

‘GUNFIGHT’ WITH BGB Rohingya ‘yaba trader’ killed in Cox’s Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s Bazar

A Rohingya man, allegedly a yaba trader, was killed in a “gunfight” with BGB in Cox’s Bazar’s Ukhiya upazila early yesterday.

The incident took place at Rahmat-er Beel area of Palongkhali union of the upazila around 3:30am, said Lt Col Ali Haider Azad Ahmed, commander of Cox’s Bazar Battalion-34 of Border Guard Bangladesh.

The deceased was identified as Md Jubayed Mia, 22, a resident of Block-A at Leda Rohingya Camp in Teknaf, the BGB official said, adding that 20,000 yaba pills, one pipe gun, and two fresh cartridges were recovered from the scene.

“A BGB patrol team observed a group of unidentified men suspiciously moving into Bangladesh from the Myanmar side, near a cyclone centre in the area, around 3:30am and asked them to halt and identify themselves. In response, the men opened fire at the BGB personnel, prompting them to retaliate, triggering the gunfight,” Lt Col Ali Haider said.

“At that point, the men kept firing at the BGB personnel and fled from the scene. Later, the BGB team found one man injured at the spot. He was taken to Ukhiya Upazila Health Complex where the on-duty doctor pronounced him dead,” the BGB official said.

“The identity of the deceased was later confirmed through different sources,” he said.

Cox’s Bazar police later recovered the body and sent it to Cox’s Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, the BGB official also said.

CRACKDOWN ON DISSENT Fourth Saudi prince arrested

Reports New York Times

NDTV ONLINE

The crackdown on dissent against Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman within the Saudi royal family widened with the arrest of a fourth prince, the New York Times reported.

The detention of Prince Nayef bin Ahmed, a former head of army intelligence, suggests the full extent of the action remains unclear, according to the newspaper, citing two Saudis close to the royal family.

Prince Nayef is the son of Prince Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who was arrested the day before along with his nephews, former Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and Prince Nawaf bin Nayef.

The detentions cast a shadow over Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s attempts to burnish his country’s tarnished international reputation as it hosts this year’s Group of 20 gatherings. Saudi officials saw the meetings as an opportunity to showcase the kingdom as a business and tourism destination, and highlight social changes in a country that banned women from driving until 2018.

Saudi Arabia’s image took a beating after activists were detained and Saudi agents murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

“The Saudi leadership’s challenges have snowballed in recent days,” said Ayham Kamel, head of Middle East and North Africa at the Eurasia Group consultancy. Recent developments may have made King Salman and Prince Mohammed’s branch of the royal family “more sensitive to risks of a coup,” he said.

Biman

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Biman operates international flights to Kuala Lumpur, Kathmandu, Kolkata, New Delhi, Bangkok, Singapore, Jeddah, Medina, Doha, Manchester and Kuwait City.

There will be no flight to Doha until further notice as the Qatar government yesterday imposed a travel ban on people from 14 countries, including Bangladesh.

On Saturday, the Kuwait government announced a seven-day travel ban on people from Bangladesh and six other countries.

Biman then cancelled its flights to Kuwait for two weeks.

Those who bought tickets for Doha or Kuwait will get a full refund from Biman’s sales centres, said in a press release.

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Group Captain Director Touhid-Ul-Ahsan said China Southern Airlines had stopped its operation from Dhaka while China Eastern was operating only one flight a week instead of seven.

US-Bangla Airlines has also reduced the number of its weekly flights to two from seven to Guangzhou for want to passengers.

Besides, Thai Airways, Singapore Airlines, Saudia and several other airlines have also reduced their flights on different routes, said the HSA director.

“Around 28 airlines used to carry between 20,000 and 25,000 passengers to and from HSA per day. The number has significantly fallen,” he added.

Major Mar 17 celebrations

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caused panic worldwide, it is our responsibility and duty to concentrate on the safety and health of the people. That’s why we have rearranged the birth centenary celebration programmes of Bangabandhu.”

She said celebrating the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation is a big occasion for the nation. “However, we will celebrate it in a different way so that the gathering of the people is less and they don’t fall in risk.”

The PM said the inaugural ceremony of Bangabandhu’s birth centenary would be held on a limited scale on March 17.

She said other programmes, including placing of wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu on Dhanmondi-32 in Dhaka and placing of wreaths at the grave of the Father of the Nation in Tungipara, Gopalganj would go on as per schedule.

“However, the children’s rally in Tungipara will be held on a limited scale,” she mentioned.

Speaking about coronavirus, Hasina called upon the people to follow the health rules properly and remain neat and clean. “There is nothing to be worried about... there may be some risk for the elderly

people, but the youths need not be worried.”

