



# From cricket to narco world

## DNC arrests Teknaf-based yaba ‘kingpin’, nabs another man who carries the pills in prosthetic hand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When he was a student, Ershadul Haque Raju, now aged 32, used to play cricket for the Cox’s Bazar district team.

After completing his bachelor’s degree in business administration, he became a fish farmer in Ukhiya. But, at one point, he turned his legitimate business into a front for yaba trafficking, officials said.

“Ershad had direct links with yaba dealers in Myanmar and used Rohingya refugees to smuggle the pills into the country. Soon, he became a godfathers of yaba trade in Teknaf,” Rasheduzzaman, deputy director at the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), told a press conference yesterday.

DNC officers arrested Ershadul with 33,000 yaba pills in the capital’s Uttara early yesterday.

He used to send large stashes of yaba to the capital in trucks loaded with fish and travelled between the city and Cox’s Bazar by plane.

Drug dealers in the city used to buy the pills from him, the officer added.

A DNC officer pretending to be a drug dealer met him on Monday and arrested him along with his wife and an associate.

In a separate incident, police arrested an auto-rickshaw puller named Rana Howladar, 26, for carrying the pills in his prosthetic hand, HM Azimul Haque, deputy

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PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

People desperately hold out their hands to grab bags of sugar at Tk 55 per kilogram from a TCB truck in the capital's Shantinagar area. Amid the soaring prices of sugar, more and more low-income consumers are turning to TCB trucks to buy the kitchen essential. Related story on B1.

# IMF talks begin over \$4.5b loan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Monetary Fund yesterday started a series of talks with Bangladesh over a \$4.5 billion loan the latter has sought.

The government is hopeful of securing the loan, said Finance Division’s Senior Secretary Fatima Yasmin.

She was talking to journalists after a delegation-level meeting at the Secretariat in Dhaka.

The loan terms would be finalised once the talks conclude successfully, she added.

Bangladesh made a formal request for the loan in July and said it wants it in the form of budgetary support to shore up the depleting foreign currency reserves.

A high-level IMF delegation, led by its Mission Chief to Bangladesh Rahul Anand, is now in Dhaka.

The other delegates are Jayendu De, IMF resident representative in Bangladesh; Emmanouil Kitsios, economist; Piyaporn Sodsriviboon, deputy division chief; Estelle Xue Liu, senior economist; Suphachol Suphachalasai, technical assistance adviser; Richard Varghese, economist; Genet Zinabou, economist; Saiful Islam, economic analyst; and Richard

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# ROHINGYA NID SCAM Syndicate charges Tk 1.30 lakh per head

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, City

Taking a huge amount of money, a syndicate, of some dishonest Election Commission employees and criminals, has been providing national identity cards to Rohingyas in Chattogram city.

This is the third such scam discovered in the port city.

Detective Branch of Chattogram Metropolitan Police on Tuesday arrested 10 people, including five data entry operators of the EC and two Rohingyas, in the city’s Halishahar Housing Estate High School, where voter list updating work is going on, for their alleged involvement.

Police said the syndicate was taking Tk 1.30 lakh for every NID.

DB also found evidence that the syndicate also manages original birth certificates for Rohingyas so that they can easily get NID cards.

Police added that using fake addresses in Chattogram city, the birth certificates were issued from Dhaka North City Corporation and a DNCC employee was involved.

The arrestees are: Kamal Hossen, 45, Parvin Akhter, 25, Nurul Absar, 28, Shamsur Rahman alias Shamsu Master, 60, Yasin Arafat, 22, Nur Nabi Anik, 25, Mizanur Rahman, 23, Farhadul Islam, 28, Emon Das, 20, and Kamal, 42. Of them, Yasin, Nur Nabi, Mizanur, Farhadul and Emon are the temporary data entry operators of EC while Kamal and Parvin are Rohingyas.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, DB’s Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ali Hossain said the two Rohingyas were taken to the school centre for taking their photos for NID cards.

He added that but on information, police held them. Official NID forms and birth certificates were also recovered from them.

Among the arrestees, Nurul and Master Shamsu, of Cox’s Bazar, are brokers who collect Rohingyas, he said.

