

700 gold bars seized, 4 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The law enforcers yesterday held four men with 700 gold bars in two separate drives in Chattogram.

Chattogram district police detained two -- Md Rakib, 34, and Karim Khan Kalu, 34, of Chaudanga's Darshana area -- around 3:00pm from a jeep in Mirsarai upazila with 600 gold bars.

Moshiuddowla Reza, additional superintendent of Chattogram district police, said a team of Jorarganj police raided in Chinki Astana area and detained the duo with 60 kilograms of gold worth Tk 26.40 crore.

They were smuggling the gold following direction over phone, the police official added.

Meanwhile, detective branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police detained two -- Lavu Saha alias Proloy Kumar Saha, 59, and Bilal Hossain alias Kader, 28 -- with 11.662 kilograms of gold worth Tk 4.45 crore.

SM Mostain Hossain, deputy commissioner CMP's detective branch, said they conducted a raid in the port city's CRB (Central Railway Building) area around 11:00am and detained the duo from a Narayanganj-bound car.

The detective branch later handed them over to the district police, he added.

According to the law enforcer, the two received the gold from a man in the city's Badna Shah Mazar area and were supposed to deliver the consignment in Narayanganj.

Police filed two cases against the four with Jorarganj Police Station and Chattogram Kotwali Police Station in this connection.

Stay alert

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terms in a row. "Our government wants to govern the country as the servant of people, not as the ruler."

She said the army is engaged in nation-building activities like construction of Padma Bridge and Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Marine Drive, alongside their main duty.

Hasina said the army earned rare dignity and image for Bangladesh through their sacrifice, sincerity and professionalism in establishment of world peace and different foreign missions, which brightened the country's image.

She said a process is on to modernise the army following the far-sighted guidelines of the Father of the Nation.

The PM said she approved in principle the formation of BIR in 1999 and formally hoisted its flag on April 21, 2001.

"It's the only regiment which was formed after the independence of Bangladesh," Hasina said, adding that now there are 43 units and two paracommando battalions under the BIR.

The PM said Bangladesh is marching forward and will continue to do so.

At the function, an attractive parade of the four battalions of the BIR was also held.

As the PM arrived at the parade ground, Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed received her.

She inspected the parade riding an open-decorated jeep and took salute. The army chief and the parade commander were also with Hasina at that time.

The PM handed over the national flag to the commanders of the respective battalions.

Dhaka returns

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in squallid camps in southeastern Cox's Bazar district after previous bouts of violence.

Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an agreement in November 2017 for the repatriation of the Rohingya, but the persecuted Muslim minority has refused to go back unless they are granted citizenship and other rights.

This week Bangladesh told the UN Security Council that it will no longer be able to take in refugees from Myanmar.

Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque told a Council meeting that the crisis over the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya sheltering in his country had gone from "bad to worse" and urged the council to take "decisive" action.

Rahman said Rohingya arrivals from Myanmar have almost stopped, with none arriving in the past few weeks.

Bangladesh in recent months has stepped up security near the border to curb smuggling of Yaba -- a popular methamphetamine pill -- across the border from Myanmar, he said.

Where is Akash?

FROM PAGE 1

Akash away from the police station late at night.

When Anju went the police station to ask about her husband, police didn't let her enter the station, Anju said.

Asked for comment, Officer-in-Charge Ashikur Rahman said Akash has not been in custody.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

A government taskforce conducting a drive against chemical warehouses and factories in Old Dhaka yesterday.

Drive barred again

FROM PAGE 1

Killarmor were disconnected as it housed five plastic factories and a warehouse of plastic materials.

As the team went to the five-storey building around 12:30pm, the traders started protesting angrily and demanded the ongoing government crackdown be stopped.

The team members locked the main gate from inside sensing trouble, said Saiful Ashraf, assistant director of the Department of Environment.

He said they were confined to the house till around 2:30pm and could come out only after the officer in-charge of local police station and local councillor came to the spot to ease the situation.

The team, led by air commodore Md Zahid Hossain, chief waste management officer of the DSCC, continued its drive and raided two more warehouses afterwards.

The agitating traders demanded the government take action only against those establishments that store 29 "dangerous chemicals" listed by the authorities. They also sought time to shift their warehouses and factories.

Subarna Shirin, assistant commissioner and executive magistrate of the Office of Dhaka Deputy Commissioner, said the drive will be resumed tomorrow (today).

