



This Bailey bridge at Rajoir upazila of Madaripur on Dhaka-Barisal highway partially collapsed two days ago, but the authorities concerned were yet to have it fixed. Vehicles are still using the bridge, risking accidents and further collapse. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

China warns citizens to avoid Philippines

AFP, Manila

China yesterday warned its nationals to avoid visiting the Philippines, citing a foiled bomb plot against the Chinese embassy in Manila and the danger of criminal gangs.

"Given the worsened security situation in the Philippines, the consular department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urges Chinese citizens not to travel to the Philippines for the time being," a ministry statement said.

The warning came after three men were arrested last week over an alleged plot to bomb the Chinese embassy, the international airport and the business premises of ethnic Chinese tycoons.

In Beijing, foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying yesterday urged the Philippine government to do more to protect Chinese citizens.

Aside from the alleged bomb plot, Hua cited "criminal gangs" who had targeted Chinese citizens and businesses.

Philippine Justice Secretary Leila de Lima said last week that the bomb plot may be linked to a fringe politician who had been involved in a string of anti-Chinese protests.

However the Philippine military dismissed the alleged bomb plot, calling the fringe politician a crank who posed no real danger and saying his "bombs" were merely firecrackers.

Police arrested him but then quickly released him.

Diplomatic relations between China and the Philippines have been extremely tense in recent years due to a dispute over competing territorial claims in the South China Sea.

In response to the travel warning, the Philippine foreign ministry released a statement saying it had been

liaising with Chinese diplomats to ease their concerns.

Many foreign governments warn their nationals to avoid large parts of the southern Philippines due to the threats of kidnapping, however there are no blanket advisories similar to China's to avoid the entire country.

The travel warning was released just before reports emerged that armed men abducted an 18-year-old Chinese man on the strife-torn southern island of Mindanao late on Thursday.

Local police spokesman Senior Inspector Leo Castillo said the gunman had not been identified but it was believed to be another case of kidnapping for ransom, a common crime in the south committed by Muslim rebels.

Castillo said the parents of the abductee, a store manager, were Chinese nationals.

Dutch say need to know MH17 missile launch site to prosecute

AFP, Rotterdam

Dutch prosecutors said yesterday they need to know where a missile that may have shot down flight MH17 was fired from in eastern Ukraine before criminal charges could be laid.

"When we know from where it was fired, then we can find out who controlled that area," and possibly prosecute, Dutch chief investigator Fred Westerbeke told journalists in Rotterdam.

"The most likely scenario was that the plane was shot down from the ground," he said.

Dutch authorities have taken the lead in the criminal probe into what brought down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over conflict-torn Ukraine on July 17, killing all 298 on board, most of them Dutch.

Westerbeke said that they had not yet obtained US satellite photos of areas from which a missile might have been launched.

"We will get them," Westerbeke said, adding that it was a "long process".

An initial report by a Dutch air safety probe into the crash released on Tuesday said that the plane was struck by numerous "high-energy objects".

Home ministry

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The Daily Star, said he was "unaware" of any such allegation. He rather advised the reporter to talk with Additional Home secretary (political) Kamal Uddin Ahmed.

Kamal Uddin Ahmed said his ministry had no information regarding the Jamaat-Saradha connection, and so there was no question of communicating with India over the issue.

According to sources, following an Indian media report at the end of last month, an influential minister of Bangladesh asked top officials of an intelligence agency to probe the allegation.

The agency then shared the matter with the Indian authorities, the sources claimed.

The Jamaat, however, in a statement brushed aside the allegation, terming it baseless and politically motivated.

The scam, in which the Saradha Group allegedly conned thousands of investors out of crores, is being probed by India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate.

On September 9, the Enforcement Directorate questioned Ahmed Hassan Imran in Kolkata in connection with the allegation, which the lawmaker denies.

The Trinamool MP was executive editor of a Bengali newspaper "Kalom". He owned the newspaper before selling his shares to the Saradha group for Rs 2 lakh, sources said.

