

## SOS from our nationals in troubled Iraq

Secure their well-being and return

AS many as 33 Bangladeshi construction workers are having to live in subhuman condition in Tikrit city of Iraq dominated by Sunni rebels for more than a week now. They have been left stranded by the company owners in a fear-stricken deserted city which even the locals have fled from.

The foreign workers face three major handicaps: First, they have no food, water and electricity to subsist on or get by even in enclosed surroundings; secondly, they are completely immobilised by the fact that their employers have taken away their passports. Last but not the least, no local or international helpline is available in such an utterly disorderly situation to be stretching their hands to.

In desperation, therefore, Bangladeshi workers are making frantic calls individually to whoever they know at home to share their anxiety for some organised efforts to rescue them urgently.

As other countries, especially India, have got a move on to locate and establish with their nationals in Iraq our foreign ministry in Dhaka in press release has assured that they are in regular communication with Bangladesh embassy in Baghdad. Our missions in neighbouring Iran, Kuwait, Jordan and Turkey are also in touch to 'ensure safety and security of Bangladesh nationals.'

That is all very good but we are still into preliminaries and clearly need make a headway with authorities in arranging their safe relocation or repatriation .For this to happen, the expatriates welfare and overseas employment ministry and ministry of foreign affairs will have to coordinate unflinchingly.

## Arsenic contamination

Switch to surface water is the answer

ALTHOUGH periodically we hear of the dreadful statistics about poisonous chemical arsenic polluting much of our groundwater exposing people to different diseases, this serious public health issue remains sidelined .Successful governments have been vobule about it; even tubewells were marked out in arsenic afflicted regions to be avoided. But sustained efforts needed in view of newer areas affected have been missing.This can be explained in two ways:First,the kind of policy intervention needed to cope with the pervasive nature of the problem with effective commitment and logistical support was lacking;secondly, and perhaps equally importantly,awareness has not permeated the grassroots to be sensitized against arsenic risks.

The sheer scale of such water consumption averaging some 25 percent for the country, leaving aside even a higher percentage in certain pockets,underscores the magnitude of the malady. International experts , some NGOs and public health professionals have voiced their concerns from time to time urging pro-active government-community synergies for an all-out preventative, remedial and rehabilitation-related action programme. What else would nudge us into action than the World Health Organisation's warning that in Bangladesh arsenic contamination level was 50ppb(parts per billion) in place of acceptable 10ppb.

Obviously,rampant extraction of groundwater, as the State Minister for Health has emphasized must be stopped and we should get a move on expediting implementation of surface water treatment plants.

## Where is the World Cup fever?

ABDUL MATIN

IF anyone thinks I have gone nuts, let me explain that I am writing this piece while visiting the United States of America. Even though I left Dhaka more than a fortnight ago, I had already noticed the initial symptoms of the World Cup fever in Bangladesh. Street vendors had started to sell the national flags of the popular teams long before the opening ceremony.

Brazil, the host country, and the States being in the same hemisphere, we have been watching the games at very convenient times, during day times or in the evenings. While we were deeply absorbed in watching the spectacular opening ceremony of the World Cup on June 12, an American friend of my eldest daughter dropped in to say hello to us. She was surprised to see us watching a TV programme in Spanish, knowing that none of us, except my son-in-law, understood Spanish. After initial exchange of pleasantries, she asked: "What are you watching?" "The opening ceremony of the World Cup," one of us replied. She asked very politely: "Excuse my ignorance. Which World Cup is it?" "Football." Surprised, she exclaimed: "Football! "Sorry, soccer," we corrected ourselves.

English football is known as soccer in America. American football, also called gridiron in some countries, is like English rugby. The Americans are crazy about it like we are for football or cricket. The National Football League (NFL) is one of the most popular leagues in the United States. It eventually culminates in the league's championship game, the Super Bowl which is watched by all Americans almost like a ritual. The other popular leagues in the States are the Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the National Hockey League (NHL).

Our guest watched the programme practically without asking any further question. She is, by the way, a typical American with very little interest in the FIFA World Cup that creates a craze among football lovers all over the world. The Americans are practically indifferent to it even though they are competing in the World Cup. Mostly, the first generation Americans coming from Asia, the Hispanic countries and Europe are interested in football.

