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SHAH CEMENT

Indian gangs smuggling yaba into Bangladesh

Claim detectives after arresting an Indian in the capital

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Several Indian syndicates are smuggling yaba pills from Myanmar and then sending them into Bangladesh through their carriers.

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) revealed this following the first ever arrest of an Indian national for yaba possession in Bangladesh.

DB officials said they unearthed at least two cases in which two Indians were found to have entered Bangladesh and engaged in selling the crazy pills to local dealers.

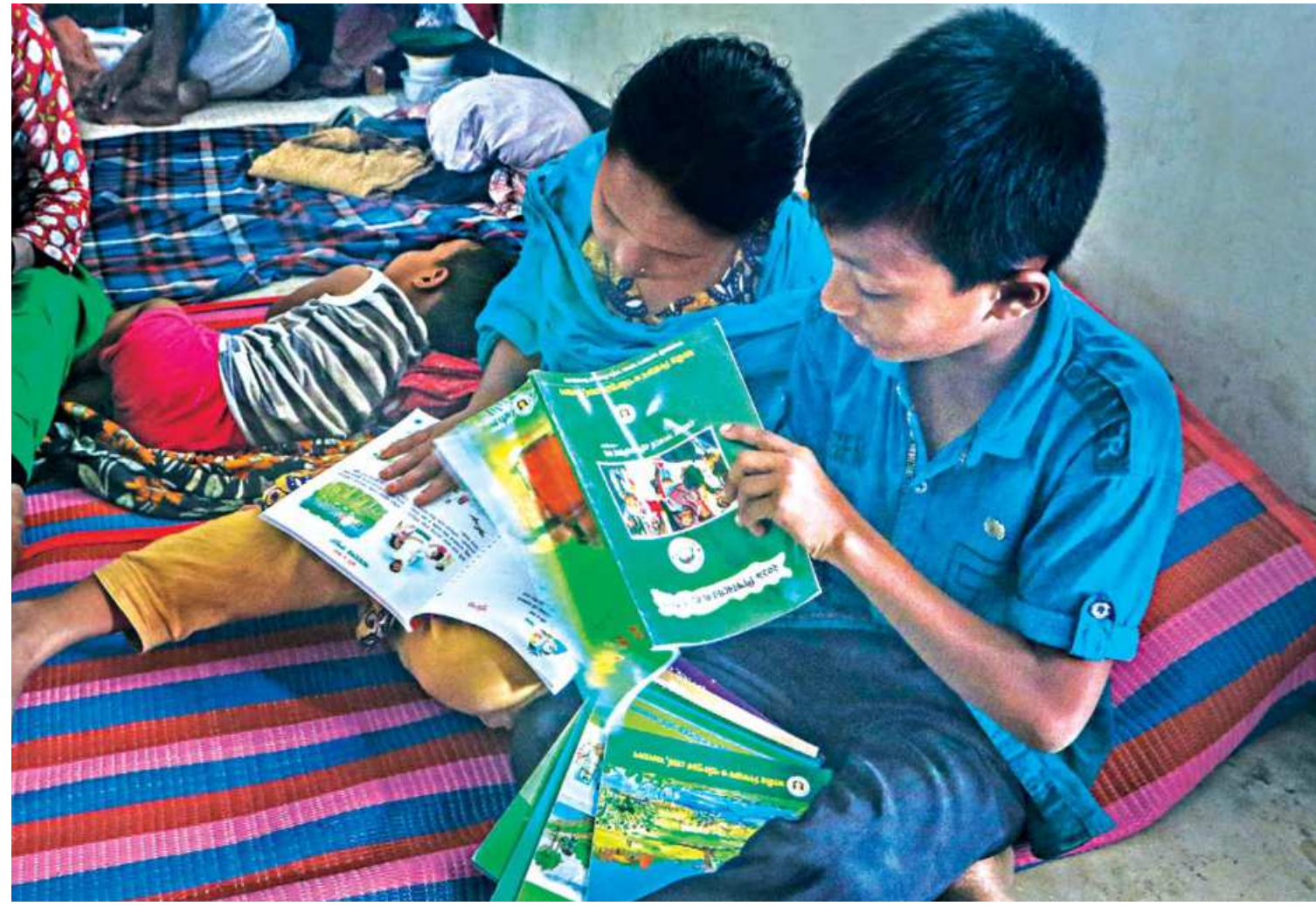
On August 9, a DB team arrested Indian national Md Abdus Sabur, 34, and two Bangladeshi yaba dealers -- Shamsul Alam, 28, and Jakir Hossain, 40 -- at a house in the capital's Rampura. The law enforcers recovered some 10,000 pieces of yaba from their possession, Mashiur Rahman, deputy commissioner of DB (north), told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mashiur also said yaba smugglers changed their route in face of tougher vigilance of law enforcers in Teknaf, known as the gateway of smuggling yaba into the country.

Several Indian syndicates are now using Kurigram's Rowmari border point as a new route to bring yaba into Bangladesh, he said.

"They first collect the pills from Myanmar and then take them to India's Assam via Tripura before pushing them into Bangladesh."

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Third graders Ratna, right, and Solayman reading new books at Bangabandhu Bidyaniketan school in Chalandika area of Mirpur in the capital. All of their family's belongings, including their books, were burnt in Friday night's fire in their slum. Some children have taken shelter at the school since the fire.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

MIGRANT TRAGEDY

Over 100 feared dead off Libya

REUTERS, Cairo

More than 100 people are feared dead after a boat carrying them in the Mediterranean Sea sunk off the coast of Libya, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said on Tuesday.

