

5 held with 23kg gold

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Rab yesterday detained five suspected gold smugglers with 200 gold bars weighing around 23kg from Moinot Ghat area in Dohar.

Officers said the suspects were about to smuggle the bars into India through Jessore border.

Tipped off, a team of Rab-11 set up a check-post on a road in Moinot Ghat area around 8:00am.

The suspects, who were in two CNG-run three-wheelers, stopped the vehicles after seeing the check-post and tried to run away.

Rab members then chased and caught them, Rasel Ahmed Kabir, commanding officer of Rab-11, told a press conference at his office in Adamjee area of Narayanganj.

The detainees are Mohsin, 47, Firoz, 34, Siddique, 46, Mizan, 34, and Aminul, 40. They were also carrying Tk 26,000.

The Rab CO said the suspects had been involved with gold smuggling for a long time.

The elite force in the last 10 days seized 216 illegal gold bars weighing around 25kg in Narsingdi and Gabtoli area of the capital and arrested 11.

UK SPY POISONING Russians 'posed as businessmen'

AFP, London

Two Russians accused by London of trying to kill a former double agent with nerve agent posed as businessmen to obtain visas to visit Britain for the attack, a report said yesterday.

British authorities have issued European arrest warrants for Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, two suspected members of Russian military intelligence.

They are accused of trying to kill former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia with Novichok in the English city of Salisbury on March 4, in an attack London believes was sanctioned by the Kremlin.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper, citing an unnamed security source, said the two men had posed as businessmen to obtain their visas from the British consulate in Saint Petersburg.

Dhaka to call

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The Mission established by the UN Human Rights Council in March 2017 has found patterns of gross human rights violation and abuse committed in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states that “undoubtedly amount to the gravest crimes under international law”, principally by Myanmar’s military.

A fuller report, containing factual information and legal analysis, will be published and presented to the Human Rights Council on September 18. It will include a significant amount of satellite imagery analysis. The Fact-Finding Mission report said the UN Security Council should ensure all perpetrators are held accountable, preferably by referring Myanmar to the International Criminal Court or by creating an ad hoc tribunal.

In the UNGA, foreign ministry officials said the EU would continue to intensify its efforts to strengthen the respect for international humanitarian law, as well as refugee law and international human rights law, supporting full, prompt, impartial and effective investigations in case of violation.

Myanmar govt

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statement in response “soon”. Myanmar has previously rejected any possibility that the ICC could have any jurisdiction over the country.

Bangladesh is a signatory, however, and the judges said that the deportation of the Rohingya amounted to a cross-border crime, thereby giving the court the right to pursue the issue further.

Its ruling means that the ICC’s chief prosecutor can now open a preliminary investigation that could lead to a wider probe and eventually a trial.

The ICC ruling followed international outrage triggered by the sentencing of two local Reuters journalists earlier this week for seven years in jail under a draconian state secrets act.

Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, had been investigating the extra-judicial killing of Rohingya villagers when they were arrested in December last year.

Rights groups decried the case as a sham trial in a country where press freedom is shrinking.

Zaw Htay declined to comment on the case yesterday.

Asean MPs, Amnesty

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was “under no obligation” to respect the court ruling.

Referring to the ICC ruling, Santiago, also a parliament member of Malaysia, said, “This ruling, however, is for now just on the jurisdiction to investigate around the alleged crime of deportation and we must be cautious in our optimism.

“It remains imperative that we continue to seek other international justice mechanisms, as well as the United Nations Security Council referral of Myanmar to the ICC for the wide array of atrocity crimes its leaders have been accused [of], including genocide and other crimes against humanity.”

The ICC found that, while the underlying coercive acts under the alleged crime against humanity of deportation of Rohingya took place in a state not party to the Rome Statute, the court nevertheless could assert jurisdiction as an element of the crime had also occurred on the territory of a state party to the statute -- in this case, Bangladesh.

The court concluded that such jurisdiction extended to other crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute, particularly those on the persecution of a group and other inhumane acts.

“The ICC now has the opportunity to initiate a full investigation. This means bringing those responsible for the alleged human rights violations to account and possibly putting an end to the longstanding discrimination and injustices this community has faced in Myanmar,” said Eva Kusuma Sundari, member of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights and House of Representatives of Indonesia.

She said it would undoubtedly bring some much-needed hope and optimism for Rohingyas.

