

**ROHINGYA TERROR CAMP**  
**Indian media**  
**report untrue**

Says home ministry  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has refuted an Indian newspaper report that New Delhi alerted Dhaka about the "emergence of terror training camps for Rohingya Muslims" in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The Times of India report yesterday said India had warned Bangladesh that the camps had been sprouting in the CHT region adjacent to Myanmar border over the past six to seven months.

During the just-concluded Indo-Bangladesh home secretary-level talks in New Delhi, Indian Home Secretary Anil Goswami was said to have drawn the attention of his Bangladesh counterpart CQK Mustaq Ahmed about the camps, wrote the English daily.

Contacted yesterday, Additional Home Secretary Kamal Uddin Ahmed, who also attended the talks, rejected the media claim.

"No such issue was discussed at the talks," he said.

The Times of India report also reads, "These camps were witnessing terror training sessions by LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed commanders, with help from local outfits like Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) that are linked to NGOs like Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO).

"Sharing intelligence inputs 'from the ground', the Union home ministry recently told Dhaka how Pakistani terror outfits like Lashker-e-Taiba were allegedly training Rohingya rebels in camps spread across the CHT for 'launching revenge attacks' in Myanmar."

Referring to Indian intelligence reports, the newspaper said Rohingya Muslims were being trained in the use of firearms and bombs at these camps.

"Bangladesh has assured India that it will verify these camps on the ground," the newspaper added.

**LAWACHHARA FOREST**  
**Vehicles killing**  
**snakes, daily**

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Lawachhara

Four to five snakes are crushed to death every day by vehicles plying the Srimangal-Kamalganj road through Lawachhara forest in Moulvibazar, according to a survey.

The 32 species of snakes in the forest, most of which are rare, will become extinct if preventive measures are not taken immediately, says the survey.

Thus, around 1500 snakes are killed in a year, said snake researcher Shahriar Sijar Mahmud, who conducted the survey.

Fourteen of the species were identified as roadkill, and two of them -- banded trinket snakes and iridescent snakes -- were spotted in Bangladesh for the first time, he told The Daily Star last month.

The other species found dead include striped keelback or Chinu snake, mock viper or pahari snake, copper-headed trinket or dudhraj and common wolf snake or ghargini snake.

Experts say the ecosystem of the forest will suffer badly if the trend continues, adding that vehicles should not exceed the speed limit of 20 to 30 km per hour when driving along the road.

Whenever a snake is seen crossing the road, the driver must slow down and let them cross the road.

Sylhet Divisional Forest Conservator (Wildlife) Mahbubur Rahman said cautionary signs had already been put up along the road, requesting drivers to go slow, but a more effective solution was to divert the road around the forest.

Lawachhara Range Officer Azharul Islam said the reptiles would be safe if the vehicles using the road drove with extra caution. Making sure the vehicles moved at a low speed became more challenging because of a lack of staff, he added.



**This road inside Lawachhara forest in Moulvibazar is used even by heavy vehicles, which often kill animals, mostly snakes, under their wheels.**

PHOTO: STAR

**80 killed in Spain**

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Ferrol as the Galicia region was preparing celebrations in honour of its patron saint James.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, a native of Santiago de Compostela, visited the scene of the accident on Thursday and declared three days of mourning.

King Juan Carlos and Crown Prince Felipe called off their public engagements out of respect for the victims.

Several witnesses spoke of a loud explosion at the time of the crash.

"I was at home and I heard something like a clap of thunder. It was very loud and there was lots of smoke," said 62-year-old Maria Teresa Ramos, who lives just metres from the site.

"It's a disaster, people are crying out. Nobody has ever seen anything like this," she added.

Rescue workers recovered 73 bodies from the wreckage and four more victims died later in hospital, a spokes-

man for the Galicia high court said.

Officials later said the death toll had risen to 80 while more than 140 people were injured.

It is the worst rail accident in Spain since 1944, when hundreds were killed in a train collision, also between Madrid and Galicia.

Renfe said the train had no technical problems and had just passed an inspection on the morning of the accident, adding that the cause was unknown.

"We will know what the speed is very soon when we consult the train's black box," a Renfe spokesman said.

Rajoy said two investigations were being carried out, one a judicial probe and the other led by the Investigation Commission for Rail Accidents, which will be overseen by the transport ministry.

"The objective is that we will know as soon as possible what were the causes of this accident," he said.

**Fitra fixed at Tk 66**

FROM PAGE 1

cash or kind.

Prof Maulana Mohammad Salahuddin, Khatib of Baitul Mukarram

National Mosque, chaired the meeting.

Maulana Abdul Jabbar and Prof Sirajuddin Ahmed, among others, were present.

