

## FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## Dhaka, Bangkok to work together

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and Bangkok have agreed to fight together against human trafficking, money laundering, and drug smuggling and plans to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for joint investigations.

The MoU will be signed between the Department of Special Investigations (DSI) of Thailand and the Special Branch (SB) of police of Bangladesh to combat transnational crimes. It is likely to be signed during the 7th Joint Commission meeting at the foreign minister level in Dhaka later this year.

The two countries also agreed to establish a bilateral forum to address issues related to transnational crimes.

The decision to ink the deal was made the first-ever Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) at foreign secretary level in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque and Thai Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs Norachit Sinhasen, who led their respective delegations at the meeting, disclosed the move.

They were speaking at a joint press conference after the FOC at the State Guesthouse Padma.

Speaking at the briefing, Foreign Secretary Haque said there would be

a technical team formed with people of both countries to share information and to crackdown on the trafficking gangs.

Both the countries laid emphasis on how effectively they could combat human trafficking and transnational crimes and agreed to go for stronger collaborative mechanisms.

Norachit Sinhasen said Malaysia would host an emergency ministerial meeting on Transnational Crimes on July 2 where the issue would be discussed further.

He also laid emphasis on long-term solutions to illegal migration through creation of jobs and manpower training.

Responding to a question on the Rohingya issue, the Thai Foreign Secretary said the issue required full cooperation from all involved and support from the international community.

On Myanmar scrapping the citizenship of its Rohingya community, Norachit Sinhasen said, "We believe every avenue needs to be explored."

Additional Foreign Secretary Mizanur Rahman, Bangladesh Ambassador to Thailand Saida Muna Tasneem and Director General at the Foreign Ministry Ashud Ahmed were present.



A boy, left, yesterday tries to separate oil from water at Boalkhali of Chittagong. Three wagons of an oil carrying train fell into a canal last Friday. Dead fishes float as the oil slick spread to a nearby pond, bottom right. People, top right, taking the oil they had collected to a BPC booth to sell it.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## Oil spill spreads again

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Mafizur Rahman claimed that most of the spilled oil had already been collected by the locals.

However, visiting the site, our correspondents found a different picture.

At Military Pool, around 6km west of the accident site, oil slick was seen flowing towards the Karnaphuli with the tide.

Locals said the spillage spread this far after more oil spilled on Wednesday afternoon.

The booms, placed around the spill

site to prevent oil from floating farther, were not of much use, they said.

IMPACTS BEGAN?

At Khitabchar, our correspondents found a large number of dead fishes floating in a pond, barely half a kilometre from the spill site.

The pond gets water from the canal flowing through a drain during high tide.

Abu Hashem, owner of the pond, said the fishes started dying on Wednesday.

"Most of the Rui and the Katla fries I released in the pond around a month

back have already died. It's all because of the oil spill," he claimed, adding that this had cost him at least Tk 3 lakhs.

Authorities at the Dohazari Peaking Power Plant, meanwhile, fear that they might have to shut down production if they don't get more fuel soon.

With the existing stock of fuel, the 102MW plant could operate for nine more days at best, said Manager Arifur Rahman Bhuyan of the plant.

Apart from the railway, there's no alternative way to ship the fuel to the power plant, he said.

## BSF troops kill Bangladeshi cattle trader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chaprainuabganji

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was killed and another injured when the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) fired rubber bullets and hurled crude bombs at them along Hapania border in Naogaon's Porsha upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Jahurul Islam, 32, son of Abdul Latif of the upazila's Doarpal-Nimatata village, and the injured is Bakul Hossain, 30, son of Mofiz Uddin of the same village.

The BSF troops of Kadarapara camp in West Bengal's Pannapur attacked a group of eight to 10 cattle traders around 3:30am when they were returning home from India through the border, said Lt Col Rafiqul Hasan, commanding officer of 14 BGB Battalion in Naogaon.

The BSF men fired rubber bullets and hurled homemade bombs targeting the cattle traders near pillar No. 232, one kilometre inside the Indian territory, leaving two wounded.

However, their fellows managed to come back home, taking Jahurul and Bakul with them.

Jahurul suffered splinter injuries. He died on the way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital around 6:30am. Several injury marks were found on his body, said the Border Guard Bangladesh official.

Bakul took treatment at a local clinic. Jahurul and Bakul along with other cattle traders entered India through the Hapania border sometime on Wednesday night, said BGB sources.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Naogaon Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

The BGB sent a letter to its Indian counterpart, protesting the killing.

## Three suspected robbers killed in mob beating

UNB, Faridpur

Three suspected robbers were beaten to death by a mob at Kojuri in Faridpur sadar upazila on Wednesday night.

The identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Mohtesham Hossain Babar, chairman of the sadar upazila, said locals caught the three at about 11:00pm when a gang numbering 25 to 30 was preparing to commit a robbery.

The villagers then gave the trio severe thrashing, leaving them seriously injured.

Later, they were rushed to Faridpur Medical College Hospital where doctors declared them dead at about 11:30pm.