“We.... hope for a full investigation and trial of those accountable for all alleged crimes under the jurisdiction of the ICC,” she added.

The APHR in its statement said the international community,

including the ASEAN states, must continue pushing for other potential mechanisms that could bring accountability and justice for victims of crimes across Myanmar and ensure those displaced can return.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND FORTIFY RIGHTS HAIL ICC

The ICC decision opens a clear avenue for justice for Rohingyas and the international community must see it as a spur to further action, Amnesty International said.

“This decision is a significant step in the right direction....” said Biraj Patnaik, South Asia director of the organisation.

The court has sent a clear signal to the Myanmar military that they will be held accountable, he added.

Amnesty International has documented extensively how the military’s crackdown also included murder, rape, torture, forced starvation, the targeted burning of Rohingya villages and the use of landmines.

“The United Nations Security Council should still refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC, so that the Court can investigate all crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya, as well as the military’s crimes against other ethnic minorities in Kachin and northern Shan States,” he added.

Also yesterday, Fortify Rights said the UN Security Council should refer the Myanmar situation to ICC.

“The court’s decision is monumental, but this is just a first step,” said Matthew Smith, chief executive officer of the organisation.

“This decision should inspire more international action, not less....”

On August 27, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar found patterns of gross human rights violations committed in Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan States, and called for the investigation and prosecution of Myanmar’s top military generals.

The Myanmar government has since refused to accept the findings.

Mahmud Chowdhury were present.

LEADERS WANTS TO MEET MINISTER

The BNP has sought a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on September 9 to discuss Khaleda’s health.

The party chief’s personal secretary, ABM Sattar, sent a letter to the home ministry on September 6 in this regard, Sayrul Kabir Khan, a staff of Khaleda’s media wing, told The Daily Star.

A 10-member delegation, led by Fakhru, wants to meet the home minister, he said.

Diamond

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Bangabandhu. There’s nothing in favour of him, everything is against him. Why have we published these reports? ... With this publication, people will know each and every activity, move and speech of the Father of the Nation from 1948 to 1971. There is so much information there,” she said.

The PM also said the IB reports would give the readers, researchers and others an opportunity to find out the most valuable information about Bangabandhu. “The country’s people will be able to know a lot about the Father of the Nation.”

Mentioning that there are some questions about how Bangabandhu had contributed to the Language Movement as he had been in jail at that time, Hasina said, “The hostile attitude of a section of people will be gone after reading these documents.”

Explaining the reason behind the publication of the IB reports, she said, “I took the step to publish those as the country’s people will be able to divulge truth from these. They’ll know the history of Bangladesh. They’ll be able to know how we got the independence.”

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Javed Patwary, Golam Mostafa of Hakkani Publishers and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust Member Secretary Sheikh Hajizur Rahman also spoke at the programme.

Bangabandhu Memorial Trust is funding the publication. Hakkani Publishers will publish the book in 14 volumes.

Pakistani Intelligence Branch used to make reports on Bangabandhu almost every day.

The book also contains different information on the country’s War of Liberation and the founding of the Awami League, letters written to Bangabandhu by his party leaders and workers, relatives and speeches delivered by him at different meetings and public rallies.

Hundreds

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and other adjacent districts.

A long queue of over 200 buses was seen at the Daulatdia end in Rajbari around noon. A similar tail-back was also found at the Paturia end in Manikganj around 1:30pm, reports our Manikganj correspondent.

Sohrab Hossain, 45, who works in a private organisation in the capital, was going to his home in Magura along with wife and children in a bus.

He said the bus reached the Paturia ferry terminal around 8:00am from Gabtoli bus terminal. As of 1:30pm, the vehicle could not board a ferry.

“Although I use this route occasionally, whenever I travel I find it difficult to cross the river because of disruption in ferry service,” he told The Daily Star.

Besides buses, around 500 trucks at the Paturia end and about 400 trucks at the Daulatdia end were seen waiting to cross the river.

Jillur Rahman, assistant general manager (commerce) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Paturia office, said the number of vehicles increased at the terminal because an additional number of goods-laden trucks used the route.

The trucks were supposed to take the Shimulia-Kathalbari route, but the vehicles used the Paturia-Daulatdia route due to Thursday’s disruption of ferry service on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route, he said.

