

## Pigeon jailed

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It was discovered on Wednesday by a 14-year-old boy whose suspicions were aroused when he spotted a stamped message in Urdu on its tail that read "Tehsil Shakargarh, district Narowal", along with some numbers.

This is an area Pakistan's Punjab province.

The boy ran with the bird to the nearest police post, with officers agreeing that the bird could be up to no good.

They had the avian intruder X-rayed at a veterinary hospital in Pathankot.

Pathankot senior superintendent of police Rakesh Kaushal told The Times of India: "Nothing adverse has been found, but we have kept the bird in our custody."

The bird was listed in police records as a "suspected spy", according to the newspaper.

Earlier this year, ISIS militants reportedly captured at least 15 pigeon breeders in Iraq after deciding it is against Islamic religion to keep birds.

Three of those held by the group in the eastern province of Diyala were reportedly killed, according to a security official.

Abu Abdullah, a farmer, said a total of six gunmen barged into his home and dragged away his 21-year-old son.

Abdullah's son is just one of the 15 young men -- all aged between 16 and 22 -- who have reportedly been captured in the province for breeding birds.

Pigeon breeding is a popular hobby in the region, but it is said to be frowned upon by extremist Islamist fighters because they believe it is a distraction from worshipping Allah.

Abdullah, 52, said he was standing beside his son when ISIS militants stormed the family home and kidnapped his son.

He told NBC News: "I asked them why and they said: 'He is not following the real Islam, he must be punished for being a pigeon breeder. This habit is taking him away from worshipping Allah.'"

"I begged them again to know where are they taking him, what are they going to do to him. They said he is going to be taken to be judged according to the Islamic Sharia.

## Scandal-hit Fifa reelects Blatter

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opinion is crucial if this organisation is to regain its credibility."

Global citizens' movement Avaaz, which started the #BlatterOut campaign, quickly condemned the re-election.

ANALYSIS

If you read most of the world's media, Sepp Blatter's ability to hang on to power at Fifa is nothing short of miraculous.

After years of negative headlines, the frenzy has reached fever pitch in the wake of the US allegations of corruption - even though Blatter himself has not been implicated. And running through all this is a theme - bemusement that much of the football world keeps voting for him.

Nowhere is Sepp Blatter's support stronger than across Asia and Africa. So why do most of the representatives from those two continents appear to be voting for him again?

Here's about as succinct an answer as you're going to get - from the president of the Nigerian Football Federation: "Blatter feels Africa. What Blatter pushes is equity, fairness and equality among the nations."

We're talking about two things - the first is so. Concrete investment, often literally so. The second is respect.

Campaign director Alex Wilks said: "More dirty dealings in Fifa's halls have crushed the hopes of billions of football fans."

But there were congratulations from Russia. The head of the Russian Football Union, Nikolay Tolstoykh told the R-Sport channel Blatter was an "experienced leader" who "understands well the organisation's current problems and sees ways to resolve them".

The vote took place at Fifa's congress in Zurich. In the first round Blatter won 133 to Prince Ali's 73, just short of the 140 votes needed for an outright win.

The two candidates had earlier delivered final appeals to the electors.

The current and former Fifa executives indicted include Rafael Esquivel, Nicolas Leoz, Jeffrey Webb, Jack Warner, Eduardo Li, Eugenio Figueredo and Jose Maria Marin

Prince Ali, 39, said questions had been raised in recent days "about whether our Fifa family is morally bankrupt".

"There are no easy answers and no blame that can be cast that will wash away the stain that marks us all," he said.

Blatter declared: "I am being held accountable for the current storm - so be it, I will shoulder the responsibility.

I will take it upon myself and I want to fix Fifa together with you."

SWISS INQUIRY

Those indicted in the US inquiry are accused of bribery, racketeering and money-laundering involving tens of millions of dollars since 1991.

The aim of the bribes was to influence the outcome of bids to stage football tournaments such as the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and the 2016 Copa America in the US, prosecutors say.

Swiss prosecutors have launched a separate investigation into the bidding process for the World Cup tournaments in 2018 in Russia and 2022 in Qatar.