The World Cup fever must have gripped Bangladesh by now even though there are some restrictions in flying national flags of foreign countries on the roofs of houses. Hot discussions must be taking place on the outcome of each match at all places including tea shops, street corners and posh living rooms in Dhaka.

We are missing this fever with all its flavour in the States.

The writer is a former chief engineer of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission.

# Extraditing criminals

## STRAIGHT LINE



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

prosecution, or to serve a sentence already imposed.

It is generally accepted that countries have no general obligation to surrender a person who is within their territory. On account of that, many countries have signed bilateral and multilateral extradition treaties agreeing to transfer 'fugitive offenders' in certain circumstances.

Extradition may still be possible even where there is no treaty or agreement between two countries but this will depend on the law of the requested State.

One of the most important aspects of an extradition treaty is the determination of those offences for which extradition is possible. There are two main types of extradition arrangements; those that rely on lists, and those that follow the principle of 'dual criminality.' The former specifies a list of crimes for which extradition is possible; the latter usually specifies that extradition will be possible if the act is an offence in both the requesting and requested State and is punishable by a minimum period of imprisonment, often one year in both countries.

There has been much discussion on the Interpol's 'Red Notice' through which countries seek the arrest or provisional arrest of wanted persons overseas, with a view to extradition. It needs to be clearly spelt that an Interpol Red Notice is not an international arrest warrant but merely a means of streamlining cooperation between Interpol Member countries on the arrest and extradition of fugitive offenders. A Red Notice is essentially a notification that a valid warrant exists in the country that is seeking the apprehension of the fugitive.

It needs to be emphasised that an Interpol Red Notice may not in itself allow the police to arrest the wanted person. This depends upon the domestic law of the land on whose territory the wanted person is found. In some States, the domestic courts will have to issue a domestic warrant pursuant to the extradition request or Interpol Red Notice before the police can cause an arrest. Many countries view an Interpol Red Notice as a valid request for arrest. However, a Red Notice does not oblige the requested State to monitor or arrest the individual.

India and Bangladesh signed the extradition treaty on January 28, 2013. In addition, in 2010 the following accords were signed between India and Bangladesh: Agreement on mutual legal assistance on criminal mat-

THE sensational seven murders at Narayanganj and the fugitive status of the principal accused Noor Hossain, who is now learnt to be in police custody in neighbouring West Bengal State of India, has brought into sharp focus the issue or otherwise of the matter of extraditing the said accused. Under the circumstances, it would be proper to understand that extradition is a legal process by which a person suspected or convicted of a criminal offense is transferred from one country to another for the purposes of

prosecution, or to serve a sentence already imposed.

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ters; Agreement on the transfer of sentenced persons; and Agreement on combating international terrorism, organised crime, and illicit drug trafficking.

It is relevant to note that the said extradition treaty has refusal provisions too. Extradition of any person may be refused by the country concerned on grounds of national security. Further, political detainee would not be brought under the purview of this treaty. Interestingly, India is hoping that extradition treaty with Bangladesh will pave the legal way for Bangladesh to deport Anup Chetia of United Liberation Front of Assam, considered a separatist group in Northeast India.

Anup Chetia was arrested in Bangladesh in 1997 and sentenced to seven years in prison for illegal entry and possession of firearms. Bangladesh has sought India's help in nabbing the killers of Bangladesh's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh MujiburRahman. The suspects, Captain Abdul Mazed and Risalder MoslehUddin, are believed to be hiding in India.

Anup Chetia's petition is reportedly pending in court since 2003. Bangladesh has reportedly said that Anup Chetia has sought political asylum, which does not fall under the extradition treaty signed with India. Some

quarters in India believe that Bangladesh's unwillingness to hand over Anup Chetia to India is affecting the confidence building environment and that Bangladesh is linking Anup's deportation to other unresolved bilateral issues.

In India, the extradition of a fugitive from India to a foreign country or vice versa is governed by the provisions of Indian Extradition Act, 1962. The basis of extradition could be a treaty between India and a foreign country. Under Section 3 of this Act, a notification could be issued by the government of India extending the provisions of this Act to the country notified.