Shafiqul Islam, manager (commerce) at BIWTC’s Daulatdia office, said 17 ferries were operational on the Paturia-Daulatdia route at present.

Of them, seven are Ro-Ro ferries, one K-type ferry, a medium sized ferry, and eight utility ferries, he said.

Except for two Ro-Ro ferries, five others are old and cannot run properly against strong currents, he added.

Normally, a ferry needs 35 to 40 minutes to make a trip. Now, a ferry is taking 60 to 70 minutes for that, he further said.

As a result, the number of trips by the ferries has been decreased, he added.

Golam Ambia, a traffic inspector of Manikganj highway police, said the pressure of vehicles increased at Paturia terminal after Thursday afternoon.

Officials said launch service on the Paturia-Daulatdia route remained suspended from 4:00pm on Thursday to 8:00am yesterday due to strong currents in the river and to avert accident at night.

Meanwhile, plying of launches and speedboats resumed yesterday on the Shimulia-Kathalbari route after 24 hours, said Khandakar Shah Khaled Nawaz, BIWTC assistant general manager at Shimulia-Kathalbari office.

The services were suspended on Thursday morning due to strong currents in the river, he said.

He added that 15 out of the 18 ferries were in service on the route yesterday, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Besides, ferries are taking extra time to make trips due to poor navigability and excessive waves in the river, he said.

Jamboree

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placed across the park to keep it clean, Nandy said, adding CCTV cameras were installed in 14 different points for security reasons.

A gallery has been constructed around the water body so that people can sit and have a good time, he said.

The place was previously known as Jamboree Math (field) as it was used for large Scouts gatherings called Jamboree.

Over the years, some local influential people, however, grabbed parts of the PWD land for growing vegetables while others constructed makeshift shops on another part.

In February, 2016, the PWD took up a project to free the land and build a park.

Nandy said there has always been a dearth of open spaces in Chittagong city and that they wanted to gift the city dwellers a place to breathe fresh air.

“Initially, the project budget was estimated at Tk 20 crore. But we finished everything within Tk 18 crore. The rest of the money was given back to the department,” he said.

Anisul Hoque, a PWD sub-divisional engineer, said the ground has been made almost three feet high so that it does not get submerged due to water-logging.

Pritom Bhattacharjee, a local, said, “There has been a lack of open spaces for us in the city. We needed it [the park] badly.”

Mujibul Khandakar, a senior citizen in the area, praised the PWD initiative and said, “Now, I have a place to walk freely.”

The park will remain open from 5:00am to 9:00pm everyday for all.

Merkel, German intel chief clash on 'foreigner hunt' reports

AFP, Berlin

The head of Germany’s domestic intelligence agency yesterday raised doubts about reports of a “hunt on foreigners” by neo-Nazi mobs in a flashpoint city last month, directly contradicting Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Weighing in on an issue that has reignited the immigration debate in the country, agency chief Hans-Georg Maassen told the daily Bild that he had “no proof that the video circulating on the internet” showing foreign-looking people being accosted and chased “is authentic”.

“I share the scepticism about media reports of right-wing extremist foreigner hunts in Chemnitz,” the eastern city that has seen several far-right rallies since the killing of a German man, allegedly by asylum seekers, in late August.

“Based on my cautious assessment, there are good reasons to believe that this was intentional false information, possibly to

detract attention from the murder in Chemnitz,” Maassen said.

Extremist groups and thousands of local citizens took to the streets in the days after the fatal stabbing, with a number of participants shouting anti-foreigner slurs and flashing the illegal Nazi salute.

In a spasm of violence that shocked the country, marauding mobs also assaulted reporters and police.

During the first demonstration on August 26, a freelance journalist working for respected weekly Die Zeit posted two videos on Twitter showing demonstrators running after foreign-looking people.

They were widely picked up by media outlets.

Police said that several people have come forward saying they were assaulted, including a Syrian, a Bulgarian and an Afghan.

Merkel’s spokesman Steffen Seibert quickly condemned the scenes from Chemnitz, including speaking of protesters “hunting down” foreigners.

Trump's feud

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political divide, either confirming a Deep State conspiracy to destroy the president, or confirming that he is unfit for office.

In the end, the verdict will boil down to what voters believe.

The op-ed appeared to corroborate at least part of the picture emerging from a 448-page book Fear: Trump In The White House, due for release next Tuesday.