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal after a meeting at the ministry attended by top law enforcement officials expressed firm stance on relocating chemical warehouses from old Dhaka.

"All chemical warehoused in Old Dhaka must be removed despite all barriers," he told reporters yesterday.

Replying to a question about the deadly Chawkbazar blaze, the minister said the probe report is almost ready and it will be released within the shortest possible time.

At least 71 people were killed and scores injured in a chemical-fed fire in Churihatta of Chawkbazar on February 20, prompting the government to act against chemical factories and warehouses in the old town.

On February 25, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon announced that a month-long crackdown would be launched against warehouses of "dangerous chemicals".

The taskforce comprising officials of 14 government agencies started the work on Thursday by snapping utility lines of 21 such establishments in Shaheednagar and Islambagh.

A team of the taskforce was forced to suspend its operation in the face of angry protests from local traders in Bakshibazar on Saturday, the second

day of the crackdown.

The drive resumed after around two hours following direct intervention of Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon. Another team, however, carried out its operation in Shaheednagar area without hindrance.

Two more teams of the taskforce disconnected utility connections of eight warehouses on Agasadeque Road, Asgar Road and Nanda Kumar Lane yesterday.

However, utility connections to four buildings were restored as the warehouses from the houses were relocated. They were snapped in previous drives.

A team led by Brig Gen Sharif Ahmed, chief health officer of the DSCC, started the drive on Nanda Kumar Lane in Churihatta around 11:45am.

They first disconnected utility lines of three buildings on Asgar Lane and Nanda Kumar Lane for illegally storing plastic raw materials and running a factory without the DoE permission.

Sharif said they will continue their drive and urged traders to shift their warehouses and factories of flammable items to other places.

Another team disconnected utility lines of five more warehouses on Agasadeque Road for keeping flammable items.

\$45m more US aid

FROM PAGE 16

"This brings the total US contribution to the 2019 JRP to \$105 million," he said after a meeting with State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Enamur Rahman at the secretariat.

Meanwhile, the state minister said the government would start relocating Rohingyas to Bhashanchar by April 15. "Some 23,000 Rohingya families, approximately around one lakh people, will be shifted there," he told reporters after the meeting, reports UNB.

Houses are being built there with water and electricity services for the Rohingyas in addition to ensuring proper sanitation, Enamur said, adding that shelters would also be set up.

The US is the leading contributor of humanitarian assistance in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis. The country has already provided nearly \$500 million since the outbreak of violence in August 2017, said a US embassy press release yesterday.

Approximately \$450 million is dedicated to programmes in Bangladesh for Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities, the release said.

The United States is committed to helping those affected by this crisis. We are deeply appreciative of the generosity of the government and people of Bangladesh for opening their border and hearts to a Rohingya community that has suffered greatly," the US envoy said.

Today's new US contribution will provide life-saving food assistance to Rohingya refugees to augment exist-

ing humanitarian interventions, including vouchers, so that they can buy food in local markets, monsoon and cyclone preparedness to protect lives, and nutritional support for vulnerable children and pregnant and lactating women, said the embassy.

This additional funding complements the ongoing US humanitarian assistance reaching more than one million refugees in Bangladesh, Bangladeshi host communities, and people displaced within Myanmar and the region to provide protection, emergency shelter, food, nutrition, water, sanitation, healthcare, psychosocial support, and learning opportunities.

US funding also targets host communities impacted by this crisis. In Cox's Bazar, the US assistance helps improve the lives of Bangladeshi in these communities through programmes expanding access to healthcare and better economic and education opportunities.

US assistance also supports the efforts of humanitarian organisations and the government of Bangladesh to improve preparedness, infrastructure, and shelter for monsoon and cyclone seasons, said the release added.

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The launch is a key step towards resuming manned space flights from US soil after an eight-year break.

After the shuttle program was shut down in July 2011 following a 30-year run, Nasa began outsourcing the logistics of its space missions.

It pays Russia to get its people up to the ISS orbiting research facility at a cost of \$82 million per head for a round trip.

In 2014, the US space agency awarded contracts to SpaceX and Boeing for them to take over this task.

Significantly more people across the globe reported helping a stranger and volunteering time in 2017. But the proportion of people who donated money has declined for the second year in a row and is the lowest since 2013.

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