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NBR SERVER BREACH

Safeguards not working

Consignments released from Ctg port illegally

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chattogram

At least three import consignments were released without inspection from the Chattogram Port using the login credentials of a top customs official in June-July despite the recent measures taken to thwart such cons that cost the state coffer in unpaid duties and taxes.

The ID of Abu Nur Rashed Ahmed, additional commissioner of Chattogram Custom, was used to unlock the suspended business identification number (BIN) of EA Chen Textile Corporation located in Cumilla Export Processing Zone, said customs officials who are investigating the case.

On March 1, the Chattogram Customs Bond Commissionerate locked the BIN of EA Chen Textile for evading duties and taxes amounting to Tk 8.6 crore and misusing the bond facility, according to customs documents.

A locked BIN means the company is barred from export-import activities.

The owners have left the country and the factory has been sealed off, according to Zillur Rahman, general manager of Cumilla EPZ.

This is the first time that the consignments of a BIN-locked company have been released without any kind of supervision or inspection, according to investigators.

"This type of incident is only possible if the designated customs official voluntarily or unknowingly shares the ID and password with someone else," said an official who works with the server of the National Board of Revenue.

The NBR server is an integrated software system to process the export-import documents. A designated custom officer can enter the server by using a unique ID and password.

Only the chief of a customs station has been authorised to unlock a locked BIN.

As per the documents in the NBR server, on June 22, 10 tonnes of yarn worth Tk 13.98 lakh arrived from China for EA Chen Textile, which enjoys duty-free imports under the bond facility.

On the same day, Supersonic Freight Service, a clearing and forwarding (C&F) agent, submitted a bill of entry (BL) on the NBR server on behalf of the importer.

Five days later, on 27 June, the consignments were approved by Ahmed before Towhidul Islam completed the final assessment on June 28.

The consignment exited the Chattogram Port on June 29 after the completion of the final assessment, as per the NBR server.

The customs officials assigned to do a physical examination of the consignments gave clearance even though the submitted documents contained false bank documents and import permit from the Bangladesh

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A metro train on display at the Uttara North Metro Rail Station yesterday during a press tour organised by the JICA ahead of MRT-6's official launch likely in the last week of this month. A worker, inset, showing the card the passengers will need to get on the trains.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Metro ready to roll this month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Uttara North Station near Diabari yesterday was thronging with staffers, officials and engineers for preparations, as the country's first-ever metro rail service is expected to be launched commercially by the end of this month.

The physical work of the station is almost complete, with four staircases, four escalators and three lifts attached to the station ready to take the passengers to the ticketing booths on the first floor and then to the second-floor platforms.

Inside the station, there are three ticket-vending machines, from which passengers will be able to collect one-time tickets and refill their MRT cards. There is a separate booth for collecting tickets manually.

Visiting the station, this correspondent saw preparations going on in full-swing. The authorities concerned have already written to the prime minister asking for her time for the inauguration.

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, the implementing agency of the fast-track project, said, "We will be fully ready within

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HOW THE CON HAPPENED

- ✓ Locked EA Chen Textile's BIN used for releasing goods
- ✓ Login credentials of a top customs official used
- ✓ Documents contained false bank files and BEPZA import permissions
- ✓ Contents of consignment remain unknown

BB sends observers to Islami Bank, FSIBL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank yesterday re-appointed an observer at Islami Bank and dispatched an observer for the first time at First Security Islami Bank (FSIBL) – the two Shariah-based lenders where Chattogram-based business giant S Alam Group has significant stakes.

Md Abul Kalam, director of the central bank's forex reserve and treasury management department, will serve as the observer at Islami Bank and Motasem Billah, director of the payment systems department, will as an observer at FSIBL.

The decision comes amid reports of allegations of irregularities in the disbursement of large amounts of loans in violation of banking rules in recent times.

On December 4, the High Court directed the authorities to probe the alleged loan scams at Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank and FSIBL, whose chairman is S Alam Group chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam. S Alam

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From 'digital' to 'smart' by 2041

Says PM about plans for Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced that her government will turn the country into "Smart Bangladesh" by 2041.