## Buet closed

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postponement of the exams.

On Wednesday night, they besieged the teachers' residential area and vandalised some academic buildings.

"Because of this, the overall law and order in the university has deteriorated," said the notice, signed by Registrar AKM Masud.

Under these circumstances, all academic activities will remain suspended until the security of teachers, students and staffs is ensured, and the congenial environment for education is restored, it added.

The students said they demanded holding the exams after the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation instead of the scheduled date of June 27.

They could not prepare themselves for the exams due to some unscheduled closure of the university in recent times, they claimed.

"But the sudden closure of the university has created an uncertain situation on academic activities," said one of the students, wishing not to be named.

Buet VC Khaleda Ekram, now staying abroad, would take necessary steps on the issue after her return, said the university sources.

Despite repeated attempts, Student Welfare Director Delwar Hossain could not be reached for his comments.

## Razzak back home

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Border Guard Police (BGP) handed him over to the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) around 5:30pm with his arms, ammunition and other belongings.

After Razzak's release following the flag meeting at Maungdaw, Aziz Ahmed held a press briefing at the BGB's Pikhana headquarters in Dhaka.

Asked whether Myanmar Border Guard Police (BGP) tortured Razzak during the captivity, he said now that the BGB jawan was back, those details would be known.

But the Myanmar side at the flag meeting claimed that Razzak was hurt in his nose as a Myanmar BGP man had bitten him, he added.

After his kidnap, two photos of Razzak surfaced in social media. One of the photos showed his bleeding nose.

"I am well," Razzak told journalists on his arrival at the transit jetty at Teknaf land port at 6:20pm by a speedboat with the Bangladesh delegation led by Commanding officer of the 42nd BGB Battalion Lt Col Abu Jar al Zahid.

Razzak also said he suffered nose injuries while scuffling with BGP troopers who attacked the six-

member team he was leading while searching a fishing boat.

Contacted around 9:40pm yesterday, Lt Col Zahid said, "Nayek Razzak is now well and with his battalion in [Teknaf]."

Asked whether Razzak would now go to his village home in Natore, Zahid said, "He [Razzak] would definitely visit his village home, since he has become father a few days back."

Meanwhile in Natore, Razzak's wife Asma Begum said she talked to her husband over the mobile phone around 6:30pm.

"My husband had talked to me and inquired about our children and my in-laws. He specially asked me to look after our new baby," Asma said. "I talked to my husband only for a while, yet I am very happy."

Thanking the media and the government, Razzak's parents Tofazzal Hossain and Bulbuli Begum said they are just waiting to see their son back home.

FLAG MEETING

To join the flag meet, the seven-member BGB delegation left Teknaf for Maungdaw by a trawler around 10:00am. The meeting began around 10:30am and continued until 3:00pm, reports our Cox's Bazar corre-

spondent, quoting BGB official Maj Md Aminul.

The Myanmar side was led by Lt Col Thiyan of BGP-2.

BGB's medical officer Maj Md Shah Alam, who was among the Bangladesh delegation, checked the physical condition of Nayek Razzak during the handover.

At the flag meeting, the Myanmar BGP claimed that Nayek Razzak and his team were on duty without any uniform and the BGB team crossed the zero point and entered their territory.

The Bangladesh border force outright rejected the BGB claims.

"Our members are never allowed to perform duty without uniform," said the BGB director general. "Rather, the BGB men's boat entered Bangladesh territory; they were in civil clothes and they forcibly abducted our man following an exchange of fire and scuffle."

At the meeting, the BGB asked for signing a joint declaration including those claims, but the BGB delegation disagreed. Later, they contacted their higher authorities and it took around one and a half hours to get the decision.

Maj Gen Aziz also said the Myanmar side at the end of the meet

requested the BGB delegation to visit a BGP man who was admitted to a hospital after "suffering injuries during the June 17 exchange of fire."

"I instructed our delegation chief to visit the hospital and see the injured BGP man," the DG said.

The BGB at the meeting protested uploading of Razzak's pictures. The Myanmar side pledged to check it and punish those involved.

Kidnapping of Razzak drew widespread criticism and protests from all walks of life.

Myanmar had been rejecting Bangladesh's request for a flag meeting. They even had laid down a condition for Razzak's release: Bangladesh has to take in 550 trafficking victims rescued from sea.

However, it later agreed on Razzak's unconditional release through the flag meeting.

THE INCIDENT

Around 5:30am on June 17, the uniformed BGB team led by Nayek Razzak were searching a civilian fishing boat as part of its regular anti-Yaba patrol, said the BGB chief at the press conference.

A written statement was also issued describing the incident.

When the BGB members were busy searching the boat, a team of seven to

## Thank you, tigers

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fresh report.

And then there were some cricketers-turned-experts who never ceased to question the very existence of Bangladesh in the top flight of world cricket. There was a David Hookes who said Australia should make a Test against Bangladesh into a one-day affair. There is a Rameez Raja, a Navjot Singh Sidhu, a Geoffrey Boycott, a Virender Sehwag et al, whose comments were more to do with belittling this passionate cricketing nation in desperate times.