Many of Fifa's major sponsors, including Coca-Cola, Visa, Adidas, McDonald's, Hyundai Motor and Budweiser, have expressed concern over the investigations.

After Blatter was re-elected, Coca-Cola said in a statement that Fifa "must now seize the opportunity to begin winning back the trust it has lost".

Greg Dyke, the chairman of the English Football Association, told the BBC: "Sepp Blatter has run this organisation for 16 years, and for all of those 16 years, there have been levels of corruption. Sepp Blatter is not the man who is going to be able to change that."

## A dozen deals on the cards

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further strengthen the bilateral cooperation on road, rail, waterways, trade, security, infrastructure and people-to-people contact.

Diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi said the June 6-7 Bangladesh visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open a new chapter in Indo-Bangla ties.

The two countries have decided to sign a MoU on establishing an IT centre in Bangladesh to assist the police in curbing cyber crimes and cyber terrorism, highly placed sources told The Daily Star yesterday.

There will be another MoU for helping the government agencies concerned gather evidence on smuggling of fake Indian currency notes

into India through Nepal and Bangladesh and collect information about the source country.

Under the MoU on IT centre, India will help Bangladesh set up information technology centres to provide training for the police on using modern technologies. The centres will help the law enforcers detect cyber crimes and cyber terrorism activities.

The plan for establishing the IT centres took shape during the Bangladesh visit of a delegation of senior Indian government officials last year.

India in May 2012 had announced that it would help Bangladesh set up IT labs in 64 model schools and IT centres at the Military Institute for Science and Technology, Bangladesh Public

Administration Training Centre and Bangladesh Police Academy.

Under an agreement, Indian agencies will assist their Bangladeshi counterparts in constructing buildings for the use of IT centres. They are also expected to provide all necessary equipment for the centres.

The two neighbours have been working closely on counter-terrorism and cross-border crimes, according to diplomatic sources.

They will sign MoUs on easing visa procedures, including introduction of e-Tourist Visa for Bangladeshis, blue economy, climate change, disaster management and environment. The Jamia Millia Islamia, a central university in New Delhi, will enter a MoU with Dhaka University.

## UN: Myanmar must address 'root causes'

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said all 17 countries at the table had agreed to a document that includes a commitment "to address factors in the areas of (migrants') origin."

Myanmar and Bangladesh, the departure points for thousands of boat people, agreed yesterday to address the "root causes" of a migration crisis at an international meeting in Bangkok, claimed Thailand's foreign ministry.

But critics pilloried a deal that failed to mention the Rohingya minority at the heart of the crisis.

The majority of the migrants are Rohingya Muslims, who are pariahs in Myanmar's Buddhist-majority western Rakhine State, and poor people from neighbouring Bangladesh.

The Thai hosts described the day-long talks as "very constructive", saying all 17 countries at the meeting agreed on a statement to provide humanitarian help to 2,500 migrants believed to still be adrift at sea, as well as to the 3,500 who have already made it to Thai, Malaysian and Indonesian shores since May 1.

The statement also drew a commitment to address the "root causes" and "factors in areas of (migrants') origin", including improving the economy, human rights and security in the source countries.

But the document did not mention the Rohingya -- who Myanmar refuses to recognise as an official minority.

Myanmar denies citizenship to the majority of its 1.3 million Rohingya and calls them "Bengalis" -- shorthand for foreigners from neighbouring Bangladesh.

The publication yesterday of Myanmar's first census in three decades also failed to include the Rohingya in its tally, after authorities refused to count them if they self-identified.

Communal violence in 2012 between Rohingya and the Buddhist majority in Rakhine State brought their plight to the fore.

Bangladesh recognises some 30,000 Rohingya as refugees but tens of thousands more are treated as illegal migrants from Myanmar.

Welcoming the outcome of the meeting, Shahidul Haque, head of the Bangladeshi delegation, told reporters

"we had a very productive discussion today."

But he rejected the notion that Bangladeshis were heading toward Indonesia and Malaysia because of a lack of economic opportunities at home.