She said those suffering from cold-related diseases would have to remain careful about the virus, but there was no need to wear mask unnecessarily.

“All have become crazy for buying masks and sanitizers. They are purchasing those in huge quantities. This is happening not only in Bangladesh, but also elsewhere in the world.”

Meanwhile, Bangabandhu’s Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation Committee yesterday announced that the Mujib Year programmes would be launched through electronic and social media under the revised plan amid coronavirus outbreak across the world.

“Celebration of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be inaugurated through televisions and other electronic and social media,” Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, chief coordinator of the committee, told a media briefing in the capital.

He said a technical team, led by lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor, would draw up a new detailed plan for the opening of the yearlong celebrations.

Mix-up had man

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Kolapra village in Munshiganj.

The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order after Rezaul filed a writ petition.

Petitioner’s lawyer Shishir Monir told The Daily Star that his client was arrested in a cheque dishonour case involving Tk 23.5 lakh. His business partner Mojibur Rahman filed the case.

“They used to do real estate business together. Rezaul had given five cheques amounting to Tk 23.5 lakh. All the cheques bounced, and the complainant filed the case on October 30, 2013,” said the lawyer.

He was arrested two years later, and the chief metropolitan magistrate’s court of Dhaka sent him to jail, he added.

And then there was a mix-up. His case was transferred to metropolitan sessions judge’s court, and somehow the respective judge was under the impression that he was out on bail, said Monir.

The case was then shifted to the special judge’s court-8 of Dhaka. Through a series of hearings, the judge observed that the defendant, who they assumed was out on bail, did not show up to the court, Monir described.

“And so they classified him as a fugitive, and gave a conviction in absentia.”

On September 18, 2018, the special judge’s court-8 convicted Rezaul and sentenced him to one year’s imprisonment, the maximum possible punishment under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

When he was convicted, Rezaul had already spent three years in jail.

On August 6, 2019, he wrote to the jail authorities seeking his release, said the lawyer.

“The jail authorities then wrote to the court, stating that they have been keeping the man in jail for over four years.”

Rezaul filed a writ petition with

the HC on March 8 challenging the authorities’ action to keep him in jail.

Following the petition, the HC bench yesterday also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in four weeks why their action to keep Rezaul in the jail should not be declared illegal.

Home secretary, inspector general of police, judge of the special judge’s court-8 of Dhaka, inspector general of prisons, jailer and senior jail supper of Kashimpur jail and plaintiff Mojibur have been made respondents, the lawyer added.

Burial

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human remains are almost non-existent,” said Richard Oslisly, leading an expedition financed by the National Agency of National Parks.

The mission is also funded by the local environmental branch of Singapore’s palm oil giant Olam International, which is well established in Gabon.

There are no golden platters or diamonds at the end of the 25 metres (82 feet) of rope needed to reach the floor of the cave, but the site named Iroungou is still a treasure trove for scientists.

Almost 30 skeletons have been discovered on three levels, with more than 500 metallic artefacts made mostly of iron and ranging from knives, axes and spear tips to bracelets and collars. Researchers also found 39 pierced teeth from hyenas and panthers.

Oslisly, 69, only began to speak of the discovery a year afterwards, but it has caused a wave of excitement and hope in the regional scientific community.

“This cave will enable us to find out a little more about these peoples of central Africa, largely unrecorded in history,” the French researcher said in his Libreville office, full of local antiquities.

Bangladesh example

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Prof Sen was addressing a discussion at Dhaka University’s Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhavan via Skype from India.

He was the designated chief guest at the programme organised by Banglar Pathshala Foundation.

In his speech, the Nobel laureate said in Bangladesh, initiatives by NGOs like Brac, Grameen Bank and Gonoshasthaya Kendra contributed significantly to the country’s progress.

He said the government also had its well-thought-out action plan, which, together with the NGO-based initiatives, had helped bring about a big change in Bangladesh.

“A big change must have happened. Why did this not happen in other societies? Why not in India, in Pakistan or not even when Bangladesh was the erstwhile East Pakistan?” he further said.

He said there were two reasons for Bangladesh’s progress and one of them was the contribution of the women.

“In Bangladesh, the women’s contribution is significant,” Sen said, adding that there was an urgency for women empowerment, which was highlighted significantly in different plans.

He said NGO-based initiatives like those of Brac and Grameen Bank have prioritised women’s contribution to Bangladesh.

In his view, the biggest contribution to economic, social and political progress can be made through showing responsibility after going beyond accountability.

Banglar Pathshala Foundation organised the discussion to inaugurate a year-long study circle on the topic titled “Amartya Sen in Quest of Prosperous and Righteous Society”.