Action can be taken under the Indian Extradition Act, Article 34 (b) of 1962. It provides procedure for the arrest and extradition of fugitive criminals under certain conditions, which includes receipt of the request through diplomatic channels ONLY and under the warrant issued by a magistrate having a competent jurisdiction. Action can also be taken under the provisions of Section 41 (1) (g) of the Indian Criminal Procedures Code, 1973 that authorises the police to arrest a fugitive criminal without a warrant. In this case, they have to refer the matter to their Interpol wing for onward transmission to government of India for a decision on extradition.

Extradition plays an important role in the international battle against crime. It owes its existence to the so called principle of Territoriality of Criminal Law, according to which a State will not apply its penal statutes to acts committed outside its own boundaries except where the protection of special national interests is at stake. In view of the solidarity of nations in the repression of criminality, however, a State, though refusing to impose direct penal sanctions to offences committed abroad, is usually willing to cooperate otherwise in bringing the perpetrator to justice lest he goes unpunished. We may wait for good news from India.

The writer is a columnist of The Daily Star.

# China's Arab March

## CHINA SERIES



MINGHAO ZHAO

Jinping called upon his Arab counterparts to upgrade their strategic relationships with China, by deepening bilateral cooperation in areas ranging from finance and energy to space technology. This reflects China's broader goal -- established partly in response to America's "pivot" toward Asia -- of rebalancing its strategic focus westward, with an emphasis on the Arab world.

Of course, economic ties between China and Arab countries have been growing stronger for more than a decade, with the trade volume increasing from \$25.5 billion in 2004 to \$238.9 billion in 2013. China is now the Arab world's second-largest trading partner, and the largest trading partner for nine Arab countries. Within ten years, the volume of China-Arab trade is expected to reach \$600 billion. Engineering contracts and investment have also enhanced ties.

Under Xi's leadership, China is attempting to reshape its relationships with Arab countries according to its new "march west" strategic framework. The most notable component of this strategy is the "Silk Road economic belt," which is to run along the ancient Central Asian Silk Road and the modern maritime Silk Road -- an initiative that Xi promoted heavily at the recent meeting in Beijing.

This effort highlights China's goal of establishing hub-and-spoke relationships with key developing economies around it. To this end, Prime Minister Li Keqiang has proposed an economic corridor linking China to Pakistan, and has spoken of other corridors running through Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar.

Unsurprisingly, energy has been a key factor in economic ties with the Arab world. From 2004 to 2013, China's crude oil imports from Arab countries grew by more than 12% annually, on average, reaching 133 million tons per year. And China's "march west" strategy furthers its goal of safeguarding access to these resources. As the director of the State Council's Development Research Center, Li Wei, pointed out in February, at the current rate, China will be consuming 800 million tons of oil annually, and importing 75% of its petroleum, by 2030.

THE growing bloodshed in Iraq and Syria are being watched as keenly in China as anywhere else in the world. Indeed, the greater Middle East is becoming an ever greater focus of Chinese foreign policy.

At the just-concluded sixth ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, held in Beijing, Chinese President Xi

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In this sense, China's trajectory contrasts sharply with that of the United States, where the rapid growth in output of shale oil and gas, together with energy-saving measures, has brought energy independence closer than ever -- a point that President Barack Obama emphasised in his most recent State of the Union address. In fact, according to the US Energy Information Administration, China surpassed the US as the world's largest net oil importer earlier this year.

Moreover, the US is gradually disengaging strategically from the greater Middle East, creating a vacuum that China seeks to fill. To succeed, China will need to become more attentive to the region's complex dynamics; find creative ways to participate in conflict-resolution efforts; and respond enthusiastically to Middle Eastern governments' growing desire to connect to Asia.

Doing so would enable China's leaders to advance their goal of developing the country's vast inland regions. Specifically, western provinces like Ningxia and Qinghai, which have substantial Muslim communities, could benefit from deeper links with Arab economies.

