

Samrat back to prison after hospital stay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Jubo League leader Ismail Hossain Chowdhury Samrat, an alleged kingpin of the illegal casino business in the capital, was taken back to Dhaka central jail yesterday after being given treatment at National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD).

He was brought back to his cell around 12:30pm, jailor Mahbubul Islam told The Daily Star.

Samrat was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital on October 8 as he "felt sick" and was later moved to NICVD's coronary care unit. He remained under observation for more than 48 hours and underwent some medical tests there, the jailor said.

Earlier, Prof Afzalur Rahman, director of NICVD, also the head of a seven-member medical board to assess Samrat's health, informed his condition was stable.

On October 06, Rab arrested Samrat, former president of Dhaka South Jubo League, and his close aide Enamul Haque Arman, former vice-president of the same unit, at Cumilla.

A Rab mobile court, led by Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam, sentenced Samrat to six months' imprisonment for possessing wild animal hides and another six months for possessing illegal liquor.

Rab filed two cases against him with Ramna police station under the arms and narcotics control acts the next day.

The law enforcement officials also recovered from his possessions an illegal 7.65mm pistol, five bullets, 1,160 yaba pills, and tools that could be used for torture.

He came under the spotlight after Rab busted his illegal casino business at different sporting clubs in Dhaka. He was expelled from Jubo League because of his arrest.

Newspaper press workers union gets new exec council



Alamgir Hossain Kamal Uddin
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federal Union of Newspaper Press Workers yesterday elected its new committee for the years 2019-2021, with Alamgir Hossain Khan of daily Ittefaq as president and Kamal Uddin of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangtha as secretary general.

All 11 members of the union's executive council including president and secretary general were elected uncontested at Bhorer Shomoy office in Dhaka in the presence of two labour department officials, said a press release.

Other members of the executive council are, senior vice president Mohammad Shamim Chowdhury (The Daily Star); vice presidents Porimol Das (Dinkal), Ataur Rahman (New Nation) and Maqsoodul

Ahsan (BSS); joint secretary general Monirul Islam Bhuiyan (The Daily Star); organising secretary Saleh Md Ibrahim (Naya Diganta); office and publication secretary Rafiqul Islam (Ittefaq); publicity, sports and cultural secretary Mominul Haque Chowdhury (BSS), and treasurer Tajammel Haque (Ittefaq).

The union also elected 15 executive members, of whom Md Minhaj Uddin and Md Yusuf Ali are from The Daily Star.



In this handout photograph taken and released yesterday by the India's Press Information Bureau (PIB), India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) along with China's President Xi Jinping look on during their summit in Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu state.

PHOTO: AFP

Modi hails new Indo-Sino ties

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Indian administrative territory.

India has moved closer to the United States and its allies in seeking a counter-weight to China's growing military shadow in the Asia-Pacific region.

It has been infuriated by China's backing for Pakistan, which controls a large chunk of Muslim-majority Kashmir.

The Himalayan region has been a long-standing source of conflict between India and Pakistan. China's proposal for major infrastructure building in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as part of its Belt and Road programme has faced strong Indian opposition.

China is in turn sensitive to India letting the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama keep his base in northern India.

But most of the disagreements were pushed to one side so they did not become a summit dispute.

Kashmir was not raised in the two days of talks, Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said.

They did however agree to step up their efforts so "that the international community strengthens the framework against training, financing and supporting terrorist groups throughout the world," said the Indian statement.

Modern rivalry between the world's two most populous countries dates back decades.

They went to war in 1962 over disputed Himalayan territory and other border standoffs remain. In 2017, the Indian and Chinese armies faced each other down for more than two months on a high altitude border plateau claimed by China and India's tiny Himalayan ally Bhutan.

Modi and Xi "reiterated their understanding that efforts will continue to be made to ensure peace and tranquility in the border areas, and that both sides will continue to work on additional confidence building measures," said the Indian statement.

On commerce, India and China are both facing a protectionist US and want greater access to each other's markets. India in particular is concerned by China's \$57 billion surplus in their joint trade.

India's summit statement said high level talks would start on ways to "better balance" trade between the countries. Modi and Xi also agreed to "encourage" more cross-border investment.

No mention was made however of China's campaign for New Delhi to give Chinese telecoms giant Huawei a key part of India's transformation

to 5G communications.

The United States has been lobbying strongly against letting Huawei spread its influence because of its alleged close links to the Beijing government.

China made no immediate comment on the summit. The official Xinhua news agency said Xi received a "warm welcome" from Modi and they agreed their countries "should respect and learn from each other so as to jointly achieve common development and prosperity."

Indian foreign ministry said Xi has suggested that informal summits with free-wheeling discussions is the way to go for India and China and "future leaders should follow it". The Chinese president has invited Modi for the next informal meet in China and the Indian PM has accepted the invitation, the ministry added.