Also as part of the probe, CBI yesterday arrested famous Assamese singer

Sadananda Gogoi.

The agency sources said Gogoi was allegedly acting as a conduit for arrested Saradha Chairman Sudipta Sen in the scam and lured influential people using his contacts.

With this arrest, a total of 10 persons have been nabbed by CBI in connection with the scam. They include former West Bengal director general of police and Trinamool Congress leader Rajat Majumdar.

A leading lawyer from Odisha also came under CBI scanner, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Yesterday, Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh said the law would take its own course in the investigation.

"Law will take its own course and the government will not interfere in the probe", Singh told the media when a journalist asked him about news reports linking Saradha fund with the Trinamool MP and Jamaat.

On Thursday, a senior leader of Bharatiya Janata Party told journalists that West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool chief had funded Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh.

Mamata sent money taken from the scam-tainted Saradha Group to the outfit in exchange for its help to influence voters in Bengal and win elections, alleged BJP leader Siddhartha Nath Singh.

He added that certain newspapers both in Bangladesh and India had reported the issue, adds The Hindu.

2 siblings

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entered his house in the absence of the victims' parents around 11:30pm on Thursday, Morelganj police Officer-in-Charge Md Aslam Khan quoted the siblings' grandmother Rawshan Ara Begum as saying.

Afterwards, Rawshan drank "juice" given by Bachchu making her unconscious, he said.

When Rawshan regained her consciousness yesterday noon she did not find any of her grandchildren, Aslam said.

Locals noticed the bodies floating in the enclosure, he said.

The bodies were sent to Bagerhat Government Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police is conducting drives to arrest Bachchu who has been on the run since the incident.

11 Shibir activists

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yesterday, seeking a seven-day remand for each of them, said Hathazari police, adding that the court fixed Sunday for hearing on the remand.

At least 15 CU teachers were injured when Shibir activists allegedly hurled crude bombs at two buses carrying them near the campus Wednesday.

Shbir men under the banner of general students have been observing an indefinite strike since August 31 demanding that two CU dormitories, which were closed earlier following violence, be reopened.

Pistorius guilty

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Pistorius was also convicted of firing a pistol under the table of a packed Johannesburg restaurant but cleared of two other firearms charges -- illegal possession of ammunition and firing a pistol out of the sun-roof of a car.

Culpable homicide -- South Africa's equivalent to manslaughter -- carries up to 15 years in prison but, given Pistorius's lack of previous convictions, he could avoid a custodial sentence altogether, legal experts said.

Masipa set sentencing for October 13 and granted a bail extension.

JP drama

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Speaking at the rally, JP Secretary General Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu said the collaborators of the BNP-Jamaat and war criminals tried to split the party but they won't succeed as the partymen are united under the leadership of Ershad.

"JP leaders and activists will not accept any other leadership in the party except Ershad," he said.

Ranga holds the local government and rural development portfolio as the state minister while Tajul is the opposition chief whip in parliament.

Following their removal from the highest policymaking body of the JP, the two were about to start a scuffle with Bablu during the Maghrib prayers break at the Jatiya Sangsad lobby on Thursday.

The main opposition JP has been facing a serious conflict after the January 5 polls, centring on its participation in the cabinet and the selection of the deputy opposition leader.

Though Ershad on several occasions said that his party would quit the cabinet, most JP lawmakers including Tajul and Ranga, who are loyal to opposition leader Raushan Ershad, outright rejected the proposition and criticised Ershad for this.

Later in an interview with a private television channel at night, Ranga said he would have resigned from his post if Ershad had asked him to do so.

Terming the decision of his removal unexpected, he said it's the JP chief who had given him the honour and then taken it away.

Rejecting the possibility of changing party, Ranga said he would rather quit politics than join some other organisation.

Meanwhile, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the JP is now faced with a dilemma. "An octogenarian leader, Ershad will have to undergo an acid test," UNB reports.

Asked if the ruling Awami League played any role in this dilemma, he said the AL enjoys two-thirds majority in parliament that is needed to pass any law.

