

TEMPORARY SHELTERS FOR MIGRANTS Thailand to use two islands

THE NATION/ANN

The prime minister of Thailand has ordered a survey of two unpopulated islands off Ranong Province with a view to using those as temporary holding centres for detained Rohingyas.

Sources familiar with the matter yesterday identified the islands as Kangkao and Kam Yai, which are under the care of the Department of National Parks.

In a bid to cope with the unabated issue of illegal migrants, the government is finding suitable places to be used as temporary holding centres for Rohingyas and other migrants, but will avoid setting up permanent centres, according to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

In response to the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) proposal to establish a multi-country working

group to tackle the Rohingya and other migrant issues in this region, he said Thailand's policy was to ensure that illegal migrants were safely repatriated.

According to the premier, the government has no budget to pay for the cost of sheltering more illegal migrants as there are still over 100,000 refugees in the country at nine detention centres.

However, he said Thailand would work with other countries in the region to address this issue.

A regional conference on migration and human trafficking problems will be hosted by Thailand on May 29 and will feature senior officials from 15 Indian Ocean countries and other nations.

In addition, police will attend a conference in Bali this weekend where human trafficking issues will be discussed by 16 Interpol member countries.

Varsity student killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A private university student was killed in a road accident at Jora Amtol in Sitakunda upazila last night.

The dead, Niaz Morshed, was a fifth semester student of Electrical and Electronic Engineering department of International Islamic University, Chittagong. He hailed from Satkania upazila.

A vehicle, which could not be identified immediately, hit Niaz while he was crossing Dhaka-Chittagong highway around 7:15pm. He died on the spot, said Dulal Hossain, a sub-inspector of Sitakunda Police Station.

When the news spread to the university campus in Kumira, Sitakunda, fellow students came to the spot and blocked the highway for around 15 minutes, the police official said.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, he added.

Tk 97,000cr

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chaired the meeting, increased the allocation by Tk 4,500, said Kamal.

Termining this a historic allocation, the minister said the ADP size has now exceeded the Tk 1,00,000 crore mark whereas it was only Tk 23,300 crore when the Sheikh Hasina-led government came to power six years back.

Asked if such an ambitious ADP could be realised at all, Kamal said: "I hope it will be implemented."

Every year, a large ADP is taken up and then slashed in the revised budget. However, at the end of the year, the government always fail to fully implement it.

For example, in FY 2013-14, the original ADP size was Tk 65,872 crore but it was cut down to Tk 60,000 crore in the revised budget.

At the end of the year, Tk 56,913 crore could be spent, according to the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

The Finance Division data shows the expenditure was even less -- Tk 51,999 crore.

This time, the planning minister said, "special measures" will be taken from the very first day of the fiscal year for full implementation of the ADP.

There are many "missing areas" in realising the ADP, he said.

For example, Kamal said, there are many projects, only 1-2 percent of which are left to be completed. But the project directors intentionally delay the completion by adding more components to the projects, for their own benefits.

"These malpractices will be stopped from next fiscal year," he asserted.

Sixty-four percent of the upcoming ADP will be implemented through own financing, the planning ministry proposed.

The transport sector will get the highest allocation -- more than 20 percent of the ADP -- with Tk 7,400 crore set aside for the Padma Bridge project alone.

In the current FY, Tk 8,100 crore was allocated to the project but Tk 2,000 crore of this is likely to remain unutilised, a planning ministry official said.

A total of 998 projects have been approved in the new ADP, with 857 unapproved ones kept under consideration.

The ADP keeps aside another 368 projects, the implementations of which are subject to availability of foreign fund.

Moreover, 40 projects have been mentioned in the ADP for implementation under Public-Private Partnership.

BSF again kills

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upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Antor Islam, 27, son of Aminur Islam of Railway Colony Para in Patgram upazila headquarters. The injured, Raju Islam, 28, son of Mahidul Islam in the same area, was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Some six to seven Bangladeshi cattle traders, including Antor and Raju, along with some cattle were returning home from India through the border around 4:30am, according to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

A patrol team of Changrabandha BSF camp in Cooch Behar district opened fire on the cattle traders. Antor died on the spot and Raju suffered bullet injuries. The others managed to escape.

The BSF men also took the body of Antor to their camp.

Lt Col Ahmed Bajlur Rahman Hayati, commanding officer of Lalmonirhat 15 BGB Battalion, said the BGB had sent a letter to its Indian counterpart, protesting the killing.

After a flag meeting in the afternoon, the BSF handed over the body to Bangladesh police last night.