DC Ali Hossain said, “Examining Nurul’s mobile phone, we found around 500 original birth certificates. And all the 500 certificates were issued from Dhaka using fake addresses in Chattogram city.”

“The syndicate can prepare a birth certificate within 10 minutes and takes Tk 1,500 per certificate. The data entry operators used to input information and photo in the NID server and later a syndicate member from Dhaka issued the NID cards.”

Brokers Absar and Shamsu Master stand accused in two cases filed in connection with NID scam for Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar, said the DB official.

Investigators said Shamsu is a former headmaster of a primary school and he was fired for his involvement in Rohingya NID scam in Cox’s Bazar in 2019.

Counter Terrorism Division of CMP is investigating another NID scam case where the

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# WJP INDEX 2022 Bangladesh ranks 127th, down two notches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has ranked 127th out of 140 countries in the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2022.

According to the WJP index, Bangladesh has slipped two notches since last year and now ranks fourth out of six countries in South Asia.

Denmark, Norway, and Finland ranked first, second, and third while Venezuela last.

The 2022 WJP Rule of Law Index evaluates 140 countries and jurisdictions around the world. For the fifth year in a row, the rule of law has declined in most countries.

The rule of law is internationally recognised as foundational to peace, justice, respect for human rights, effective democracy, and sustainable development. It influences every person’s daily life and helps communities organise

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# Scientists find the lightest neutron star ever

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



Scientists have discovered the lightest neutron star ever, a small, extremely dense stellar object that might also confirm the existence of a very strange state of matter.

Neutron stars are one of the potential outcomes when a massive star dies in a fiery supernova explosion. After blowing off most of its mass in the explosion, the remaining stellar core collapses in on itself, forming either a black hole, or a neutron star, an ultra compact star usually about 1.4 times as massive as the Sun, but only around six miles in diameter.

But scientists measuring the mass of a neutron star found in remnants of a past supernova called HESS J1731-347 found the neutron star weighed in at 77 percent the mass of the Sun, according to their paper published Monday in the journal Nature Astronomy.

It’s not only the light neutron star yet discovered, the authors note, but could be an example of an exotic and so far only hypothetical stellar object known as a “strange star.”

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# Rohingya man picked up from home, shot dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s bazar

Criminals shot a Rohingya man to death in Cox’s Bazar’s Ukhiya upazila early yesterday.

Mohammad Jasim, 25, son of Abdul Gofur, was shot at Balukhali refugee camp around 3:30am.

“The criminals picked up Jasim from his house while he was asleep with his family. They shot him thrice in the chest and left the body at the spot before an APBn team arrived at the scene,” said Faruq Ahmed, assistant superintendent of Armed Police Battalion-8, quoting the victim’s family.

The family members could not identify the assailants as their faces were covered, he added.

The body was sent to Cox’s Bazar District Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Meanwhile, the police are conducting raids on different places to arrest the criminals.

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A section of the Dhaka-Chattogram highway beneath the Mayor Hanif Flyover near Jatrabari intersection are littered with crater-like potholes, which are deep enough to even topple vehicles. The other side of the road is occupied by illegally parked trucks. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# RECOVERING LAUNDERED MONEY

## BFIU gets three months for deals with 10 countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) to have MLA (mutual legal assistance) pacts signed with 10 countries through the finance ministry to expedite the recovery of laundered money.

The countries are the US, the UK, Canada, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, UAE, Switzerland, Thailand, Hong Kong, and China.

The BFIU was given three months to complete this task along with forming a research cell in its office to identify those who laundered money abroad.

It was also asked to submit a fresh progress report within this deadline.

Justice Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat issued the order a day after receiving the latest progress report from BFIU on the matter.

The BFIU report said they advised the finance ministry to sign MLA agreements with at least 10 countries to get information, evidence, and other necessary assistance required to recover money laundered overseas.

The report also said BFIU asked Bangladesh Bank to recruit manpower for the proposed research cell, which will help in identifying money launderers and recovering the money.

According to the report, the recruitment process is currently ongoing.

The report added that the sixth meeting of the

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