"So, why would the Awami League take part in the game of splitting the Jatiya Party?" Quader told reporters at the site of an under-construction bridge in Manikganj's Singair.

10 attackers

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An address she gave to the United Nations general assembly in July last year, in which she vowed she would never be silenced, earned a standing ovation.

Malala rose to prominence in 2009, aged 11, with a blog for the BBC Urdu service chronicling life under Taliban rule in the Swat valley where she lived.

In east Ukraine, suspicions of truce run deep

AFP, Novokaterynivka

The rotting body of a Ukrainian soldier lies bent double in a field-side ditch, flies swarming on the camouflage jacket that covers his head, an exposed and mottled leg the only sign this was once a human being.

A week after the ceasefire between government forces and pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine came into effect, and two weeks since his death, the soldier's body has only now been freed from the power lines 10 metres (30 feet) overhead.

His removal by two electricity workers is hardly a sign of things returning to normal, with the debris of war still littering the streets of Novokaterynivka, a village about 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of the main insurgent stronghold of Donetsk.

Suspicion of the fragile truce is running deep among locals and insurgents.

A local official, who declined to be identified, dismisses rumours the soldier was hung up by the separatists, and says he became tangled in the overhead wiring after he was blown out of his tank, the wreckage of which lies in the road.

She has come to collect his documents so he can be identified -- but confronted with the stinking corpse she tells AFP she has no gloves and leaves.

Locals say the village was the scene of fierce fighting at the end of August as Ukrainian troops came under attack when the rebels -- reportedly backed by elite Russian troops -- swept south.

"It was very scary, we spent three days in the basement," says 22-year-old student Anastasia Moroz who is working in a half-bare local store. "The neighbour's house was hit by artillery and blown to pieces."

On the other side of the village from the dead soldier, military vehicles lie gutted amid the litter of spent bullets, RPG casings and camouflage clothing.

A gas mask sits in the dirt, its lenses cracked, alongside an unused military-issue medical pouch containing a blood-clotting agent.

Passing cars -- and even bicycles -- carry small white flags tied to their aerials.

Further south, past a number of checkpoints where insurgents check documents -- often apologising for the inconvenience -- is the area's main town of Komsomolske.

17 arrested

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caught the applicants in 11 exam centres in the capital.

The authorities filed four cases, implicating 10 of the detainees, and more cases were under the process of filing, the chief security officer told The Daily Star at 1:00am today.

A total of 80,442 candidates appeared at the test for 1,640 seats

under "Ka" unit yesterday.

During the "Ga" unit admission test on the previous Friday, seven cheaters were held. Last year, the total number was 17.

Earlier, detained students said they received answers from some people involved in private coaching institutions, with whom they had made spoken deals for a few lakh taka.

'Ex-AL MP's men'

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some shops were set up in kitchen market on the footpath yesterday.

When Shabu and others went there to observe the situation, a group of 20 to 25 supporters of Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin suddenly attacked them, Arman said.

Haji Selim along with his associates visited Shabu at DMCH yesterday afternoon.

Mohibullah, sub-inspector of Lalbagh Police Station, said injured

Shabu's close associates damaged the newly built shops at the site around 5:00pm yesterday.

Following the incident, police detained a woman named Bristi, 23, on the charge of working as an informer of the attackers, he said.

When contacted, Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin told The Daily Star that he did not know who attacked Shabu and others.

He also said he was not involved in the "politics of terrorism".

UN begins food aid

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feed as many as 120,000 people over the next six months at a cost of \$15 million.

"The fighting in the last few months primarily in the cities of Lugansk and Donetsk and surrounding areas has significantly disrupted access to food and basic services," explained Carlo Scaramella, WFP deputy regional director in eastern Europe.

"While many have remained, thousands of other families have fled their homes at short notice, often without anything even for the journey," he said in the statement.

Since the beginning of September, WFP and its partners have already distributed 10,000 daily food rations, or enough to feed 2,000 people for five

days, it said.

