

They stole

FROM PAGE 3 11,600 in cash from their possessions.

Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of legal and media wing of Rab Headquarters, said the arrestees were involved in cell phone theft, smuggling, and changing IMEI over the last five to six years.

"One of the syndicates was only responsible for snatching or stealing cell phones and then selling those to other groups. Then the second group got the phones ready for sale again by changing the IMEI numbers," he said.

Moin said these syndicates were mainly active in the Gulistan, Mohammadpur, and Khilgaon areas of the city.

The syndicate has changed the IMEI number of 20,000 cell phones so far, he said.

"Depending on brand and quality, these cell phone prices vary between Tk 500 and Tk 20,000. Good quality cell phones were sold out to different mobile shops in markets, while others were sold out at different points of the city through street vending," said the director.

Rab said the arrestees were wanted in several cases filed with Shahbagh and Sonargaon Police Stations.

HANDMADE SHOES

Eid rush breathes life into fading industry

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

While imported shoes have flooded the shoe market in the country and are in high demand, local handmade shoes have still clung to their place in the market.

Although handmade shoes are not produced in large quantities anymore, their production has increased a bit ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, as there are still many left who love to don their feet with local handmade shoes rather than fancy imported ones.

With this in mind, handmade shoe factories in the port city are buzzing as production continues in full swing during Ramadan.

Even though the numbers aren't many, there are still a significant amount of orders, keeping the workers busy ahead of Eid, said factory owners and workers.

This correspondent recently visited a few shoe factories in the Madarbari, Kamal Gate, and Nalapara areas of Chattogram and found makers going on with their busy schedules.

Some are cutting leather, while others are gluing stitched pieces together into a shoe. Another group then put nameplates on the shoes. The remaining group is packaging shoes for delivery.

This is a common scenario at each of those handmade shoe factories. "Normally, we work 8-9 hours a



day. But during Ramadan, we have been working extra hours to ensure delivery of orders," said Mohammed Aziz, a shoemaker at the Sraboni Shoe Factory in Madarbari area of the port city.

Mohammed Elias, a shoemaker at Shah Amanat shoe factory, said, "Generally, we make 3-4 dozen shoes every day. But during Eid, production rises by 9-10 dozen per day."

However, Elias expressed frustration over their low wages and claimed they still get paid really low compared to other industries.

Traders in this sector said they are struggling to survive as the market is being flooded with imported shoes, mainly from China.

"The golden age of the handmade

shoe industry is over. We have not received the expected number of orders this year," said Mohammed Sadek, owner of Tarik Shoe factory.

He, however, said a small group of people are still buying handmade shoes.

According to the Chattogram Khudro Paduka Shilpo Malik Group, currently around 250 handmade shoe factories are operating in the port city.

Businessmen from this sector said the high price of raw materials has put the industry in crisis.

"We urged concerned authorities to decrease tax on the import of raw materials so that the industry would survive," said Moslem Uddin, a member of the Chattogram Khudro Paduka Shilpo Malik Group.

Family unhappy

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DB also exonerated Fardin's friend Amatullah Bushra, prime suspect in the murder case that Fardin's father filed in November 2023, of all charges in the probe report.

Regarding that, Nooruddin told The Daily Star, "I don't understand how DB declared it a suicide. Last year, I expressed my dissatisfaction by filing an application based on the DB's report submitted to the court."

Following the application, on April 16 last year, the case was handed over to the CID for further investigation. However, the investigation now remains at a standstill.

CID has requested an extension of time for submitting the report 11 times so far. The court has approved each request. On February 29, the court set April 3 (today) as the deadline for submitting the report.

On November 8, 2022, a day after Fardin's body was found, Dr Farhad Hossain, a forensic doctor at Narayananj Victoria Hospital, told journalists, "Several signs of injury have been found on Fardin's chest and head. The victim lost his life due to an internal haemorrhage. It is definitely a murder."

"I filed a murder case based on the doctor's comment. In the first two and a half months, the DB and Rab provided different information about the identities of the killers. Later, the law enforcement agencies claimed the victim died by suicide, which I find incomprehensible," Nooruddin told this newspaper.

Nooruddin alleged, "In an attempt to save the perpetrators of this 'murder,' CCTV footage from the auto-rickshaw stand of the journey route has been concealed. The entire CCTV footage of November 4, 2022, is crucial for the investigation of this case."

"Identities of the 4-5 people who were on the same human hauler with Fardin just before the incident have not been disclosed. If the entire footage from that day is released, identities of those who took Fardin to an unknown location and subsequently murdered him will be revealed," Nooruddin further claimed.

Nooruddin said Fardin opposed student politics at Buet. He was one of the key organisers in archiving the memory of Buet student Abrar Fahad, who was killed by Buet Chhatra League members in October 2019.

On August 15, 2022, when students of Buet started the "Loud and Clear" campaign to protest against the programme of Chhatra League's Buet unit, Fardin was one of the key organisers, he said.

Nooruddin also said Fardin was a seasoned debater and was supposed to participate in the World Universities Debating Championship 2023, held in Madrid, Spain.

As CID, with no progress, is now taking time extensions repeatedly to submit the probe report, Fardin's father expressed concern, fearing, "Will this case meet the same fate as the murder of journalist couple Sagar-Runi?"

Security

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he said. "Around 1.5 crore people will leave Dhaka during the Eid holidays, so the Dhaka city will be empty," said the DMP boss.

Addressing city dwellers, he said, "We would advise you to be aware of your valuables and be aware. Special security measures have been taken by the police 24 hours a day until the end of the holidays."

Habibur Rahman said a police team is working to prevent mugging, and a task force has been formed in eight divisions of the DMP.

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Court accepts

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The court set May 2 for hearing on charge framing in the case.

It also transferred the case to the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka for next course of action.

On February 1, Investigation Officer Gulshan Anwar Prodhon, a deputy director of the ACC, placed the charge sheet before the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka.

The 13 other accused are Grameen Telecom Managing Director Nazmul Islam, Directors Ashraf Hassan, Naznin

Sultana, Parvin Mahmud, M Shahjahan, Nurjahan Begum, and SM Huzzatul Islam Latif, Sramik-Karmachari Union President Kamruzzaman, General Secretary Firoz Mahmud Hasan and representative Mainul Islam, Jatiya Workers Federation Office Secretary Kamrul Hasan, and lawyers Zairul Hasan Sharif and Yusuf Ali.

On May 30 last year, Gulshan Anwar filed the case with the ACC's integrated district office in Dhaka.

The ACC approved the charge sheet on January 29,

Khaleda back home

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heart, and eyes.

Khaleda Zia was admitted to Evercare Hospital on March 13. She returned to her Gulshan residence the next day after undergoing a health check-up.

Last month, the government for the ninth time extended the

suspension of the BNP chief's jail sentence for another six months.

It was granted on two conditions - Khaleda will receive treatment staying at her residence and she cannot go abroad, according to a gazette notification issued by the home ministry.

A 50-bed hospital

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is not only troublesome for the patients but also expensive," said Shafikul Islam, a local.

In case of any critical medical emergency, the

patients need to be taken to Sylhet, about 100 km away, he added.

Shamima Akhtar, upazila health and family planning officer in Baniachong upazila, said, "If the manpower had been sufficient, there would have been no problem delivering the services properly."

Dr Nurul Haque, civil surgeon of Habiganj, said, "Higher authorities have been informed about the manpower crisis. Hopefully, recruitments will be made against the vacant posts at the health complex soon."

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