Xi flew off to Nepal for a one-day stopover on his way home in a country that India has traditionally considered within its sphere of influence. China is pressing for a greater share of Nepal's infrastructure projects.

Nepalese authorities detained at least 18 Tibetan activists in a bid to head off protests during the visit, the International Campaign for Tibet said.

Mizan denies identity

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drive, which lasted over an hour.

However, when Rab found an unlicensed firearm, four bullets and Tk 2 lakh among his possessions, he became nervous and subsequently admitted his identity, he added.

The AL leader and councillor of ward-32 of Dhaka North City Corporation was then arrested at the house that belong to his friend.

Sarwoer also said Rab conducted a drive on Mizan's Mohammadpur residence on Wednesday night to nab him.

They used cell phone tracking to find him. After entering his house, Rab, however, found out from his family members that he left the house the day before.

Rab recovered Tk 1 crore in fixed deposit receipts and Tk 6.77 crore in cheques from Mizan's Mohammadpur flat, hours after he was arrested in Sreemangal.

Mizan had gone to Sreemangal as he was trying to flee the country through Sylhet after sensing that law

enforcers would be coming after him, Sarwoer said.

Yesterday, two cases were filed against Mizan -- one with Mohammadpur police on charge of money laundering and the other with Sreemangal police station for the possession of illegal firearms, Sarwoer told this paper.

GG Biswas, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur police station said the case that Rab had filed against Mizan over money laundering with the station was handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Meanwhile, the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Nivana Khair Jessi placed Mizan on a seven-day remand in connection with the money laundering case after CID Inspector Giasuddin produced him before court seeking a 10-day remand, court sources said.

Sarwoer said Mizan had several allegations against him, including of running an illegal drug business at Mohammadpur's Geneva camp, extortion, patronising mugging gangs

in Mohammadpur and Dhanmondi areas, and land grabbing.

During primary interrogation, Mizan could not give answers regarding how he amassed his wealth, said Sarwoer.

Officers were checking whether he had any involvement in the Freedom Party and if he was an accused in a case filed over an attempted murder of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he said.

Locals in Mohammadpur and Rab sources said Mizan worked as a hotel boy in Mohammadpur area after 1975.

His full name was Mizanur Rahman which he later changed to Habibur Rahman, locals said.

He gradually involved himself in extortion and mugging, they added.

He was a member of the Freedom Party until 1990. Later, he joined the AL and became the general secretary of its Mohammadpur thana unit, said locals.

At present, he does not hold any organisational post of AL.

Govt signed deals

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Mosharraf Hossain.

He said the government signed the deals due to its "subservient foreign policy and the policy of appeasing India".

"The main motive behind signing of such deals is to cling to power by force... this regime has sacrificed our interests only to stay in power," Mosharraf said.

The rally was organised as part of the BNP's two-day programme protesting the murder of Abrar and demanding cancellation of the deals.

Though the BNP was denied permission by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, several thousand party leaders and activists joined the rally, which ended peacefully.

Mosharraf said as citizens of the country, they have the right to register their protest against the "anti-nation" deals. He said signing of the agreements was a move to "establish imperialism in Bangladesh".

The BNP leader said Abrar was killed by Chhatra League men as he stood in favour of the country and its people and sovereignty through a Facebook status.

Moudud Ahmed, another member of the BNP standing committee, alleged that the current government has plunged into corruption. "I think the fall of the current government is a matter of time now. People cannot tolerate such a regime for a long time."

Protesting Abrar murder, he said Chhatra League, the pro-Awami League student front, has set up torture cells at halls and hostels of all the educational institutions across the country.

Referring to the PM's comment that she didn't sacrifice the country's interests, the former law minister said, "People are not fools. They know you have sold the country's sovereignty. But you could not bring anything for the country's people in return."

Mirza Abbas, member of the BNP standing committee, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina "gave India everything" through the bilateral deals without bringing anything for the country's people.

Mentionable, Bangladesh and India signed seven bilateral documents in New Delhi on October 5 during Hasina's four-day official visit to the neighbouring country.

Trucks ply at daytime

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and long vehicles... But I have no hesitation in admitting that it's not possible to achieve cent percent success in this regard," he said. "We continue to file cases and fine those who violate the restriction," he added.

When asked about taking strict measures, he said even though they are faced with a persistent manpower crisis, they are trying to address the issue accordingly. "We are also organising programmes to raise awareness among drivers," the deputy commissioner added.

According to the traffic department of CMP, the roads off-limits to trucks at daytime are: Baluchhara-BRTA-Oxygen Intersection; Oxygen Intersection to Sholashahar Gate-2; Kaptai Rastar Matha to Bahaddarhat Intersection; Utmarching to Station Road; Kadamtali to Utmarching;

Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge to Bakalia; Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge to Kotwali Intersection; Majhirhat to New Market Intersection, and Newaz Hotel Mor to Government City College Road.