The organisation aims to rapidly increase its reach, and said it expects by the end of the month to be able to deliver 90,000 daily rations, or enough to feed 18,000 people for five days.

WFP said it was mainly helping people displaced from their homes suffering from serious medical conditions, along with pregnant women, nursing mothers, the elderly and large, vulnerable families.

More than 310,000 people have been internally displaced inside Ukraine since the conflict erupted in April, WFP said, citing official numbers from the UN refugee agency, and stressing that the actual number "may be at least double that".

Female manpower export

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Association (BOMSA).

"It explains why they do not receive high salary compared to their three other competitors abroad," said an official of BOMSA.

However, they are now contributing substantially to the country's remittances, the second biggest foreign currency earning sector. But the BMET statistics fail to give the actual figure of their contribution.

Despite some incidents of their harassment which were reported both in local and international media, female workers are now being encouraged to go abroad.

Marzina Akter, who hails from Chapainawabganj, has been working as a domestic help in Jordan for over two years now.

"After the death of my husband seven year ago, I started working first in my hometown and later in Dhaka. But I couldn't save up enough to run my family. That's why I have chosen to work abroad," she told The Daily Star over the phone.

With a monthly salary worth around Tk 18,000, Marzina now hopes to ensure a better future for her 12-year-old daughter who is studying in class six at a school in Chapainawabganj.

"Although I face some problems here, I am pleased with my current job because it has encouraged me to move

ahead with my life," she added.

Foreign jobs thus have come as a blessing for many Bangladeshi females to be self-reliant and equal wage earners in their families. They, however, do not get necessary services from the government to establish their rights in their workplaces.

Bangladeshi females, in most cases, have to work for long hours -- from 14 to 18 hours a day, and their employers often impose restrictions upon their mobile communication with families and receiving salaries, according to BOMSA.

Migration analysts hailed the government's success in expanding the labour markets for female jobseekers, but they demand the government ensure their protection from abuse and harassment.

"Female migrant workers enjoy little freedom in their workplaces. Besides, they sometimes face torture from either their agents or their employers. The government must address these issues," said Sumaiya Akter, director of BOMSA.

She also put emphasis on proper skills training facilities for female migrant workers.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Secretary Khondaker Showkat Hossain said safe homes would be set up for female workers in their destination countries to ensure better services for them.

Shops removed

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Tejgaon police also share the toll collected from the traders.

Locals and traders said one "Commander Siraj" used to sit in the office regularly and was the leader of the toll collectors.

The tin-shed office had a signboard that read: "Bangladesh Railway Community Police". It also claimed the organisation was approved by the Government Railway Police (GRP).

During a visit in the evening, this correspondent found the signboard was taken down. But it was not clear who removed it.

Asked why the office was not knocked down, railway Director General Tafazzal Hossain said he did not know.

"If the office really belongs to the

community police, we will not demolish it. But if it is not, we will take it down," he added.

Nurunnabi Kabir, railway divisional officer who led the drive, said he was unaware of any such office. "If there is any illegal establishment, we will pull it down in the next drive."

The drive also spared several hundred shanties on both sides of the track as there is a High Court order against their demolition, he added.

Meanwhile, a number of traders said Siraj tried to extort money from them even on Thursday night and threatened them with consequences for not paying him.

They also alleged they were not given time to remove their goods and belongings and that the drive cost them dearly.

They did not remove those as Siraj

on Thursday night assured them that their shops would not be affected in the drive.

Billal Hossain is among those most affected. He had a motor workshop, Billal Automobiles, opposite the Karwan Bazar wholesale fish market. Two cars that came for repair were badly damaged in the drive.

"I wanted to shift all my belongings, including the vehicles, on Thursday night, but did not do so following assurances by Siraj," he said, adding that he lost goods worth Tk 20 lakh to the drive.

Billal has no idea what he will tell the owners of the two cars when they come to take back their vehicles.

Contacted, rail authorities said they asked the traders on Thursday and again yesterday morning to remove their belongings.