The vibrant Tanguar Haor Ex-AL lawmaker

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ing of 20th April when I boarded a canoe, 12 feet by 3, which can support at least three heavy persons like me. As the whole of the Tanguar Haor has been imprisoned by embankments to protect the paddy crops from flash floods and excessive unseasonal rains, our canoe had to be dragged over one of the embankments at Golabari and then led into the haor proper.

I had normal full-sleeve, field wear but as we entered the lake proper, the weather turned inclement. The wind that went wild and formed lots of waves in the water made us shiver and the canoe wobbly. When I was putting on additional layers of clothes to prevent myself from catching cold, the boatman, a lad from the local village, possibly had no clue as to how to ride through the waves. I had to take over and direct the boat facing the wind and the waves at the same time, leading the boat to a shelter of reeds and other water loving shrubby plants not more than 200 metres from us.

When we were struggling to avoid the wavy centre of the haor and were rather fearful of dropping the cameras and other gadgets into the water, we were amazed to see a tight flock of over 1,000 ducks of various sizes, shapes and colours were virtually dancing in sync with the swings of the waves.

I wasted no time to take photographs of the flock from one end to the other so that I can identify them later when we reach our main boat safely. Possibly realizing our precarious positions on a small boat, the flock decided to take off. This gave me a chance to take some running shots although the sky was overcast and we were expecting the rain any time.

The ducks landed just a few hundred metres away in the direction of the boat. By that time the boat had reached within few metres of an island with reeds and thickets. As our canoe touched the island, a pair of Pati Hansh (Spot-billed Ducks) flew off producing quite a ruckus like the domesticated ducks. They too landed not far from us. I had a kind of feeling that the pair had a nest on the island. As we had no intention of disturbing any animal, we left the area and kept moving.

In one bend of the haor, there were over two dozen Kalim or Kaim (Purple Swamphen) that earlier used to be called Purple Moorhen. These birds are also possibly breeding because a large number of them visit the haor during the winter migration time when a few hundreds that stay back are thought to be permanent residents of the Tanguar Haor where they breed. They were all busy with their morning feeding bouts, trying to dry their wings that got wet from last night's heavy rain with bolts of thunder and hail storms.

We came across flocks of Little Cormorant or Paankauri. They were too busy gathering fish swimming underwater when almost all ducks were dabbling to fetch food from under the surface of the water. We did not see any diving duck at that time.

When deeply engaged in taking

snapshots of ducks, almost suddenly all birds scurried for covers. Before I could guess what happened, I saw an immature Kura or Pallas's or Ring-tailed Fish Eagle flying past our canoe. I realised the reason behind all the commotion because it feeds entirely on other birds of the haor. Kura is a winter-breeding migrant and at least 4 pairs are known to breed around the Tanguar Haor every year. Once the breeding is over, both the young and the old depart for high hills, possibly in the neighbouring territories of India and Myanmar. Sometimes one or two immature ones fail to keep pace with their parents and keep the Tanguar Haor as its summer home. Therefore, it is not unlikely to see stray Kuras in this and other haors of the Greater Sylhet District.

Several Shankhachil or Brahminy Kite were busy sky-diving and swooping on unsuspected fishes that surfaced to some oxygen from the open air. Some were also contented with the dead fish floating in the vast stretches of the haor water.

Most ducks and larger birds even did not take notice of the Shankhachils as they are only fish-eaters.

However, Golabari villagers complained that Shankhachils sometimes snatch their hens and ducklings. But they seemed to be living with it and did not show much anger towards this and other birds of prey. Luckily the Kurus, which breed permanently on a tree in this village, are not known to attack ducks kept by the villagers.

After nearly an hour of boat ride through rough water, we reached much calmer beels laden with Trapa or Singra plants, water lilies and lotuses.

Most welcoming were dozens of Gangchil or Whiskered Tern that are known to breed along the banks of the haor. There also appeared a few Chhoto Gangchil or Little Tern that fly more like a butterfly than a bird.

As we were approaching low water ranges of the haor, we started coming across herons and egrets giving company to buffalos grazing and wallowing in muddy knee-deep water. We found all three white egrets, the Great White, Intermediate and Little Egrets as well as the Kanibok or Pond Heron which is abundant throughout the country. Jungle Mynas and Black Drongos never miss an opportunity to ride on the backs of the grazing animals and pick up insects that disturb them. Once in a while crows may join the foray.

