency with a salt of "authenticity", News18.com backed up its report by a reference to the Mizzima report penned by the same journalist.

Yesterday, a section of Bangladesh TV media followed suit. A Bangladeshi TV channel even went on to interview Bhaumik, consulting editor at Mizzima and also senior editor of a Dhaka-based news portal, live where he boasted of his 37-year journalism career and claimed that his report was authentic.

The PMO is disturbed by all these media activities.

"This is to inform all that the news of the so-called failed attempt [on PM's life] is completely baseless, confusing and motivated. It's not expected at all from any responsible person or conscious media organisation to publish or broadcast such a confusing report that goes against the interest of the country's security," read the press release.

The PMO also requested all the media outlets to be cautious about such "baseless and confusing news".

Ironically, the state-run news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) also gave in to the news, only to kill the dispatch within an hour.

Unfortunately though, vague comments of some ministers and TV talkers also gave some sort of weight to this "baseless" report.

On Saturday night, the CNN-News18 TV channel took Bangladesh information minister's comments over the phone.

Hasanul Haq Inu told the TV chan-

nel that Hasina and political parties are facing a conspiracy from forces like Pakistan and their friend, the Jamaat-Islami.

"[Members of] JMB and other militant outfits who have been arrested or killed have links with ISI and Pakistan-based terror networks," the channel quoted Inu as saying.

The minister said Bangladesh would take up the matter with Pakistan.

"Pakistan is involved in terror activities in Bangladesh. And Khaleda Zia is toeing Pakistan government's policy. Khaleda Zia and her son are behind these attacks. They are hand in glove with Pakistan."

About the so-called assassination plot, Inu said, "We are looking into the matter seriously. We are investigating. Reports are along these lines. Sheikh Hasina knows there is a threat to her life."

Yesterday, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said a vested quarter is plotting to kill Hasina.

"Being envious of Sheikh Hasina's huge popularity, a vested quarter comprising local and foreign elements is plotting to kill her," Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, told reporters while talking about the PM's efforts over the Rohingya issue.

Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu, however, trashed the report on the so-called assassination attempt on Hasina.

He was talking to reporters after a meeting of the cabinet committee on law and order at the home ministry yesterday.

"This was not discussed [at the meeting]. We don't find any authenticity in it [such reports]," Amu said.

In his report, Bhaumik, consulting editor at Mizzima News of Myanmar, implicated Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa), also known as Harakah al-Yaqin, in the so-called attempt on Hasina's life.

But it's not fathomable that a force like Arsa would involve itself in something that Bhaumik is suggesting at a time when the Bangladesh PM championed the cause of the repressed Rohingyas and is playing host to half a million refugees with global appreciation.

Free food for the poor

FROM PAGE 16

dressed people often came to my restaurant in search of food and I had to give them. I wanted to provide for everybody."

Earlier this year he set up a free street kitchen run at the Shaheed Minar premises every evening. The menu was good: steaming rice with fish, meat or egg curry, chicken hotchpotch or that detectable dish prepared with fish or goat head called murigantha. There were time-to-time treats such as mango milk, too. With up to 160 guests dining each evening, for perhaps the first time in Tangail's history, none went hungry.

"Anyone could take a meal, there was no bar," recalls Manik Hossain, the manager of Masud's eatery who prepared the food. "Nobody left with an empty stomach."

The initiative was popular. Ahammad, 12, from Mohishkhola area in the town pulls a rickshaw van at the local fish market. He was a regular patron. "I spend around Tk 40 for my supper," he says, "I was able to save that."

Maznu Miah, Shukur Ali and Abu Miah, all over 50 years old, normally sleep at the rifle club premises after a day of begging. They too were regular street kitchen diners. "I usually eat stale food," says Maznu, "whatever people give when I beg. At the street kitchen I ate hot rice with tasty curry!"

Tania, 30, who lives a precarious life at Shantikunjer Corner in the town, used to bring her young daughter with her to enjoy the evening meal. "We ate there every day," she says, "I don't know who fed us."

The street kitchen required at least 25 kilograms of rice and cost around Tk 3,000 per day to run, relying on the services of twelve staff, six of whom were waiters from Masud's restaurant, with the remaining six being street hawker and rickshaw driver volunteers.

"I was really happy to volunteer," says Shahida Begum, 40, who runs a teashop on the footpath of Victoria Road. "And I also took my dinner there."

"It gave me a new kind of mental peace to help out," says another volunteer, rickshaw driver Shahin Miah from Dighulia area of the town. "With my rickshaw kept to one side I served our guests willingly."

Naturally the street kitchen initiative did not go unnoticed. "Even if somebody arrived in Tangail town with an empty pocket they did not go hungry," recalls one resident, Jakir Hossain. "It was a really noble initiative. May God bless Masud Bhai!"

Unfortunately however, the cost of feeding so many people every day proved burdensome on Masud's personal finances. While some of his friends did donate extra items like milk

or mangoes on an ad hoc basis, none stepped forward to contribute regularly. Now the street kitchen operates only on a Friday afternoon.

"I spent my meagre savings to keep the daily kitchen running for as long as possible," says Masud. "What else could I do? I'd like to run it every day like before but I need to find a way. If only I had 30 kilograms of rice per day, I could arrange the rest."

He approached the upazila food officer in Tangail to see if rice could be made available, to no avail. Masud is not sure where else to turn.

"Many people in this town have lots of money and the ability to help," says one town-dweller Shafiqul Islam Jewel. "Perhaps Masud Bhai alone has the heart."

"Despite a lot of wealthy traders and politicians, along with government and non-government organisations being based in Tangail, Masud's daily initiative to feed the destitute couldn't continue," says development worker Bidyut Khoshnobish. "That is our community's shame."

Robot performs

FROM PAGE 16

Although medical staff were present during the one-hour surgery in Xian, Shaanxi province, they did not play an active role.

Two new teeth, created by 3D printing, were successfully implanted into a woman's mouth, the South China Morning Post reported.

The robot was developed by Beihang University in Beijing and the Fourth Military Medical University's Stomatological Hospital.

Dr Zhao Yimin, who works at the hospital, told the newspaper the robot was designed to carry out dental procedures and avoid mistakes made by human error.

It followed a set of pre-programmed commands to fit the implants into the patient's mouth, but was able to make adjustments as the woman moved.

The robot was built to help deal with China's shortage of qualified dentists. Hong Kong and Singapore are also facing a shortage of dentists, experts have warned.

Patients are also at risk of poor surgery carried out by unqualified dentists, which can lead to further complications.

According to the report, there are around 400 million patients in need of new teeth in China.

Experts say robot surgery, or robot-assisted surgery, allows doctors to perform complicated surgery with more precision, but some question whether these operations are safe.

In 2015, a US study into the safety of robotic surgery linked 144 patient deaths to the use of the machines, although this only represents a tiny proportion of the total number of robotic surgeries.