**Find the surviving**

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by Nazi war criminals. Some of the perpetrators are free and alive! Help us take them to court."

It supplies a telephone hotline number where tips can be submitted.

The campaign is being coordinated by US-based Jewish human rights organisation the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and led by Dr Efraim Zuroff.

A reward of 5,000 euros (£4,300) will be paid for information upon the charging of a suspect, a further 5,000 euros upon conviction and a further 100 euros (£85) per day spent in prison -- up to 150 days -- for a total of 25,000 euros (£21,493).

Dr Zuroff believes there are up to 60 people still living in Germany who could stand for trial for crimes allegedly committed.

The campaign was launched in the wake of the conviction of John Demjanjuk in 2011 for his service as an armed SS guard at a death camp.

Demjanjuk was convicted of 28,060 counts of being an accessory to murder at the Nazis' Sobibor death camp. He denied the charges, claiming he was a prisoner of war himself.

He was sentenced to five years in prison but was released to a nursing home in the southern Bavarian town of Bad Feilnbach pending an appeal. He died in

March last year.

On the Wiesenthal website, Dr Zuroff adds: "In response to those who question the value of bringing elderly Nazi war criminals to justice, it is important to remember that: the passage of time in no way diminishes the guilt of the killers, old age should not afford immunity to murderers, every one of the Nazis' victims deserves that an effort be made to hold their killers accountable, this ongoing effort is a reminder of the importance of Holocaust crimes and a warning to contemporary anti-Semites and racists and these trials are helpful in the ongoing struggle against Holocaust denial and distortion.

**It's EC that will decide**

FROM PAGE 1

assesses the overall law and order situation on the basis of information from law enforcement agencies, mentioned Rakibuddin. "Our stance is very clear. We will decide about deploying law enforcement agencies in time as per our assessment."

He also emphasised the importance of settling the polls-time government issue immediately to enable the EC prepare for a free, fair and credible national election.

Since it is a political issue, it needs to be resolved politically with an agreement between the political parties, he pointed out.

Queried whether the EC would hold a dialogue with political parties before amending the electoral code

of conduct, the CEC said they will think about it later.

Meanwhile, the EC yesterday sent the draft of the Representation of the People's Order (Amendment) Act, 2013 to the law ministry for scrutiny.

**BNP ASKS ECTO DROP PROPOSAL**

BNP yesterday asked the EC to drop a proposal which would allow the ruling party chief and its 20 leaders lead electioneering across the country if the next general election is held under a partisan government.

The EC made the proposal in a draft amendment to the electoral code of conduct. In its first official reaction to the EC move, the main opposition party said the proposal goes against the concept of

free and fair election.

"The commission has added fuel to the fire by adopting a stance against people," BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan told newsmen at a press conference at its Nayapalitan headquarters.

He expressed concern that the amendment would create a fresh crisis in the country and put the whole electoral system in question.

Nazrul also asked the EC commissioners to step down if they cannot stop the amendment from being incorporated in the electoral code of conduct.

Once approved, the new provision of the electoral code of conduct would allow Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the Awami League chief,

along with 20 other ministers or state ministers or AL leaders join the polls campaign without resigning from her post.

If the EC, said the BNP leader, allows special privileges to any party through the amendment, it would destroy the level playing field in the election. For this reason, the election results would not be acceptable to the people, he noted.

By drafting the amendment, the EC has become an institution subservient to the government, complained Nazrul.

BNP had alleged that a free and fair election would not be possible under the incumbent EC and its recent move has proved the allegation to be true, he maintained.

**Gunmen execute**  
**14 Shia truck**  
**drivers in Iraq**

AFP, Kirkuk

Sunni militants summarily yesterday executed at least 14 Shias after setting up a roadblock north of Baghdad, stopping trucks and checking the IDs of drivers, Iraqi officials said.

The nighttime attack was reminiscent of the darkest days of the Sunni-Shiite sectarian bloodshed in Iraq in 2006-2007, when thousands of people were killed because of their religious affiliation or forced to abandon their homes under threat of death.

Lingering tensions between Sunnis and Shias have been inflamed by persistent violence in Iraq and the civil war in neighbouring Syria, and there are growing fears that the country is slipping back towards all-out sectarian conflict.

**6 charges accepted**

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some 1,225 people were killed in 1971.

Besides, he was allegedly involved in killing four people, abducting 17, raping one, confining 13, torturing 13 others and looting and torching numerous houses in the district.

"Upon perusal of the documents it appears that there is strong prima facie [sufficient to establish a fact or raise a presumption unless disproved] case against Azharul," the tribunal chairman said while accepting the charges.

So, cognisance of the offences as per the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973 was taken against Azharul, he added.