Time was ticking out for us to move towards the shore as we were supposed to have our meal in the new boat house built by a local enthusiast Bellal who spent over 6 lakh takas over this which is equipped with solar power for running laptop and charging all cell phones.

It had high commodes with water coming out of a plastic drum placed at a high stool nearby.

My short sojourn proved that the Tanguar haor is vibrant in all seasons whether it is winter or not.

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Shamarukh's father Nurul Islam, also the plaintiff of the case, against the probe report.

Talking to The Daily Star, Islam said the investigating officer (IO) of the case didn't visit the crime scene and also didn't take into cognisance the issues raised in the case statement.

According to postmortem reports, Shamarukh committed suicide and there was no injury marks on her body. The autopsies were done at Dhaka Medical College and Jessore Sadar Hospital.

The physician in her diary wrote that she would commit suicide. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) confirmed that the handwriting was of Shamarukh's.

Musnshi Ruhul Kuddus, assistant superintendent of police in CID and also the IO of the case, submitted the probe report to the court on March 24, clearing all the three accused of the charge.

The IO in the report said he collected two autopsy reports and seized a diary of the deceased. He also recorded statements of several people and scrutinised relevant documents. The evidence didn't support the charge against the accused, he added.

Nurul Islam had filed the murder case with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing Humayun Sultan Shahdat and his parents of the murder. The three are now on bail.

The plaintiff in the case statement complained that the accused tortured Shamarukh to death and later hanged her from the window of her apartment.

Cheated

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were turned down every time.

They also went to the Bangladesh high commission in Brunei to get the issues resolved. On its intervention, the employer agreed to give them the day offs but was not ready to increase their salaries.

"We had to work for 15 to 16 hours every day. When the company denied hiking our salary, we requested it to send us back home. But the company refused to do it as well," said Ramjan, another returnee, who hails from Brahmanbaria.

On April 5, the Bangladeshis quit the job and requested the Bangladesh mission to arrange their repatriation, he added.

Then, the high commission arranged the air tickets to send them back home. Yesterday, each of them was given Tk 5000 from the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund of the expatriates' welfare ministry.

The ministry has decided to investigate the workers' allegations against the two agencies, said Golam Mustafa Khan, a director of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training.

None of the agencies could be reached over the phone for comments.

10 die on ferry of death

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A group of women wearing headscarves who were huddled on the deck cried as reporters approached, one AFP correspondent said, many with young children and toddlers in their arms.

"My children are sick and we haven't had anything to eat for a week," a mother of four who gave her first name as Sajida shouted out.

The words "We are Myanmar Rohingyas" were daubed in English on a black flag tethered to the wooden boat, while a large tarpaulin had been erected to protect the stricken and weak migrants from the blazing tropical sun.

Initially there was no immediate sign of Thai authorities who have apparently been scouring the area for a number of vessels laden with migrants adrift in the area.

Eventually a Thai Navy helicopter dropped food packages into the sea and was later joined by other boats.

Desperate scenes followed as several emaciated men jumped into the sea to retrieve the packages, one of them eating handfuls of raw instant noodles in the water before swimming back to the boat.

Rights groups fear hundreds, possibly thousands, of Rohingyas have been cast adrift on rickety boats in the Andaman Sea in recent days, abandoned by smuggling gangs spooked by a belated crackdown on the thriving people-smuggling trade in southern Thailand.

Both the UN's refugee agency and the International Organization for Migration have called for a coordinated search and rescue effort, something regional nations have so far resisted.

Instead Malaysia and Indonesia have vowed to bar boats bearing desperate migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh after nearly 2,000 boatpeople were rescued or swum to shore earlier this week.

A Malaysian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, yesterday told AFP that two vessels carrying a combined 600 migrants had been turned away.

Thailand has long practised a policy of encouraging migrants to continue their journeys towards Malaysia.

"They want to go to Malaysia but the ship has no engine, it was scuttled by their broker," Navy Lieutenant Commander Veerapong Nakprasit said, referring to the latest vessel. "We will send a technician to fix the engine so they can go to their destination."

Major General Sunsern Kaewkumnerd, a junta spokesman, said Prime Minister Chan-O-Cha had

The town

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symbolic of the status of the social networking site locally.

Jun, home to 3,500 people, is believed to be the first town worldwide to adopt Twitter as the dominant method of communication between local government and residents. For the past four years, it has acted as the town's community noticeboard: sharing obituaries, news, school-dinner menus. Residents use the social-networking site to report crime, problems with civic services and to book doctors' appointments.

