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‘Casino kingpin’ Samrat stages showdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expelled Jubo League leader Ismail Hossain Chowdhury Samrat staged a showdown in the capital yesterday, a day after he was released from a hospital in the city.

One of the “casino kingpins” in Dhaka, Samrat along with several thousand followers, went to Dhanmondi Road 32 around 4:00pm to place a floral wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He was arrested in Cumilla during the anti-casino drive in 2019.

On Monday, Samrat secured bail in a money laundering case while he was in the prison cell of BSMMU. He had earlier been granted bail in three other cases filed over possession of arms and narcotics, money laundering and amassing wealth beyond known sources of income.

Around 2:00pm yesterday, Samrat’s followers riding on motorcycles and pickups started



Truckers have turned this section of the central reservation under the BRT Line-3 project in Tongi into a parking lot. With the project suspended after a safety lapse that killed five earlier this month, nobody seems to be there to remove the vehicles.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Narco ‘let go’ from Rab custody?

Court orders PBI to probe

BULBUL AHMED, Natore

A court in Natore has directed the Police Bureau of Investigation to probe into an allegation that Rab let go a suspected drug dealer in custody in Lalpur upazila of Natore.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the order passed by Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Moslem Uddin on August 14.

Citing the court’s order, bench assistant Ataul Gani Osmani said the Crime Prevention Special Company (CPSC) of Rab-5 in Rajshahi claimed to have arrested three people and recovered 400 bottles of Phensidyl and around 1.26kg of heroin hidden in a truck on the night of August 8 in Gopalpur area.

Of the arrestees: Sharif Mia, 33, is the truck driver, Nazir Hossain, 27, is his assistant, and Zainal Hossain, 42, is a labourer.

A day later, Sub-inspector Md Nasim Uddin, currently working in the CPSC, filed a narcotics case with Lalpur Police Station against the three. The trio were produced before the court on August 10.

During the hearing that day, the three claimed

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5 YEARS OF ROHINGYA INFLUX

A sense of unease growing among locals

Increasing involvement of the refugees in criminal activities, drug trade now a cause for concern

MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA and MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT from Cox’s Bazar

Five years ago, they were the first to welcome with open arms the thousands of Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Myanmar, setting an example of how compassionate our society is here in Bangladesh.

The locals of Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas in Cox’s Bazar gave the Rohingyas shelter and food. Those who could afford even gave small amounts of cash to help the refugees pay for emergency treatments and medicines as many Rohingyas were injured while making the treacherous journey to Bangladesh.

Now the compassion is all but faded and fatigue has set in in the host community. Many feel that the Rohingyas have overstayed their welcome. They think the Rohingyas have changed the environment of the two upazilas and have created socio-economic problems for the hosts.

The involvement of some Rohingyas in criminal activities, especially crimes related to narcotics, has become a cause for concern.

“It was beyond our imagination that they would stay for such a long time. Five years have already gone by, but there is no sign of repatriation. The more they

[Rohingya] stay, the more harm they would do to the society,” said Abdur Rahim of Palongkhali in Ukhiya.

Asked to explain, he said, “The environment of Ukhiya and Teknaf has changed. Most of the areas here used to be forests full of deer but you won’t see any forest here anymore. The livelihoods of many depended on the forest that is now destroyed.”

A number of locals said some Rohingyas get out of the camps, evading the eyes of the law enforcers, and work as labourers for low wages. They can afford to work for low wages as they get various assistance from aid agencies.

As a result, locals do not get work, they said.

Gafur Uddin Chowdhury, chairman of Palongkhali Union Parishad, said, “We gave shelter to the Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds. But it seems that we made a mistake because it has now become a multifaceted problem... hills have been cut, forests have disappeared, a crisis of groundwater has emerged, and job opportunities have shrunk.”

Some Rohingyas have also been involved in various criminal activities, he said.

Around 2,000 cases have been filed against Rohingyas in the last five years,

including murder, abduction, arms, and narcotics cases.

At least 99 murders of Rohingyas were reported between August 2017 and July 2022, according to Cox’s Bazar Police Station.