He said Bangladesh had been achieving sustained economic growth and hundreds of thousands of people have been lifted out of poverty.

Bangladeshis had left because of the false promises of traffickers, Haque said, calling it a "manifestation of human trafficking at its worst".

"BAND AID ON A GAPING WOUND" Others were less impressed with yesterday's talks, writes AFP.

Charles Santiago, chair of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights and a Malaysian lawmaker, described the meeting as "lots of talk with little genuine substance or resolve to take any action whatsoever."

His group pilloried the meeting for failing to "publicly discuss the persecution of the Rohingya."

Phil Robertson of Human Rights Watch Asia called the talks "a band aid on a gaping wound."

"The Rohingya are not even named in the statement... how can you talk about a people if you don't name them?"

Myanmar's Rohingya are one of the world's most persecuted minorities.

They face restrictions on movement, jobs and family size, while their pariah status means they are unrepresented -- even Myanmar's democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi chooses not to exert her moral authority on their behalf.

The former junta-led quasi-civilian government has balked at any criticism of its treatment of the community and has previously threatened to pull out of the talks altogether if the word Rohingya is used.

Myanmar officials insist that Rohingya are not from Myanmar, and had previously refused to participate in the meetings if the term was used to describe the group.

"It is important to address the reasons that are behind these movements," Turk told CNN on the sidelines of the meeting.

"Some of it is economic depriva-

tion. Some of it is poverty. Some is the fact that there is no legal status attached to them.

"Obviously all those issues will need to be addressed in order to make sure that people do not take dangerous sea voyages across the seas and see it is very crucial that we work on that collectively and constructively with all governments involved."

POLICY OF ABUSE

Rights organisation Human Rights Watch agreed that Myanmar must take steps to change its treatment of Rohingya minority Muslims.

"Myanmar is basically trying to deny responsibility for a rights abusing policy that has sent tens of thousands of people out into the region on boats in desperate situations," Phil Robertson, the group's deputy director, Asia division, told CNN at the meeting.

"What we've seen is ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya people in Myanmar and the government has held no one accountable for that. Myanmar can contest this issue in the meeting, but the world community knows what's happening in Arakan (Rakhine) State and it has to be addressed."

COOPERATION NEEDED

Participants at the Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean largely spoke of the necessity for regional and international cooperation in solving the migrant crisis.

The meeting in Bangkok brought together representatives from south-east Asian nations as well as Australia, New Zealand, Afghanistan and Iran, plus delegates from international organizations such as the UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

Thai Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister General Tanasak Patimapragom said that there were three main aims of the one-day meeting: To protect the migrants currently stranded at sea; to prevent and stop human trafficking and people smuggling; and to address the root causes behind irregular migration -- to improve livelihoods for affected communities.

[CNN, AFP]

## Zia's death

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at Chittagong Circuit House.

Born on January 19 in 1936 at Bagbari of Bogra, Zia was a sector commander during the Liberation War.

He was awarded Bir Uttam, the highest gallantry award for a living officer for his wartime services.

According to a BNP press release, the party flag will be hoisted at half-mast at the party's central office in Naya Paltan and all other party offices across the country today.

Leaders and activists of the party, including its chairperson Khaleda Zia, will offer special prayers and place wreaths at the grave of Zia at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital this morning.

Khaleda will also distribute food among poor people at different spots in the capital.

## Rohingyas left

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authorities," said Vijay Nambiar, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar.

The count has also been criticized after its organizers based it on a list of 135 ethnic groups, which activists and critics say is outdated and inaccurate.

The biggest surprise of the preliminary results from the count released in August was data showing Myanmar's population stood at 51.4 million, some 9 million less than estimates. The full census broadly confirmed it, putting it at 51.5 million.

The results of the census also showed a literacy rate of adults at almost 90 percent. But other data reflected economic mismanagement under the 49 years of military rule, which plummeted the country into poverty, before reforms in 2011.

Only a third of Myanmar's households have electric lights, the infant mortality rate is at 62 per 100,000 live births, and life expectancy stands at just 66.8 years compared to neighbouring Thailand's 74 years, according to World Bank data.