The mayor chats to residents in messages of 140 characters or fewer, while all public offices have an official account and police vehicles have @PoliciaJun painted on their bonnets. Now researchers at the Laboratory for Social Machines at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab are studying the town, to see if social networking holds the key to improved public services on a wider scale.

Rodríguez Salas -- or @Joseantoniojun as he's known by his 330,000 followers -- describes Twitter as "the social network of our immediate society", enabling efficient responses to problems.

been made aware of the boat.

He said Thailand was willing to provide humanitarian assistance but if the migrants aim for Thailand they will be treated as "illegal immigrants".

"The refugees want to go to a third country," he said, adding that Navy officials expected the engine to be fixed later yesterday.

Thailand has launched a crackdown to disrupt people smuggler networks since the discovery of dozens of bodies in abandoned camps along regular trafficking routes.

As many as 8,000 migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar are believed by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to be stranded at sea.

People smugglers are reportedly refusing to land their boats because they do not want to follow their usual route through Thailand since the government's campaign against them began.

A senior Thai official told Reuters news agency on Wednesday that Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia would all continue to turn the boats away.

9 students

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Omar Faruque of Environmental Science and Resource Management department, Monirul Islam Monir and Ashikur Rahman of Computer Science and Engineering department, Mohaimenul Kaiyum and Omar Faruque of Textile Engineering department, M A Ahad Khan and Babu Kishor of Information and Communication Technology department, and Saidur Rahman of Criminology and Police Science department.

A five-member body headed by Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, was also formed to probe the Wednesday's incident, said Khademul.

The university authorities would also file a case in connection with the clash, he added.

Modi's Dhaka Visit

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diplomatic source in New Delhi yesterday told this correspondent over the phone that "it [the visit] would be of 36 hours and could take place between June 5 and 7."

"Actually the proposed dates of the visit have not been discussed with Prime Minister Modi. It will be discussed and finalised after his return to India from his ongoing tri-nation visit to China, Mongolia and Korea from May 14-19," he added.

The Indian diplomat said, "We are taking views and ideas on what Dhaka has planned about the visit."

Asked about the possibility of signing the Teesta Water Sharing Agreement during the visit, he said the deal needed "a little more time" to have some groundwork done.

"The Teesta agreement which was prepared in September 2011 has to be modified. Technical committees of India and Bangladesh will start meeting soon to carry out some modifications," he added.

According to diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi, Modi wants to work on a road map to upgrade economic relations with Dhaka and assist Bangladesh in achieving a higher economic growth.

The sources said following the ratification of long-pending Indo-Bangla Land Boundary Agreement in Indian parliament, opportunities had emerged for preparing new grounds for enhancing bilateral ties, especially in the economic sector.

"If such an old issue can be settled, there cannot be any barrier to the way of bolstering ties in the days to come," said a senior official at Bangladesh foreign ministry.



An Evaluation of Monetary Policy in Bangladesh



Apply for Ph.D. Scholarship Opportunities

The Department of Banking & Insurance, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka is conducting a research project entitled "An Evaluation of Monetary Policy in Bangladesh." The project is administered under the Academic Innovation Fund (AIF) of the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh and the HEQEP project of the World Bank. The project is inviting applications for three (03) PhD Researcher vacancies. The overall focus of the research project is the monetary policy of Bangladesh and the PhD researchers are expected to conduct research broadly in three areas: (1) Trade Patterns & Exchange Rates, (2) Monetary Transmission Mechanisms and (3) Independence of Central Bank.

The Scholarships: The selected researchers will be provided with PhD admission in the University of Dhaka as per the university admission rules and regulations. There will be no financial reward from the university or the project for being a researcher of this project.

However, after successful completion of the first year at the University of Dhaka, a researcher will have an opportunity for six to twelve months as a foreign academic resident of Swansea University in the United Kingdom. An academic supervisor of Swansea University will facilitate further work of the PhD research pursuit. In this regard, the project will bear return economy airfare and admissible allowances for a specific period of maximum six months.

Eligibility Criteria: Applicants should fulfill the following requirements:

- Masters degree in Business or Economics;
- Preference will be given to applicants from the academia;
- IELTS Score of 7.0 and above;
- Prior experience of working with statistical softwares such as STATA and/or RATS is preferred; and
- At least one single authored peer reviewed published article.

Documents required with application: Interested applicants are requested to send a sealed envelope containing detailed Curriculum Vitae with names of two referees, copies of certificates and mark sheets, one photograph and a research proposal in less than 2000 words. Only short listed candidates will be contacted for further assessment.

The last date for application is July 26, 2015.

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