Rafiqul Islam, additional superintendent of police in Cox’s Bazar, said inside 34 camps, they found involvement of Rohingya people in 14 types of criminal activities, including drugs, human trafficking, abduction, theft, robbery, snatching, arms and rape.

Mohammad Abdullah, of Pankhali village in Hnila of Teknaf, said, “Out of resentment, locals have even formed various committees to either resist Rohingyas or to ‘protect Cox’s Bazar’.”

One of the committees is “Amra Cox’s Bazar Bashi”. Its president Mohammad Ali said locals were sympathetic towards the Rohingyas when they arrived in 2017 but that sympathy started fading after the repatriation process basically halted.

“Now the Rohingyas have apparently become opponents of the locals and it is because of criminal activities of the Rohingyas,” he claimed.

Bangladesh is currently hosting more than 1.2 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals.

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Nazrul’s death anniversary today

BSS, Dhaka

The 46th death anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam will be observed in the country today in a befitting manner.

On this day in 1976, the poet breathed his last at the then PG Hospital, now Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital, in the capital.

The poet was buried with state honour beside the Dhaka University central mosque.

Different political parties, socio-cultural and professional bodies have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the day.

The programmes include placing of wreaths at the grave of the poet, discussions, song and poetry

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Webb telescope finds CO2 for first time on alien world

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa’s James Webb Space Telescope has detected carbon dioxide on an alien world, for the first time.

A team of more than 30 scientists analysing the spectrum of the gas giant exoplanet Wasp 39b have reported finding a clear signal of an abundance of carbon dioxide in the planet’s atmosphere.

Previous studies by the Hubble and Spitzer Space Telescopes had detected water vapour, potassium and sodium in the exoplanet’s atmosphere, but this is the first time carbon dioxide — a greenhouse gas and, at least on Earth, a product of animal metabolism — has been clearly identified on distant world.

The new findings have been accepted for publication in the journal Nature and are currently available on the online academic server Arxiv.

The result is one of the first findings to come from Webb’s first observations, and suggests the new space telescope may also help tease apart the atmospheric components of smaller, rocky, Earth-like exoplanets during its operational life time. Accurate detection of gas concentrations in the atmospheres of such planets could help scientists detect signs of alien life, if it exists.

The spectrum of Wasp 39b was one of the first

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India’s Adani Group contests NDTV’s defence News network fights takeover

REUTERS, Mumbai

India’s Adani Group yesterday contested claims by New Delhi Television NDTV.NS that regulatory curbs restricted its founders from selling their stake, prolonging the battle for control of a news network seen as bastion of independent media.

The takeover bid launched by a group led by Asia’s richest man, Gautam Adani, has fanned concerns over editorial integrity at NDTV.

NDTV on Thursday sought to block Adani’s move by saying its founders Prannoy and Radhika Roy have since 2020 been barred by India’s market regulator from buying or selling shares in India’s securities market, and so can’t transfer the shares Adani is trying to secure.

But Adani said in a statement yesterday that the NDTV founders’ arguments were “baseless, legally untenable”.

It said the founders’ investment entity was not part of any regulatory restrictions and was “bound to immediately perform its obligation and allot the equity shares” to the conglomerate.

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A bus almost tips over while crossing large potholes on Khulna-Jashore highway at Mujgunni Residential Area in Sonadhangra of Khulna city yesterday. This patch of the highway is riddled with crater-like potholes.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

KUSHIYARA RIVER Water-sharing deal likely to be signed during PM’s India visit Says state minister for water resources

UNB, Dhaka

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on interim sharing of the Kushiara river water will be signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s visit to India scheduled for the first week of September, said State Minister for Water Resources Zahid Farooque yesterday.

He said the agreed draft of the MoU has been sent to the Indian cabinet to complete the procedures before the signing.

“We firmly believe that the MoU will be signed when our prime minister visits India,” the state minister told journalists at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after returning from New Delhi.

He led the Bangladesh delegation to the Joint Rivers Commission

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