Goods-laden trucks, covered vans, long vehicles, prime movers and other heavy vehicles fall under this restriction, as per a CMP press release.

However, vehicles on emergency export duties and those carrying emergency food supply could ply the roads with special permission and stickers issued by Chattogram Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the press release adds.

Earlier in 2007, a similar restriction was imposed on heavy vehicular movement from 8am to 10pm, but failed to bring results.

3,500-yr-old

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coffins, Hawass said at a press conference in Luxor, according to the statement.

Hawass' team also uncovered a royal tomb that contained tools used in tomb construction.

A mission launched by Napoleon Bonaparte in the early 19th century discovered a few items at this site, which otherwise remained untapped until a new excavation in 2011. That mission was halted, and Hawass returned to the site in 2017.

Work is currently underway in

the Western Valley to find the tombs of Queen Nefertiti and the wife of boy-king Tutankhamun, Hawass added.

In April, archaeologists unveiled an expansive tomb on Luxor's west bank that also dates to the 18th dynasty, believed to have belonged to a nobleman named Shedsu Djehuty.

The west bank of the Nile in Luxor also is home to the Valley of the Kings, a major site where pharaohs and nobles of the New Kingdom were buried.

Two killed

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Police claimed to have recovered 5,000 yaba pills and two firearms from the spot.

Three policemen -- Sub-inspector Mohammad Babul, Assistant Sub-inspector Mohammad Ohid and Constable Mohammad Malekul -- also sustained injuries. They received

treatment at Teknaf Upazila Health Complex, said the OC.

Two cases were filed in connection with the "gunfight".

A total of 171 people were killed in such anti-drug drives in last 17 months, said police sources. Of them, 45 were Rohingya, they added.

BNP leader Hafiz

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not give details about the case.

Abdul Mannan, officer-in-charge (investigation) of the police station, said Hafiz was in their custody.

However, Shamsuddin Dider, an official at BNP chairperson's press

wing, told The Daily Star Hafiz was taken to the airport after being held.

Col (ret'd) Ishaq Mian, chief of BNP Chairperson Security Force, was also arrested under the same case, said Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station.

Checking eyes from miles away

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In no time, the nurse handed her some free medicines and Samira was out the door with a printed prescription that had an electronic signature of the doctor.

The service was made available three months back when a room at the upazila health complex was equipped to function as a community vision centre, one of 50 units already set up under the National Eye Care plan of the health and family welfare ministry.

The plan was developed and signed by the health ministry in 2005 to meet the nation's obligation as a signatory of a global campaign to eliminate avoidable blindness by 2020.

The community vision centre programme is, however, very recent; it was included in the plan only a year and half ago, said Golam Mostafa, director at National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital (NIOH), which is implementing it.

It was undertaken to take services to the doorsteps of people like Samira by building an eye-care network with 200 community vision centres on the periphery. They will be connected to base centres at tertiary public hospitals or district sadar hospitals, where doctors will prescribe treatment.

Until now, RMCH saw 15 centres in as many upazilas connected to it and in operation.

Another 15 such set-ups are functioning under Rangpur Medical College Hospital as the base centre and 20 under Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Eye Hospital and Training Institute in Gopalganj.

The eye care network is a replication of Aravind Eye Hospitals, a hospital chain having major contribution to eradicating cataract-related blindness in India.

Aravind Eye Care System is providing technological support and training under a memorandum of understanding signed with the government, said M Zahirul Islam, director research and training at the NIOH.

At every vision centre, two senior staff nurses have been posted from the respective upazila health

complexes upon completing four-months of training. They are trained to give spectacles and to measure some parameters. If they come across complicated cases, they have to refer them to the base centres.

The patients referred will be given a card with a code, doctor's name and the location where s/he has to go.

Many people have already begun making use of the services. In Puthia, about 1,000 patients and in Gopalganj, nearly 1,300 patients received treatment between July 1 and September 17.

And 120 people were referred to Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Eye Hospital during the same time.

A close monitoring is in place, said Zahirul, as he was communicating from the NIOH with Amena Begum in Puthia through the social media and checking inputs from different centres on September 17.

"We can see everything from here -- who are prescribed what medicines, for what symptoms, and the status of drug stock."

With all these, vision centres seem to be a reality of a well-thought-out programme but it also faces a few challenges. Uninterrupted internet connection, quick fixing of any instrument and strong opposition from doctors' community are a few among them, added Zahirul.

The latest available data of national blindness and low vision survey 2003 points to the necessity of a decentralised eye-care system to bridge the gap as 80 percent patients suffer from blindness that is treatable, low vision or blurred images were living in rural areas and 90 percent of the doctors who could provide them with treatment lived in cities or towns.

Zahirul said doctors at district level were still scarce, let alone at upazilas.

This is the scenario when technology is probably showing the way as to how best the government can overcome the challenges of manpower, resources and distance to reach people living in the furthest corner of the country.

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