

# Saarc satellite by Dec 16

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India is expected to launch the Saarc satellite in December next year, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Kiran Kumar said yesterday.

The satellite was proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a gift to India's neighbours.

"The launch is expected next December once the final approval comes, about eighteen months is what we are talking about," Kumar told reporters in the southern Indian city of Bangalore.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event there, he said, "A meeting has already taken place with Saarc countries and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs is coordinating this. The satellite will have 12 Ku band transponders."

In June last year, Modi asked ISRO to develop a Saarc satellite which can be dedicated as a gift to India's neigh-

bour to help them in areas such as telemedicine, education, weather forecasting and communication.

Modi also declared this decision at the Saarc Summit in Kathmandu last November, which was attended among others by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

On Monday, deliberations were held with experts from other Saarc countries to finalise modalities for developing such a satellite exclusively for regional grouping.

Referring to the meeting, Kumar said, "We had about five representatives from each of the seven countries apart from India. It was an extremely good meeting where all participants were made aware of what can be done with the Saarc satellite, so every went back happy."

"Pakistan also participated, in fact they came in a larger number than the others. We had invited five participants from each country, the Pakistan team

comprised of nine."

Stating that the proposed satellite will primarily be a communication satellite, Kiran Kumar said, "It will provide all of us an opportunity to make use of the transponder for various uses, whether for education, telemedicine or disaster monitoring."

"In addition, the satellite will have capability to interconnect all these eight countries for things like hotlines at political level, MEA interconnection, disaster monitoring constellation, and also for meteorological data dissemination," he said.

Kumar further added that Saarc countries have begun to think on a Saarc Consortium for future space programmes for the benefit of the region on lines of the European Consortium.

He said, "Each Saarc country will have some capacity exclusive to them, they will have also a ground station. They can do various things with this."

## Two 'human traffickers' held

STAR REPORT

Two alleged human traffickers, including a woman, were arrested in Cox's Bazar and Narsingdi yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided Sonarpara village in Cox's Bazar's Ukhia upazila around 4:30am and caught listed human trafficker Khairul Haque, 35, said Jahirul Islam Khan, officer-in-charge of Ukhia Police Station.

Khairul had been absconding since a human-trafficking case was filed against him, the police official added.

In another incident, Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) nabbed a woman for her alleged involvement in human trafficking at Putia village of Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila yesterday afternoon.

The arrestee is Rokeya Begum, 46. Rokeya was arrested in a human-trafficking case filed with Shibpur Police Station, said Apel Mahmud, additional superintendent of PBI in Narsingdi.

Our correspondents in Cox's Bazar and Narsingdi contributed to the report.

## Rain triggers landslides

FROM PAGE 1

reportedly damaged in landslides in other parts of the district.

EVICTED DRIVE

Chittagong district administration yesterday dismantled at least 25 houses and evicted 75 families living in risky hill slopes at Lalkhanbazar Motijharna in the city to avoid loss of life in landslides.

"We have arranged shelters for the evicted families at Shahid Nagar Primary School at Lalkhan Bazar so that they do not suffer in the rain. We have also provided them with dry foods," said Assistant Commissioner Ruhul Amin of the district administration.

But most of the families went to their relatives' instead of the shelters, he added.

In a similar drive, Cox's Bazar district administration destroyed 15 houses in Adarshagram, Chaddagram and Lighthouse Para areas yesterday.

RAIN DAMAGED GOODS

Imported goods worth several crores were damaged after a shed of Benapole Land Port warehouse was flooded by rainwater, reports our correspondent there.

## Peshawar bomb suspect detained in Italy

Mokhlesur Rahman, clearing and forwarding agent of Unilever Co Ltd, said a huge quantity of goods of the company was damaged.

Admitting the incident, Nitai Chandra Sen, director (traffic) of Benapole port authority, told The Daily Star that they would take appropriate measures as soon as possible.

## Peshawar bomb suspect detained in Italy

AFP, Rome

A Pakistani accused of organising a 2009 bomb attack on a Peshawar market that killed more than 130 people, has been detained in Italy, police said yesterday.

Siyar Khan, 36, who is also suspected of involvement in a potential plot against Pope Francis, was arrested on terrorism charges as he stepped off a flight from Islamabad to Rome on Thursday evening.

## 2-headed lizard!

FROM PAGE 16

Frozen, is thought to be one of only four bearded dragons known to have hatched with two heads in the world.

Stephan Evans, 34, who has been breeding bearded dragon lizards for 17 years, discovered the two headed creature on Thursday while checking a clutch of eggs.

He said originally he thought there were two lizards emerging from one egg when he noticed the heads begin to poke out from the shell.

He said: 'I'd checked the incubator, we'd seen two heads and assumed they were twins, which can sometimes happen.'

'I've looked online and I think there's only ever been three or four cases of bearded dragons being born with two heads.'

'It's certainly not common and I don't think any of the other babies born from the clutch of eggs will be born with two heads.'

'Other than the fact it has two heads it seems to be healthy and strong - it hatched on its own and that is a good sign. The two heads move independently and it does move about normally.'

Mr Evans and his wife Jodie keep nearly 50 bearded dragons and specialise in breeding lizards with rare colours and unusual patterns.

He said they will be keeping the two-headed lizard, whose sex will not be known for another six weeks, in a separate vivarium to its siblings and will be fed a diet of crickets, mealworms and salad leaves.

However, animals with polycephaly rarely survive for long. For example, two headed snakes usually die after only a few months.