This yours truly still remembers two very powerful remarks, the first one by an England journalist during Bangladesh's first Test at Lord's in 2005 when he quipped that the ECB should never entertain a team like Bangladesh in the Mecca of cricket.

The second one is India's 1993 World Cup hero Ravi Shastri. He was managing the Indian team in Bangladesh after their first-round exit from the 2007 World Cup. He was

upset with that stunning World Cup defeat to the Tigers that he made no secret about.

"We will not take any prisoners," Shastri said on his arrival in Dhaka for that series.

It has always been a rough ride for Bangladesh and the Tigers have been playing with that minnows tag until they arrived at this year's World Cup down under.

And the wind slowly but surely started to change. A quarterfinal berth at the expense of heavyweights England hardly reflected the true story of how well they played in Australia and New Zealand, a testing condition for any team from the sub-continent. It was not just that the Tigers beat England, chased down Scotland's 300-plus score in style or brushed aside debutants Afghanistan in the showpiece event. It was their aggressive brand of cricket that almost had the Kiwis, who blew anything and everything with the ferocity of typhoon, in

the threshold of a defeat.

The world has witnessed what had happened in the quarterfinal against India where more than one umpiring decisions had gone against a combative Tigers. After the quarterfinal defeat one interesting post in one of this writer's article struck most. The post read: Bangladesh should be happy with what it has achieved so far in the World Cup. Three wins including two against Associate nations could have meant little had their game against Australia not been washed out. And the big defeat against India reminds them where they belong.

The Tigers needed little time to disprove these kinds of harsh remarks by completing a magnificent 3-0 whitewash against Pakistan immediately after the World Cup. As it has always been the case cynics tried to play down that success as they did after Bangladesh's famous win against the same team in the 1999 World Cup. But this time they termed this Pakistan

team as young and inexperienced. They are young but one should better ask the Sri Lankans, now hosting the same Pakistan team, if it's an advantage they are exploiting.

The biggest test for Bangladesh was when India arrived in the Tigers' den to play one Test and three ODIs. And after the one-day series that the home side won 2-1, the Tigers have made a big statement that they aren't pushovers anymore.

It's true that Bangladesh have not improved as a Test team as they have as a one-day unit. But we will also have to consider the amount of Tests they are allowed to play. Besides, one seasoned cricket writer in a talk show rightly said that Bangladesh's arrival in international cricket was at a time when one-day cricket was more prominently displayed than Test because of its commercial appeal.

The Tigers' easy wins against India in the first two ODIs that sealed a historic series success surprised many.

serious problems, it observed.

The report claimed some non-government organisations faced continued legal and informal restrictions on their activities.

Women suffered from unequal treatment. Early and forced marriage remained a problem. Many children were compelled to work, primarily in the informal sector, due either to economic necessity or in some instances trafficking.

Weak regard for the rule of law not only enabled individuals, including government officials, to commit

Many Indian experts tried to attach those defeats to complacency or to burnt-out factor.

But the moment India won the third game convincingly, the immediate reaction from across the border was MS Dhoni's men are back to their usual self and Bangladesh to their old.

How should one sane person react to that? It's better to say that those two defeats did not make India a bad team or Bangladesh the world's best overnight.

The truth is that the Tigers have shown the world they are increasingly becoming a very competitive unit on their home soil. They are playing an attractive brand of cricket. They have got a very healthy pipeline. They have got unbridled talents lurking in remote villages and waiting to surprise the world like Mustafizur Rahman.

They are now not a team ready to die without a good fight. We just can't stop loving these enfant terribles.

Thank you, the new brand of Tigers.

## US report focuses on extrajudicial killing

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Kerry presented the 2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices at the US Department of State in Washington DC.

The annual reports on human rights practices, commonly known as human rights reports, cover the status of human rights in countries around the world.

According to the new report, the Bangladesh government took limited measures to investigate and prosecute cases of security force abuse and killing.

It said the constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, but the government sometimes failed to respect these rights.

There were some limitations on freedom of speech and some journalists self-censored their criticisms of the government for fear of harassment and reprisal, according to the report.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League retained power in the January 5 parliamentary elections, which were preceded by months of political turmoil and violence perpetrated by several political parties.

Most international observers characterised the elections as controversial and falling short of international standards due to the boycott (by the BNP and its allies), it added.

Other human rights problems in Bangladesh included security force torture and other abuse, widespread official corruption, arbitrary arrests and detentions, weak judicial capacity and independence and lengthy pretrial detentions.

Authorities infringed on citizens' privacy rights. Politically motivated and intra-party violence remained

human rights violations with impunity but also prevented citizens from claiming their rights, said the report.

Disappearances and kidnappings, some committed by security services, continued.

Quoting human rights NGO Odhakar, the report said from January through September, there were 35 disappearances allegedly involving security personnel, compared with 14 in all of 2013. For the same period, Ain o Salish Kendra estimated there were 80 disappearances, compared with 53 in all of 2013.