

It's not an ATM card!

Syndicate uses 'special' digital device to aid cheating during recruitment tests; 10 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joining hands with a section of suspended and present employees of at least two government offices, a syndicate has been helping applicants secure government or bank jobs by leaking questions and facilitating cheating during exams.

The syndicate, which has an upazila vice-chairman as member, first come to an agreement with applicants of government or bank jobs for Tk 10 lakh to Tk 15 lakh. At least Tk 50,000 to two lakh has to be paid in advance.

To help them cheat, the syndicate provides clients with a special digital device, which looks like a regular ATM card but works like a mobile phone. They also provide a tiny, wireless ball-like earphone, capable of two-way communication.

As recently as Friday, the syndicate was involved in malpractice in the Office of Controller General of Defence Finance recruitment test.

Detective Branch (DB) of police came up with the findings yesterday, after arresting 10 people connected with the syndicate by conducting drives in different areas of the city during the test.

Police have recovered six digital devices, three sets of leaked question papers, five bank cheques and 16 cell phones from their possession.

Of the arrestees, Mahbuba Nasrin Rupa is the vice-chairperson of Dupchachia upazila in Bogura, while Mahmudul Hasan Azad is a suspended officer of Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh, said detectives. Other arrestees include members of the syndicate and some examinees.

They are Noman Siddique, Al Amin Rony, Nahid Hasan, Shahid Ullah, Tanjir Ahmed, Razu Ahmed, Hasibul Hasan and Rakibul Hasan.

Azad was previously arrested in 2019 and jailed for 36-day over the same crime, Mashur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Gulshan) of DB police, told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, Nahid, Al Amin and Hasibul were arrested in 2013, 2016 and 2019 for involvement in question leak, said DC Mashur.

Investigators said the process works across multiple layers.

For example, a syndicate member will sit for the exams as an applicant. As soon as the exam starts, the members send out the question through the digital device to a group of syndicate members skilled at solving questions.

The syndicate calls this group its "one stop solution centre", police said.

Once the question is solved, the answer is sent back inside the hall through the digital device.

Police said the same process took place on Friday's exam, which began on 3:00pm.

DC Mashur said the syndicate buys the devices from China for Tk eight to 10 thousand.

"We have already shared our findings with the authorities concerned of Friday's auditor recruitment test," he said, adding that drives are on to arrest other members of the syndicate.

"We are now looking for an assistant railway station master who is in charge of sourcing the devices and who dragged [vice-chairperson] Mahbuba to the crime," he said.

Police said the syndicate has embezzled a huge amount through this process for a number of recruitment tests, including Department of Inland Shipping, Family Planning, Agricultural Extension and Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

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After a few weeks of respite, winter is back in the capital again. City dwellers who had just started to relax a bit have returned to cladding themselves in multiple layers of winter garb, like this veteran who was sitting in front of the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday morning.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

MV ABHIJAN LAUNCH FIRE

Civil committee finds grave negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A civil committee formed to probe MV Abhijan-10 fire incident has found negligence of four government officials and four launch owners, along with irresponsibility of four operators.

In a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday, the probe body disclosed its findings with 25 recommendations.

The probe report said after September last year, MV Abhijan-10 was not in operation for three months, although it had route permit and survey-period.

"Authorities didn't ask the reason for this. Three months later, the launch's first trip was on December 19, and the fire incident occurred on December 23," said Ashish Kumar Dey, chief coordinator of the committee, while presenting the report.

The fire killed 49 people and injured many on December 24.

The committee found the presence of gas cylinders beside the engine room and absence of adequate numbers of fire extinguishers and lifeboats, among other issues.

The 19-member committee found joint director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority Joyanal Abedin, traffic inspector Dinesh Das,

Civil committee found negligence and irresponsibility of four government officials, four launch owners and four operators

inspector of water transport department Md Habibur Rahman and ship surveyor Md Mahbubur Rashid to be negligent in their duties.

The report said four launch owners -- Hamzalah Sheikh, Shamim Ahmed, Rasel Ahmed, Ferdous Hasan Rabbir -- launch masters Reaz Shikder and Khalilur Rahman, and drivers Masum Billah and Abul Kalam were also responsible for the incident.