The data on ethnicity and religion, as well as figures on occupation and maternal mortality, will be released next year after the country's general election scheduled for November.

## Gang rapes

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with her co-workers boarded a boat, owned by the company, in the Shitalakhya river to go to her home at Nargana in Kaliganj upazila, said Arif Hossain, an assistant sub-inspector of Kaliganj Police Station.

After all her co-workers got down at Nargana ghat, two people - Al Amin and Fahim -- who worked on the boat, took the boat to a nearby place and then raped the girl. Two others -- Faruk and Sharif -- who worked on another boat, joined the duo and violated the girl, said the police official, quoting the victim.

Hearing her screams, locals rescued the girl on Thursday morning. As per allegations of the girl, police later caught Faruk and Sharif.

Mustafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station, yesterday said a case was filed in this connection. "The girl is now in police custody."

Locals alleged that the evidence of rape would be destroyed as police kept the girl waiting at the police station instead of arranging immediate medical attention.

Only a few days ago, the country was outraged by the gang-rape of a woman, belonging to an indigenous community, in a microbus in the capital's Kuril area.

Prior to this, sexual abuse on women during Pahela Baishakh celebrations at Dhaka University and Jahangirnagar University drew widespread outrage and triggered protests.

## ISIS strikes

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The spokesman had earlier said the car exploded as security officials headed towards it. Other nearby vehicles caught fire.

The blast comes seven days after a May 22 suicide bombing on a Shia mosque in a village in Eastern Province killed 21 people.

ISIS also claimed that attack.

A witness of the latest attack, Nassima al-Sada, said it was carried out by a suicide bomber who blew himself up after security volunteers tried to stop him from entering the ladies side of the mosque -- the only Shia mosque in Dammam.

After last week's attack, residents set up security committees to search those entering mosques during prayers, witnesses said.

Women were not allowed to pray at the mosque this week over security fears, Sada said.

In November, ISIS-linked gunmen killed seven Shiites in the Eastern Province town of Al-Dalwa.

Most of the kingdom's Shia minority live in the oil-rich east but have long complained of marginalisation.

# Fingers crossed in India

Experts say rain on the way as death toll tops 1,800

AGENCIES

The massive heatwave sweeping India has started to ease, officials said yesterday, with forecasts of rain in some affected states as death toll topped 1,800.

Hundreds of mainly poor people die at the height of summer every year in India, but this year's figures are already nearly double the annual average.

Experts say the official figures likely understate the true impact because heatstroke disproportionately affects the poor and homeless, who are less likely to die in hospitals.

Most of the confirmed deaths are in the southern states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, where doctors described hospitals overflowing with victims of severe heatstroke. Nearly 1,700 people have died in the states, officials said.

Clouds have formed over some parts of the two states and weather officials say pre-monsoon showers are likely to provide some relief.

The monsoon is due to reach Kerala, in the south, by the end of May. It will then sweep across the country.

The Andhra Pradesh's top meteorological officer YK Reddy told BBC Hindi that heatwave conditions "have reduced considerably" and temperatures have fallen in all but two districts.

In neighbouring Telangana, where officials say at least 340 people have died from heat-related conditions, temperatures have declined.

"For all practical purposes, the heat wave has now ended in our state," BR Meena, Telangana's disaster management commissioner, told BBC Hindi.

Meanwhile India's public hospitals

are struggling to cope with patients of the heatwave.

"I have been posted here for seven years, but I am feeling a lot of heat this year. We have been seeing a dozen patients of heat wave every day," Dr Ananya of Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Medical Sciences in Andhra Pradesh told the BBC.

Hospitals in the Indian capital Delhi, where temperatures have soared to 45.5C (113.9F) have also seen a large number of patients.

"Hospitals are overflowing with heatstroke victims," Ajay Lekhi, president of the Delhi Medical Association, told AFP news agency.

"Patients are complaining of severe headache and dizziness. They are also showing symptoms of delirium," he said.

Reports said there were long queues outside the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, one of Delhi's largest government-run hospitals.