Enhanced influence in the Arab world would also promote the perception of China as a leader of the developing world -- a position that could boost China's strategic and economic resilience considerably. For starters, it would enable China to capitalise on the demographic heft of the developing world, which will house more than 80% of the world's population in 2020. Moreover, it would allow China to maximise its gains from burgeoning trade among developing economies, which surged from 8% of global trade in 1990 to 24% in 2011.

To be sure, not all Arab governments are welcoming China with open arms. Indeed, many of the Middle East's most powerful actors -- including Turkey and Saudi Arabia -- are suspicious of China's long-term intentions.

But China can take steps to gain these countries' trust. For example, China's leaders should work to address the unrest in the Muslim-dominated province of Xinjiang more effectively.

Clearly, China's rising clout is no longer confined to Asia. China's "march west" into the Arab world is a bold effort to translate its economic might into enduring regional -- and, ultimately, global -- influence. This is a daunting task, but it is one that can not only help to secure China's long-term future, but perhaps bring greater weight to bear in resolving the region's immense challenges.

The writer, a research fellow at the Charhar Institute, a Chinese foreign-policy think tank, is also an adjunct fellow with the Center for International and Strategic Studies at Peking University and the executive editor of China International Strategy Review.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## Media shouldn't be silent in Pallabi killings

I am surprised to see that the recent carnage at Bihari camp at Pallabi in Mirpur has not been given enough media attention. We all should raise our voice against these brutal killings. In such cases, we should not keep quiet because the victims are not one of 'us'. So I request the newspapers to publish follow-up reports on this serious matter.

Shahin Huq

One e-mail

## A voice of conscience gone silent

Sardar Fazlul Karim passed away on June 15, 2014. Being a student of Dhaka University, I always feel proud of some erudite personalities of our university, and Sardar Fazlul Karim sir was one of them. He was a voice of conscience and reason. He has left his earthly body to meet his eternal life. His death is an irrecoverable loss for us. I pray for the peace of his departed soul.

Kamrunnahar Shapla

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## Their captors should not go unpunished

This refers to the report, "Abducted by Somali pirates, 7 sailors freed after 3 ½ years" (June 8). It is good news that the Bangladeshi sailors held captive by Somali pirates have been freed. The navies of various nations are patrolling the Gulf of Aden and have managed to bring down the attacks by Somali pirates. What is needed to be done is to destroy their bases on Somali coast using armed drones and also by commando action. Why this has not been done till now is surprising. Ransoms have been paid in the past by different nations to have their captured sailors freed.

It is surprising that the United Nations has not passed a resolution authorising a combined global action to root out piracy. Powerful navies of different nations should attack the bases of Somali pirates in their own land and root out piracy once and for all.

Deendayal M. Lulla

One e-mail

## Comments on news report, "It's poorly planned," published on June 17, 2014

### Mofi

A serious lack of coordination between the departments of the government! Now suddenly why the agriculture ministry sings in a different tune? Look at their statement: "Even, formalin is soluble. If one washes the fruits before consumption, it is free of danger". Now, what is the scientific proof of this statement? Can the government publish a circular on that? Why is formalin not used in other countries? Where on earth will you find traders spraying formalin into raw fish?

### Afrina Khanam

You are right. What a sarcasm! They are thinking about the interest of farmers, businessmen and others, but not about the health hazards! Why would there be a minimum level of formalin? What is it worth? The food items have to be formalin-free and capital punishment should be imposed for contaminating fruits with formalin.

### Akhtar Shah

Blind leading the blind!

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## "Tarique believes in wrong history" (June 17, 2014)

### Mshafiqua

History here has more often been twisted to suit the perspectives of the beneficiaries.

### Hafeejul Alam

It's really funny as to how the second most important person of BNP exposes his ignorance about the emergence of Bangladesh as a free country and the sycophants chime in with it!

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## "Shakib at it again" (June 16, 2014)

### Nasrullah Khan

It is unfortunate that a cricket star could be involved in such a scuffle before the open gallery. Obviously, he could not resist his anger. Shakib could have handled the situation with the help of police, as eve-teasing should not go unpunished. Unfortunately, the news media has flashed his unworthy behaviour without censoring the teasers or the law-enforcers as they failed to take action against them. Hopefully, it will not distract Shakib's attention from the coming matches.