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Yaba dealers' clever trick

1.96 lakh pink pills found in lorry's secret chamber

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They made a hidden chamber on top of the cab of a lorry, concealed a large consignment of yaba inside it, welded them shut and painted over it so that it would not raise suspicion. This was how a drug smuggling gang was carrying around 1.96 lakh pieces of yaba tablets in a salt-laden lorry from Teknaf to Dhaka amid the ongoing nationwide anti-narcotics drive.

However, their trick did not work as members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered the contraband item during a raid at Rugganj upazila in Narayanganj on Tuesday night.

A flatbed truck carrying 10,000 yaba pills inside its spare tyre was also seized during the raid. "The smell of paint, salt and some other chemicals put inside the chamber tricked the sniffer dogs. Finally, we traced and recovered the yaba pills using an iron cutter," said Lt Col Sarwar-Bin-Quasem, commanding officer of Rab-1.

The elite force arrested the drivers and helpers of both the vehicles. They are drivers Manik Mia, 27, and Masum Mia, 40, and their assistants Arif, 22, and Abdul Khaleque, 28.

Had they failed, the vehicles would have been taken to a workshop in Keraniganj for delivery of the pills, said Rab quoting the arrestees.



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Traders sort hilsa fish at the fish landing station on Barisal city's Port Road yesterday. Following great catch in the rivers, fishermen with their trawlers full, inset, flooded the market with hilsa.

PHOTO COURTESY: TITU DAS

Massive raid in Bashundhara, Kalachandpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police last night launched a massive block raid in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area and its adjacent Kalachandpur to arrest "drug peddlers and criminals".

Equipped with armoured personnel carrier and dog squad, around 1,500 law enforcers, including members of Detective Branch (DB) of police, started the raid around 8:30pm, police said.

The raid was underway when this report was filed around 1:30am today.

The move came two days after a clash in the area between police and students demanding road safety measures. The law enforcers, however, claimed that the raid had nothing to do with the clash.

SM Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Bhatara Police Station, said, "Around 1,500 law enforcers have taken part in the block raid which is being conducted as part of our

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Freed in one case, arrested in another

Tangled up in 37 cases, Khaleda remains in jail for 6 months

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Tangled in 37 cases, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has not been able to walk out of jail in the last six months. If she gets bail in one case, she is arrested in another.

Khaleda was imprisoned on February 8 following conviction in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case. Many BNP leaders' initial optimism about her release waned as she could not get out of jail despite winning a hard-fought legal battle for bail at the Supreme Court in May.

She had to start fighting other battles for bail in other cases. She is yet to get bail in a murder case in Comilla, two arson cases in Khulna and Narail and defamation case in Dhaka.

"The lower court is influenced by the ruling party. She got bail in the case in

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Myanmar still not giving free access

Says UN; Dhaka says Naypyidaw failing to tackle Rohingya issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations said Myanmar has not yet granted its staff independent and effective access to Rakhine, though two months have passed since the signing of a deal on helping the country create conducive conditions for Rohingya repatriation.

"On 14 June, UNHCR and UNDP submitted travel authorisation requests for international staff to be based in Maungdaw and to start their work in the northern part of Rakhine State, and are waiting for a response from the government [of Myanmar] to these requests," said UNHCR, UN Refugee Agency, and UN Development Programme in a joint statement yesterday.

The UN agencies said effective access requires being able to consult, freely and independently and on a day-to-day basis, with communities in Rakhine about their needs. It also necessitates a predictable, flexible and simplified procedure to approve travel authorisations within a reasonable period of time for UNHCR and UNDP staff to go to the areas where these communities reside.

"These are basic criteria for enabling us to carry out our work in the areas of Rakhine State covered by the MoU," said the UN, urging Myanmar authorities to make tangible progress to improve conditions in Rakhine.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh has accused Myanmar of failing to tackle the concerns of over 1 million Rohingyas, including the 300,000 who fled earlier violence, and urged the UN Security Council to take action to ensure their safe return to Myanmar, reports AP.

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ROHINGYA TALKS FM flies to Myanmar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali left Dhaka for Myanmar last night to see for himself whether a conducive environment has been created in Rakhine for the safe return of forcibly displaced Rohingyas.

He is leading a 15-member delegation of the Joint Working Group (JWG) formed to facilitate the Rohingya repatriation. During the four-day visit, the team will see the accommodation facilities, particularly installation of prefabricated houses, for the Rohingyas.

In December last year, Bangladesh and Myanmar formed the 30-member JWG -- 15 from each country -- in Myanmar to supervise all aspects of the refugee repatriation.

The group held its second meeting in Bangladesh in mid-May, co-chaired by

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Remove 'anti-homeless' benches from campus

Students call on London univ



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Students are calling on the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) to remove "anti-homeless" benches from outside the library, which prevent people sleeping there.

The new benches -- which now include metal armrests -- were recently installed on the university's campus in central London to reduce the risk of "threats and anti-social behaviour", LSE has said.

But students have described the move as "outrageous" in an online petition which calls for the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Ansar-VDP gets job to publicise govt's success

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ansar-VDP Cooperative Society Ltd has been tasked with publicising 10 special initiatives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other development activities of the government among people at unions.

The cabinet committee on economic affairs made

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PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 9

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-47 8-15

JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'Drug dealer' killed in 'gunfight' in Comilla

STAR REPORT

A wanted drug dealer was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab at Chauddagam upazila in Comilla early yesterday.

Deceased Md Faruk, 33, was an accused in five drug related cases, Rab claimed.

Maj Ataur Rahman, a company commander of Rab-11 in Comilla said a Rab team raided Komalla Munshirhat College Road area to arrest drug dealers. Sensing presence of law enforcers, the drug dealers opened fire prompting the Rab team to retaliate, he said.

At one stage, Faruk was shot. Faruk passed away when he was being taken to Comilla Medical College hospital, Ataur said, adding that his accomplices managed to flee.

A pistol, two bullets and 524 yaba pills were found on the spot, he added.

Family sources said Faruk was a tea stall owner.

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People queue up to buy train tickets for their Eid holidays at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday. The advance tickets for August 17 went on sale yesterday and many, mostly people from northern districts, started queuing since the night before.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

No one trusts US anymore

Says Tehran; China, Germany defend business with Iran after sanctions

AGENCIES

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said yesterday it was hard to imagine new talks with the US after it lost the trust of the world with its erratic decision-making.

"Imagine negotiating now -- how can we trust them?" Zarif told reporters on state broadcaster IRINN. "America has zig-zagged constantly, so now no one trusts them."

Zarif was speaking a day after Washington reimposed a first tranche of harsh sanctions following its withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal.

President Donald Trump says he wants talks with Iran on a new deal covering the full range of its "malign behaviour" in the region, which has been dismissed by Iran.

"There is a big difference this time," said Zarif.

"Before nobody supported Iran. But now, all the countries in the world are supporting Iran."

China and Germany yesterday defended their business ties with Iran in the face of Trump's warning that any companies trading with the Islamic Republic would be barred from the United States.

The comments from Beijing and Berlin signalled growing anger from partners of the United States.

"China has consistently opposed unilateral sanctions and long-armed jurisdiction," the Chinese foreign ministry said.

"China's commercial cooperation with Iran is open and transparent, reasonable, fair and lawful, not violating any United Nations Security Council resolutions," it added in a faxed statement to Reuters.

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