"We have every reason to fear the worst - that over 100 lives were lost and nobody will ever know for sure," MSF said in a statement on Twitter on Tuesday.

The Libyan coast guard was not immediately available for comment.

Libya is a hub for migrants and refugees, many of whom try to reach Europe in unseaworthy boats.

A boat carrying about 250 people, mainly from Eritrea and other sub-Saharan Africa and Arab countries, capsized last month off the coast near Komos, east of the capital Tripoli.

Libyan coast guards and local fishermen rescued

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

BUSINESS

Janata pushes to reschedule loans of a top defaulter

In a baffling move, the central bank is set to allow precarious Janata Bank to reschedule default loans amounting to Tk 1,049 crore of Root Group that ranks 49 out of the top 300 defaulters in Bangladesh. Root Group, a textile and fertiliser producer, will be permitted to regularise its bad loans by providing only 5 percent down payment -- at a time when it is being investigated by two wings of the Bangladesh Bank for charges of money laundering. Not only that, the state bank is preparing to extend fresh import financing worth Tk 750 crore to the group, breaching BB rules. Janata's generosity towards Root Group comes at a time when it is grappling with the biggest provisioning shortfall for a bank in Bangladesh's history.

STORY ON B1

J&K tensions spike

Two killed in cop-militant gunfight; Trump again offers to mediate; cross border firing kills four

AFP, Srinagar

A suspected militant and a policeman were killed in the first gun battle since New Delhi stripped Indian Kashmir of its autonomy, police said yesterday after US President Donald Trump offered to mediate the "explosive" situation.

In a further sign of rising tensions, Pakistan said meanwhile that three of its civilians died in Indian gunfire from across the de-facto border in Kashmir known as the Line of Control (LoC). Pakistan also said its forces later killed six Indian soldiers. But the Indian army rejected this claim as "totally fake," the Press Trust of India said.

PTI quoted officials as saying one Indian soldier died and four were wounded when Pakistani troops opened fire on forward posts and villages along the LoC in the Poonch district on Tuesday.

Both India and Pakistan are nuclear powers and the situation in Kashmir, divided between them since 1947, is further complicated by the fact that China also claims part of the Himalayan region.

Trump -- who has previously spoken of his willingness to mediate -- said he would raise the situation over the weekend with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Both men are expected in France for a summit of the Group of Seven industrialised nations.

"Kashmir is a very complicated place. You have Hindus and you have the Muslims and I wouldn't say they get along so great," Trump told reporters at the White House.

"I will do the best I can to mediate," he added.

At least 4,000 people have been detained in Indian-controlled Kashmir, according to security and government sources, since early August when authorities imposed a communications blackout and restricted freedom of movement in the region.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Ex-Goalanda OC sentenced to 14 years

His wife to serve 2 years in jail for helping him acquire, conceal illegal wealth

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced Saiful Islam, former officer-in-charge of Goalanda Police Station, to fourteen years' rigorous imprisonment in two graft cases.

The court also handed down two years' imprisonment to Saiful's wife Zakia Islam Anu for assisting her husband in acquiring the illegal wealth.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed two cases against the duo in June and September of 2010 with Ramna Police Station, accusing them of acquiring illegal wealth worth over Tk 2.77 crore and concealing wealth statement of Tk 38.55 lakh from the commission.

After cross-examining 23 witnesses placed by the prosecution and a fully-fledged trial, Judge Shaikh Nazmul Alam of the Special Judge Court-4 yesterday pronounced the verdict.

In the verdict, the court also fined Saiful Tk 6.5 lakh, in default of which, he will have to suffer two-and-a-half-year more in prison.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Court sells fugitive's skyscraper online



CNN ONLINE

With its exaggerated crown and bulging upper levels, the 39-floor Pangu Plaza casts an unusual shadow over Beijing.

And now the dragon-inspired skyscraper has an equally odd ownership story: It sold online Tuesday for a bargain \$734 million after being confiscated from a fugitive billionaire.

Located less than half a mile from the iconic Bird's Nest stadium, the 629-foot-tall tower was completed in 2008 in a district built for that year's Beijing Olympics.

But in 2016, authorities seized ownership of the skyscraper from a real estate company controlled by exiled Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui. A Beijing court then put the building up for auction on a website run by e-commerce giant, Alibaba.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

One held for raping fifth grader

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday arrested a man for allegedly raping a fifth grader in Mymensingh, while another was sued for attempted rape in Jashore.

The arrestee is Zilhaj Mia alias Dilu, 30, of Gafargaon upazila in Mymensingh.

The 13-year-old girl was alone at her home on Monday evening. Dilu forcibly entered the house, tied her hands and legs and then raped her, police quoted the victim's family as saying.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 22
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:30 12:45 4:45 6:33 8:00
JAMAAT 5:05 1:15 5:00 6:36 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A part of the Suhrawardy Udyan shrouded in smoke of burning twigs and litter yesterday. The thick smoke has a strong smell and causes burning eyes.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



35th Death Anniversary of Habibul Kabir (Nizam)

On this Occasion a Milad Mehfil will be held today, 22-08-2019 (Thursday) after Maghrib Prayers at **Union Centre, 68/1 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.** Relatives, friends and all well-wishers of the deceased are requested to kindly join the Milad Mehfil and pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Family Members