Convener of the committee and chairperson of Poribesh Bachao Andolon Abu Naser Khan said, "Our aim is to make sure that the government-



RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Enact law to compensate families of victims
- » Every vessel must have Ansar members, security guards
- » Install cameras in crucial places
- » Ensure fire safety system is functional
- » Get clearance from fire service
- » Involve fire service officials during inspection

formed probe committee identifies those involved and punish them. We also aim to point out the loopholes in such cases."

The report urged authorities to enact a law to compensate families of victims and injured, in which provisions to determine the amount of money and how to collect compensation from those responsible are present.

Every vessel must have its own Ansar members or security guards, and cameras in crucial places including the engine room and entrance, the committee recommended.

The probe body also recommended ensuring that the fire safety system is functional, launches have clearance from fire service, and that fire service authorities are involved during inspection.

Earlier, the government-led probe body also

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LAW ON EC FORMATION

Just another 'joke': BNP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain yesterday described the government's move to enact a law on the formation of the Election Commission (EC), after the president's dialogue with political parties, as just another "joke".

"Those who rule the country by force will pass a law. Then a search committee will be formed as per the law. In other words, the search committee will give the president a list that will be provided by the prime minister," he said.

Speaking at a discussion, the BNP leader also said the president will then announce the names of the chief election commissioner and other commissioners from that list.

"So, it's just another joke to confuse the country's people," he observed.

Ziaur Rahman Foundation arranged the programme at Jatiya Press Club, marking the

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Scope for cooperation still present

Says Prof Imtiaz Ahmed on Teesta water allocation

UNB, Dhaka

There is still room for cooperation on Teesta River water allocation, and it cannot result in a zero-sum game, said international affairs expert Dr Imtiaz Ahmed yesterday.

"The solution should come while keeping human and nature-based perspectives in mind," he added.

The Dhaka University professor said this while delivering a speech on the last day of the three-day virtual 7th International Water Conference, titled "Teesta River Basin: Overcoming the Challenges", organised by ActionAid Bangladesh.

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said people's lives and rivers are intertwined, but individuals are not included in river-related discourses.

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PRAYER
TIMING
JAN 23



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-30	12-45	4-15	5-43	7-15
Jamaat	6-05	1-15	4-30	5-47	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



On almost the same spot where Friday's tragic accident -- that killed three people -- took place, vehicles were seen taking the wrong side en route to the capital. Locals say this is the norm for vehicular movement in the area, which often leads to accidents. This photo was taken from the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in front of Matuail Matri Sadan Hospital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

5 killed, 6 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Five persons were killed and six injured in road accidents in four districts yesterday.

In Cumilla, two motorcyclists were killed as an unknown vehicle ran them over on Dhaka-Chattogram highway at Amtoli Alekharchar in Sadar upazila, said OC Belal Uddin Jahangir of Mainamati Highway Police Station.

The deceased are Rubel Hossain Hossain (25) and Shawan Ahmed Taki (22).

In Chattogram, a truck driver and his helper were killed when the vehicle hit a roadside tree in Hatiyarpool area under Lohagara upazila. Their identities could not be known immediately.

In Joypurhat, a pickup driver was killed and another injured as the vehicle and a bus collided head-on in Khetal upazila. The deceased is Masud Rana from Chapainawabganj. The injured -- Monoranjan -- was taken to Bogura for treatment.

In Patuakhali, at least five people were injured when a picnic bus fell into a ditch at Auliapur in Sadar upazila. The passengers were going to Kuakata from Pabna. The accident took place as the driver lost control over the vehicle, said police.

The injured -- Marjuddin, Prarthana Biswas, Shahnaz Parveen, Ramen Biswas and Afroza -- were from Kasba area in Pabna. Locals took them to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

7 DU-AFFILIATED COLLEGES

Students block Nilkhet as exam postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of seven Dhaka University-affiliated colleges blocked Nilkhet intersection yesterday morning, protesting the postponement of an examination.

The students alleged that they were not given any prior notice regarding the matter. They said they went to the centres to take their last examination yesterday morning and came to know about the postponement there.

The authorities said they postponed the exam as part of a government decision to shut down educational institutions to curb the spread of Covid-19.

Sharif Mohammad Farukuzzaman, assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (New Market zone), said students blocked the intersection for around one hour.