"Last night there was no electricity for nearly five hours," Seema Sharma told AFP outside the hospital as she waited in line for her four-year-old son to be examined.

"You can imagine what we must have gone through. He just couldn't sleep and kept on crying. Now he has fever as well."

The Delhi-based research organisation Centre for Science and Environment said the high deaths this year could be because of the sudden onset of heat.

"This could be due to the sudden change in temperatures after a prolonged wet February and March that had kept the temperatures cool," said Arjuna Srinidhi, the group's programme manager for climate change.

## 4 of a Rohingya family

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and 8:00pm Thursday.

Amin and his sister Begum Bahar used to work at a horticulture garden owned by one Abu Bakkar of Khagrachhari, according to locals.

Locals alleged that they had seen Nurunnahar, who lives in Cox's Bazar, and one of her brothers in Kyamolong area on Thursday afternoon.

Farmer Hla Thuai Marma found

Amin and the three others lying in a pool of blood inside their houses when he went there for collecting firewood yesterday morning.

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies to Bandarban Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Nurunnahar and her brother went into hiding.

A case was filed.

## Land deal

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Agreement. We [Bangladesh and India] have been able to resolve every problem through bilateral talks. Very few neighbouring countries in the world can attain this kind of achievements through bilateral talks."

"Bangladesh is advancing fast socio-economically. Many had predicted that Bangladesh, if liberated, would be a bottomless basket. I want to say to them that Bangladesh is no more a bottomless basket today. Bangladesh's basket is full of developments. And the country is an example to the whole world."

Hasina said when she used to travel abroad in the past, she often found people neglecting Bangladesh. "But today the country has stood on its own feet."

The premier also sought blessings and cooperation from all to complete the trials of all war criminals.

At the programme, a new honorific title -- Deshratno -- was conferred on

Sheikh Hasina. When noted wordsmith Syed Shamsul Haque, who chaired the programme, proposed that the new title would be used before Sheikh Hasina's name from now on, virtually everyone in the audience raised their hands in support.

Cultural personality Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman, Shaheed Jaya Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, former captain of Bangladesh cricket team Akram Khan, educationist Dr Anupam Sen, economist Qazi Kholiquzaman Ahmad and historian Muntasar Mamun also spoke at the programme.

Ministers, lawmakers, AL leaders, vice-chancellors of different public universities, senior government officials, freedom fighters, cultural personalities, artists, students and people from different other professions attended the programme defying intermittent rainfall.

## 772 victims on a boat

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in a fishing boat have been arrested as a Myanmar Navy ship found them this morning in the delta," the statement said.

Myanmar does not recognise the Rohingya as an indigenous ethnic group and officials routinely refer to them as "Bengalis" from across the border.

The discovery comes as a Myanmar delegation joins an international conference in Bangkok to address a migrant crisis that has erupted since the start of May, leaving around 3,500 people on Thai, Malaysian and Indonesia soil and an estimated 2,500 more stranded at sea.

The majority of the migrants are persecuted Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar's western Rakhine State or people fleeing poverty in neighbouring Bangladesh.

Photographs on the ministry's Facebook page published on Friday afternoon showed bare-chested men on the stern deck of an old fishing boat packed tightly in rows, while women appeared to be kept below deck.

It was unclear where the migrants were from and where they were headed.

Record numbers of people from the region are believed to have made the

journey south so far this year ahead of the looming monsoon.

The Navy towed the "Bengali boat people" to a nearby Myanmar island, the ministry said, without giving further details.

More than 200 migrants were found adrift last week near waters off the Rakhine State in western Myanmar where the 1.3 million Rohingya live in dire conditions.

The majority were taken to the Bangladesh border to be repatriated, although it is not clear if they have been allowed to cross or if Rohingya from Myanmar were among the group.

## SSC results

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their respective boards and on mobile phones via SMS from 2:00pm.

The results will also be available on www.educationboardresults.gov.bd

Around 14.79 lakh students under 10 education boards appeared for this year's SSC and equivalent exams that began on February 6 instead of February 2 due to the countrywide blockade and hartals called by the BNP-led 20-party alliance. The authorities had to reschedule all exams in the weekends.