Written by veteran investigative journalist and Washington Post associate editor Bob Woodward, extracts released thus far paint a picture of a White House with a mercurial president at the centre of internal tension and chaos.

The book and the op-ed have triggered more than chatter about the possibility of a decision by the Cabinet under the 25th Amendment to remove the president from office on grounds that he is unfit.

Massachusetts Senator Elisabeth Warren tweeted: “If senior officials believe the president is unfit, they should stop hiding behind anonymous op-eds and leaking info to Bob Woodward, and do what the Constitution demands they do: invoke the 25th Amendment and remove this president from office.”

But President Trump and Vice-President Mike Pence lambasted the author of the op-ed, and the New York Times.

“The Deep State and the Left, and their vehicle, the Fake News Media, are going Crazy,” Trump tweeted on Thursday.

Yesterday, he blasted Woodward’s damning portrayal of the inner workings of his administration as a “scam” based on made-up quotes.

Pence told reporters: “Anyone who would write an anonymous editorial smearing this president who has provided extraordinary leadership to this country should not be working for this administration. They ought to do the honourable thing and... resign.”

The New York Times’ decision to publish the op-ed will likely be debated for years.

But is the damning op-ed the har-

binger of a coup or constitutional crisis?

Unlikely, experts say. “This is a continuing political and leadership crisis,” James Thurber, a government professor and presidential studies expert at American University, told AFP. “It is not yet a constitutional crisis.”

Political scientist Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia’s Center for Politics agreed. “We don’t even know who the author of the op-ed is, and that is essential to properly evaluate it.”

The essay is unlikely to precipitate Trump’s impeachment, but no one sees it as a good sign. While the essay and Woodward’s book caused a White House meltdown -- with Trump asking if the unsigned op-ed could be “treason” and demanding the author’s unmasking -- the president’s closest aides circled the wagons.

More than a dozen top administration officials denied being the essay’s author.

“This will have little impact on Trump, but will continue to undermine trust in his presidency here in the US and in the world,” said Thurber, who believes the 25th Amendment will not be used on Trump.

But the Republican Party risks losing momentum ahead of the Nov 6 mid-terms, in which the Democrat Party will try and seize back a majority in the House of Representatives - something which historically, and on current polling, it has a good chance of doing.

“We have a seemingly endless stream of stories about a White House that is at war with itself and a White House staff who are at war with the president,” Dr Glenn Altschuler, professor of American Studies at Cornell University said.

“Every week that goes by that the Trump administration and the Republicans are unable to sustain or develop momentum for their candidates is a lost week for the Republicans and a significant gain for the Democrats.”

He signed the statement

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A lineman at a bus stop, Dulal maintains the serial number of buses near the entrance to National Zoo in Mirpur.

His wife Nasima said her husband can only sign and cannot read or write.

“They [president and secretary] asked my husband to put his signature on a paper and he complied. They even didn’t read him out what was written on the paper,” she claimed.

Police arrested Mozammel, secretary general of Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a platform working for passengers’ rights, from his Sanapar house in Narayanganj on Thursday, two days after Dulal filed the case against him with Mirpur Police Station.

He was placed on one-day remand on Thursday.

The case statement read that Mozammel, claiming to be a transport leader, demanded Tk 2 lakh from Dulal.

Dulal gave Mozammel Tk 10,000 in front of Sony Cinema in Mirpur around 5:00pm on September 3, it said.

Delwar Hossain, Mirpur unit secretary of Bus-Minibus Sramik Committee, yesterday denied the allegation of forcing Dulal to sign the

paper.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said being informed about the matter, he advised Dulal to take help from police and later came to know that Dulal filed the case.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach Abdur Rahim, Mirpur unit president of Sramik Committee, over the phone for comment.

This newspaper has obtained a copy of the case statement. It says 48-year-old Dulal, son of Nawab Ali, lives at House-9 of Road-18 in Gudaraghat under Shah Ali Police Station in Mirpur.

But in fact he lives at House-7 of Road-22 in Block-New C under the same police station.

Dadan Fakir, OC of Mirpur Police Station, said Dulal along with two to three others came to the police station on Tuesday to file the case.

Asked about Dulal’s claim that he didn’t know anything about the case, the OC said they were investigating his claim.

Meanwhile, Human Rights Forum Bangladesh in a statement yesterday expressed deep concern over the arrest of Mozammel, saying he was held and placed on remand in a “false” case.