As part of the initiative, 12 classes

All regional offices

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an application now, he would get an appointment for June as all the slots till May were already booked.

On that specific date, the applicant would have to visit the regional passport office concerned for having those jobs done.

The project director said they were accepting applications online to maintain the serial of the appointment dates. “Receiving applications offline will take time as we still don’t have enough trained manpower for e-passport service.”

Presently, people can submit e-passport applications only under the general category. There is a provision for submission of applications under emergency category, but the DIP was not offering the service yet.

Under the general and emergency categories, applicants are supposed to get passports within 15 and 7 days.

Brig Gen Saïdur said they were still facing some problems with the operation of the online software. “We expecting to start receiving applications under emergency category from next month.”

He said if anyone needed an e-passport urgently, he/she must submit the related documents to the DIP showing the reason.

SERVICE FROM 10 MORE OFFICES
Officials said e-passport service was

now available at the DIP’s Agargaon, Jatrabari, Uttara, Cantonment, Secretariat and foreign ministry regional passport offices.

Only the government officials can submit e-passport applications from the Secretariat office. Besides, the office at the foreign ministry provides diplomatic passports.

The DIP on March 5 launched the e-passport service at its regional office in Gazipur. The service will be offered from three regional offices in Narsingdi, Manikganj and Munshiganj this week.

In Gopalganj and Mymensingh, the service will be launched on March 16 and 18 respectively.

According to officials, the service will be available at two passport offices in Chattogram division, and in Feni, Noakhali and Cumilla this month. The service is likely to be launched in all eight divisional cities within next month.

MANY APPLICANTS IN TROUBLE

Speaking to this correspondent, several e-passport applicants said they could not fill in the application form online due to some problems.

They said as they were filling in the form, error messages popped up. Besides, they didn’t receive any confirmation message from the DIP

after paying the applicable e-passport fees online using cards of different banks.

As a result, the applicants were forced to take help from different computer shops near the Agargaon regional passport office. They complained that they had to pay the shops Tk 300 to Tk 500 for submission of a single application online.

Asked about the problems, Brig Gen Saïdur said they were aware about those. Three people were already arrested in this connection, he added.

The e-passport project director said filling up the form online was very easy, but some applicants were facing problems as they were not used to it.

Meanwhile, the e-gate service is not available yet for the general e-passport users.

Saïdur said the service would be offered to all e-passport holders after a couple of months when there would be enough trained manpower.

There are two types of e-passports booklets with 48 and 64 pages, and their tenures are five years and 10 years.

Fees for e-passports varies from Tk 3,500 to Tk 12,000, depending on the number of pages and time for delivery. An additional 15 percent VAT is applicable with the fees.

No power can undo the reality

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Fund delegation when they call on him at his official residence.

Replying to a question, Bangabandhu says, “I don’t like to make beggars of my countrymen but I want to give them work. I can assure you whether help from abroad comes or not, Bangladesh will exist with whatever resources she has.”

Bangabandhu notes with satisfaction that his government, in only three months’ time, has been able to set up government machinery at the village level and work is going on round the clock to repair and rebuild the new nation. He tells the delegation that they should be happy to see that Bangladesh is now ‘happier, more stable and more normal’ than Pakistan, with whom the Nixon administration has friendly relations.

NO MILITARY PACTS WITH ANY COUNTRY
Tajuddin Ahmad, minister for finance

and planning, declares that the people of Bangladesh are against joining any military pacts. Addressing the conference of the Bangladesh branch of the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Committee, the minister says that Bangladesh will no more fall prey to those who provoke nations to fight among themselves and earn profits by selling arms to them. The people of Bangladesh want peace and prosperity and will contribute their share in the preservation and promotion of world peace, he adds.

INDUSTRIAL POLICY BEING FINALISED

Syed Nazrul Islam, minister for industries, informs that the industrial policy is being finalised and will be announced by Bangabandhu soon. The policy will be socialist-oriented and will outline the stages for the phased-out switch to the socialist pattern of industrial growth in the country, he adds.

Law ministry to decide

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home ministry seeking her “temporary” release.

Asaduzzaman said, “The home ministry does not have the power to release her [Khaleda]. It needs to take legal support and go to court to release her.”

On Sunday, BNP’s Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir told reporters that party chairperson Khaleda Zia’s family members had applied to the home ministry for her “temporary” release.

Khaleda, who is now in the prison ward of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, has been in jail since she was convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case on February 8, 2018. She was found guilty in another graft case later the same year.

Regarding law ministry’s steps, the home minister further said, “The law ministry and us, neither will be able to go beyond the law. We have sent her [Khaleda’s] appeal for legal opinion. But the actions must be taken through the judicial process and nothing will be done beyond it.”