"We'll make Bangladesh a developed country by 2041, and that Bangladesh will be a 'Smart Bangladesh'," she said said at the inauguration of Digital Bangladesh Day 2022 and prize distribution of Online Quiz Competition 2022.

She added that her government has fixed four bases – smart citizens, smart economy, smart government and smart society – to turn the country into Smart Bangladesh.

"Every citizen will be skilled in technology, while economic activities will also be done through the use of technology. The government will also be [technologically] smart ... We have already partially done that. The whole society will be technologically savvy," she said.

The ICT Division organised the programme at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center, with "Advanced Technology Inclusive Development" as the theme.

State Minister for ICT Division Zunaed Ahmed Palak; Parliamentary Standing Committee on Post, Telecommunication and ICT Ministry Chairman AKM Rahmat Ullah, and ICT Division Senior Secretary

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BNP, allies look to wage 1-point movement

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

After completing its rallies in 10 divisional cities, the BNP now wants to wage a one-point movement to oust the government, uniting all like-minded opposition parties and forces.

The party had announced concurrent movement with other parties at its December 10 rally in Golapbagh.

In line with the announcement, the BNP and 33 like-minded parties would chalk out programmes in unison but would observe those from their own platforms.

Party sources said that as part of its process to unite the other parties and forces, the BNP's December 24 procession programme across the country will be observed by those parties too.

The BNP plans to gradually convert this concurrent movement on the streets into the one-point movement to oust the government.

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, a key component in the BNP-led 20-party alliance, has already announced it would bring out processions on December 24 and that it supports the BNP's 10-point demand unveiled at the Golapbagh rally.

Several other parties of the alliance have also said they support the BNP's demands.

BNP sources said the concurrent movement was planned keeping the 20-party alliance and the Jatiya Oikya Front inactive and modelled on the successful movement of the 1990's that ousted Ershad.

BNP sources said that due to ideological differences,

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DESERT FEST

Two legends on collision course

ATIQUE ANAM, from Doha

Neymar departed in tears. The Brazil No 10 cried inconsolably, only to be lifted off the pitch as the pre-tournament favourites were knocked out on penalties by Croatia in the quarterfinals at the Education City Stadium on Friday night.

The next day, it was the turn for Cristiano Ronaldo, one of the greatest footballers of all time, to bid farewell to the grandest stage following a 1-0 defeat against Morocco at the Al Thumama Stadium. Ronaldo's departure was a bit more dramatic and as painful, as it was certainly the last time the Portuguese legend played at the World Cup.

It is heartbreaking for millions of fans across the globe to see their idols go

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In his World Cup swansong, Lionel Messi stands just two steps away from the ultimate glory that would lend him immortality, at least to the Argentines, alongside Diego Maradona. The 35-year-old almost single-handedly brought Argentina to the semifinal and would not want to be stopped here by a buoyant Croatia on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Argentina want more of feisty Messi

ATIQUE ANAM, from Doha

Lionel Messi wasn't available at the pre-match press conference for Argentina's World Cup semifinal against Croatia on Monday. He wasn't, in fact, expected to be; the PSG talisman hardly ever attends a press conference.

But that doesn't mean he is shying away from the focus or trying to steer off any controversy he caused during and after the game against the Netherlands.

We've already seen how Messi led his team against the Netherlands, with his skill and with his words, even turning violent at times. That is something Argentina team is apparently comfortable with – the feisty Messi, the Messi that rallies his team and teammates.

Lionel Scaloni, the Argentina coach and Nicolas Tagliafico, the midfielder, voiced their support to this new avatar of Messi, and they apparently want more of it.

"I am not surprised because I know him," Scaloni said of his talismanic forward. "It was always like this. He was always the same, a winner. And he has a pride and a desire to continue playing ball that they envy."

Tagliafico, sitting beside Scaloni, was more forthright in his regards for Messi: "Having Messi motivates us, we are delighted that he is our captain"

Croatia's plans, meanwhile, will not centre around Messi only, as Bruno Petkovic said on Sunday that they would be looking to stop the entire team from working, not just Messi.

While Argentina had a rough start to the tournament with a stunning defeat against Saudi Arabia before

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