The tribunal yesterday directed the jail authorities to use a comfortable vehicle, if available, to ferry Azhar from

Kashipur Jail to the court.

The defence had earlier appealed for a comfortable vehicle for their client saying the accused had been suffering from back-pain and it was difficult for him to ride on the prison van.

Azhar was not brought to the tribunal as per a prayer of the defence filed on Wednesday.

Police arrested Azhar at his Mughbazar house in the capital on August 22 last year after the tribunal had issued a warrant of arrest in connection with his alleged wartime offences.

ICT-2 ZM Altafur Rahman, investigation officer of the war crimes case against BNP leader Abdul Alim, yesterday completed his testimony and the International Crimes Tribunal-2 asked the

defence to complete his cross-examination in four days.

Altaf, also 35th prosecution witness in the case, started his testimony on Wednesday. He described his full investigation procedure in the case yesterday.

The investigator exhibited several documents, mainly books and newspapers, which he had seized during investigation.

Alim was indicted on 17 charges including genocide and crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 war.

At one stage of his deposition, Altaf said Joypurhat district administration being directed by the investigation agency had sent a letter about Alim's role in 1971. The letter mentioned Alim as the chairman of Joypurhat Peace Committee, an auxiliary force of Pakistani army.

After Altaf's submission, Alim's junior counsel Tarikul Islam sought a "long adjournment" citing illness of senior counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena, who usually cross-examines the prosecution witnesses.

The tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan however said the defence would have to complete the cross-examination from July 29 to August 1.

"We are compelled to say this. Lawyers fall ill one day and the accused another day. If one lawyer is ill, another will perform his duty. But, you [the defence] are not doing it. This is one sort of obstruction," said Justice Hassan.

On July 8, the tribunal fixed July 11 for recoding Altaf's testimony but had to adjourn the proceedings four times until Wednesday for illness of either the accused or his counsel.

**Drinking water to death**

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier, a research on expecting mothers visiting the Dakop health complex for treatment identified a range of health problems with potential links to increased salinity, including hypertension, miscarriage, kidney failure, skin disease, acute respiratory infection and diarrhoea.

The research conducted by the Imperial College of London and Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) between July 2008 and March 2010 found that when the region runs out of drinking water in summer, salinity level in its ground water and river water rises.

Up to 39 percent of expecting mothers who drink shallow tube well water suffered from hypertension, with another seven percent suffering from pre-eclampsia.

Researchers found that many people take water with high salt contents, not knowing the amount of sodium they consume.

"Awareness has increased now. And people, especially the pregnant women, mostly drink rainwater. But still a significant number of people suffer from hypertension," noted Santosh Kumar Majumder, assistant health officer of Dakop Upazila Health Complex. He is also one of the researchers.

Aniere Khan, a researcher of the Imperial College, in her paper titled "Climate change, water salinity and health impacts in coastal Bangladesh" described salinity as something that is "not only breaching our coasts, but is approaching the very shores of motherhood in the womb."

Kartik Chandra, a development worker in Dakop,

**Hypertension, anaemia, liver and gynaecological diseases, diarrhoea are associated with salinity**

**People of this region take up to 16 grams of salt daily from water only, whereas WHO recommends maximum 5 grams from food, drink**

**Over half of the 5,384 patients admitted to Dakop Upazila Health Complex in 2011 had salinity-related diseases**

**Of all the patients admitted in 2011, around 60 percent died of hypertension and other salinity-associated ailments**

said most people collect as much rainwater as possible and preserve it for drinking in dry season.

Otherwise, people have to buy drinking water that comes in 20-litre jars from the Khulna by boat. Each container costs Tk 30, he added.

Md Habib, assistant health officer at Shyamnagar Upazila Health Complex in Satkhira, said the situation is no different in Gabura union, where he works.

Worse, salinity has badly affected agriculture in the area and farmers now cannot grow vegetables due to extreme salinity, he said.

In total, 93 upazilas of 18 southwestern districts are affected by salinity in different degrees. Of them, Khulna and Satkhira are among the worst hit districts. The problem continues to worsen, with around 20 million people of the coastal region already

affected, according to Soil Resource Development Institute.

"It is necessary to do extensive research to determine various health impacts on people. The situation may be worse than what we know," said Atiq Rahman, executive director of BCAS.

Yesterday, elderly Mofazzal Molla of Sabuj Palli village under Chalna was admitted to the Dakop upazila health complex with a second cardiac attack.

His son, Yasin, told The Daily Star over the phone that his mother and sister and many of his neighbours were also suffering from high blood pressure.

Asked about the source of their drinking water, Yasin said they were drinking pond water at the moment, which is slightly salty. But they prefer it because it is better than the highly saline water.

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