HAIJ SERVICE BOOTH IN ALL REGIONAL PASSPORT OFFICES

The home minister was addressing reporters after the inauguration of the Hajj Service Booth 2020 at the Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) in the capital’s Agargaon.

DIP Director General Major General Shakil Ahmed presided over the inauguration ceremony.

DG Shakil Ahmed said they are launching the Hajj service booth in all regional passport offices across the country to facilitate arrangements for hajj aspirants.

There will be a designated person in every service booth and hajj aspirants will get all passport-related facilities from a single place, said the DG.

Every hajj aspirant will be provided a special card after their passport enrolment and any family member or relative will be able to collect the passport using the card on behalf of applicant, he said.

“We need to ensure our best services to them so that they can get their passports in due time,” added the director general.

Both DNCC, DSCC partly negligent

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According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 101,354 dengue cases were reported last year, of which 49,544 were outside Dhaka. The number of deaths was 156.

During the hearing of a suo moto rule, the HC bench of Justice Tariq ul Hakim and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir Lyton on November 12 formed the probe committee led by Dhaka District Judge Md Helal Chowdhury to identify the persons responsible for outbreak of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue and chikungunya in Dhaka.

The inquiry committee talked to experts on how to prevent the spawning of Aedes mosquito, which causes dengue fever.

In the report, the committee said an integrated initiative is needed to prevent the spread of dengue, chikungunya, and other mosquito-borne diseases.

In its recommendations, the committee said though it is the duty of city corporations to fight mosquito, it is not possible for them to do that alone. It will have to be done in a coordinated way.

Coordinated efforts will have to be taken by all service-providing organisations -- Rajuk, Dhaka Wata, Bangladesh Police, Dhaka Cantonment Authority, Civil Aviation Authority, BRTA, Bangladesh Railway, Bangladesh Water Development Board, Directorate General of Health

Services, Metro Rail Authority, Department of Environment, Bangladesh Meteorological Department, Rehab, house owner associations or welfare associations and others.

The probe committee also recommended taking up short-, mid- and long-term plans to fight mosquito.

As the dengue and chikungunya have been spread across the country, the probe committee suggested forming a separate authority or body to control mosquito centrally. There will be a modern laboratory, research cell and skilled entomologists under the authority.

The committee’s other recommendations include forming a high level ministry level monitoring cell for mosquito control activities and constituting mosquito control monitoring cells incorporating officials and employees from division, district, upazila, union and other city corporations and municipalities.

It also suggested formation of monitoring committees incorporating high officials from every district to oversee mosquito control activities regularly.

The committee proposed examining the effectiveness of insecticides and chemicals in every two years and taking steps accordingly.

It asked the authorities to carry out two surveys every year to find the density of mosquito in the city

Addressing the programme, Md Nurul Islam, secretary of religion affairs ministry, said they have analysed the database of hajj aspirants and found that every year, around 50 percent of total hajj aspirants need to submit applications for new passports.

The special initiatives of passport authority will boost the hajj aspirants to perform the holy prayer, added the secretary.

After the inauguration ceremony, the home minister handed over passports to six hajj aspirants.

Regarding the service booth, DIP DG Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed said they are planning to keep the booth running round the year. Once the hajj season is over, the service desk will be used to provide services for physically less able passport applicants, he added.

Public Security Division Senior Secretary Mostofa Kamal Uddin, Md Shahiduzzaman, secretary of security service division of the home ministry and Md Nurul Islam, secretary of religion affairs ministry, were present at the ceremony as special guests.

corporation areas.

The committee suggested building separate warehouses to keep pesticide and equipment to control mosquito.

It also asked the authorities to give more importance on larviciding instead of adulticiding to fight mosquito.

9 more lives lost

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road in Noakhali’s Senbagh upazila around 9:00am.

The victim, AB Siddique Nayeem, 20, was a student of Iqbal Memorial Government College in Feni’s Dagonbhuiyan, said police.

In another accident, Habibur Rahman, 55, an employee of Dinajpur Polytechnic Institute, was killed when a motorcycle hit him at Matasagar in Dinajpur Sadar upazila in the morning.

In Jamalpur, a man was killed as a lorry and a truck collided head-on on Jamalpur-Tangail road at Haridrata in Sadar upazila around 3:00am.

The victim, Shahin Mollah, 30, of Gopalganj’s Kashiani upazila, was the lorry driver, said Inspector Abdul Latif, in-charge of Narayanpur Police Investigation Centre.

Police seized the two vehicles, but the truck driver fled, he added.

(Our correspondents from Tangail, Noakhali, Dinajpur and Jamalpur contributed to this report)