It is not clear why polycephaly may occur but there has been some speculation that inbreeding can make it more likely.

Mr Evans said: 'I posted a picture on Facebook saying that they were twins - but I couldn't believe it when I noticed the two heads shared the same body.'

## Deal with Chinese

FROM PAGE 16

MAN Siddique and Executive Director and Chairman of CCCC Liu Qitao will sign the agreement at a ceremony in Beijing, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader told The Daily Star yesterday.

Quader, who is on his way to Beijing with an eight-member delegation of the government for this reason, said he and the Chinese commerce minister would be at the agreement signing ceremony.

He said the construction work of the tunnel would be inaugurated in October in presence of both the prime ministers of Bangladesh and China.

The structural construction would kick off in December and it will be completed within four years, he told The Daily Star from Singapore over the phone.

## Razzak taken

FROM PAGE 16

Razzak was kept at the 42 BGB Battalion headquarters in Teknaf after his release from Myanmar Border Guard Police (BGP) on Thursday. He was sent to Cox's Bazar around 9:00am yesterday, reports our correspondent in Cox's Bazar.

"He was sent to Dhaka's Pilkhana in an ambulance from Cox's Bazar. He will undergo medical treatment there," said Maj Abu Rasel Siddique, joint director of the 42 BGB Battalion.

Razzak reached Dhaka around 11:30pm. He would go to doctors today. Meanwhile, Razzak's father Tofazzal Hossain was worried, hearing that his son was taken to Dhaka for treatment, our Natore correspondent adds.

"Although Razzak told us over the mobile phone that he is fine, then what prompted the BGB authorities to take him to Dhaka?" asked Tofazzal, adding that Razzak might hide his real physical condition from them.

He said they would visit Razzak at Pilkhana today.

The Myanmar BGP handed over Razzak to a Border Guard Bangladesh delegation following a flag meeting at Maungdaw on Thursday, eight days after his abduction.

On June 17, plain-clothes BGP members on a boat attacked a BGB patrol boat near the Naf river in Bangladesh side and took Razzak. The BGP men had shot and wounded a BGB trooper in the attack.

Since then, Bangladesh had tried to hold a flag meeting with the BGP and bring Razzak back. After dillydallying for eight days, the BGP finally held the flag meeting and handed over Razzak on Thursday.

## Sunken wagons

FROM PAGE 16

Later, oil spill from the wagons spread in the Karnaphuli through the canal, threatening the ecosystem in and around the river.

On Wednesday, more oil gushed out of the wagons when the authorities tried to lift them out.

Chittagong Divisional Railway Manager Mafizur Rahman yesterday said there was no fresh spillage of oil from the sunken wagons as the cracks on them had been sealed by Thursday evening.

Locals echoed the railway official and said thin layer of oil could be seen on the surface of the canal.

Mohammad Alamgir, an owner of a shop near Military Pool, around 6km west of the accident spot, said he saw light layers of oil in some places of the canal.

However, fishermen at Shakpura area, where the canal merges with the Karnaphuli river, claimed they did not notice any oil flowing into the river yesterday.

The railway relief train, which is being used in the salvage operation, is capable of lifting only 40 tons, said railway sources, adding the sunken wagons were much heavier.

The situation has forced the railway authorities to appoint the private firm, added sources.

The stronger relief trains of the railway could not reach the accident spot as they would have to cross the

Kalughat bridge which is too narrow for the trains.

Railway official Mafizur confirmed that the firm would be involved in the rescue effort.

He said the firm using special equipment would separate the sunken wagons from each other and bring them towards the railway line.

From there, cranes of the railway relief train would pull out the tankers and place them on the railway line, said Saiful Islam, divisional mechanical engineer of Bangladesh Railway (east zone).

Mafizur said the private organisation had already started its preparatory works yesterday.

Contacted, Mainuddin, owner of the firm, said they would begin the work today.

"Although we sought 10 days to complete the task, the railway authorities asked us to do it within five days," he said.

Visiting the accident site on last Sunday, Bangladesh Railway Director General Amzad Hossain had said the salvage operation would end within seven days.

Meanwhile, like the previous days, locals scooped up spilled oil using nothing but their household utensils yesterday.

Hasan Imam, deputy manager (sales) of Jamuna Oil Company Ltd, said they bought 187 litres of oil from locals yesterday.

## Press free

FROM PAGE 16

fear of harassment and reprisal though the government claims media enjoys full freedom.

The US government made the observations in its "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014" of Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor of Department of State released on June 25 at the US Department of State in Washington DC.

US Secretary of State John Kerry presented the annual country reports, commonly known as the Human Rights Reports, covering the status of human rights in countries around the world.

It said the Bangladesh government indirectly sought to censor the media through threats and harassment. According to journalists, on multiple occasions government officials asked private television channels not to broadcast the opposition's activities and statements.

"The well-regarded newspapers Prothom Alo and The Daily Star were denied access to prime ministerial events because they published reports critical of the government and Prime Minister [Sheikh Hasina]," it said.

Quoting some journalists and NGOs, the US report says journalists are engaged in self-censorship, particularly due to fear of security force's retribution. "Although public criticism of the government was common and vocal, some media figures expressed fear of harassment by the government."

Turning to the state-owned media,

it adds the government owns a radio station and a television channel and the law mandates the Bangladesh Television (BTV) remain the country's sole terrestrial [non-satellite] broadcast channel.

The BTV broadcasts parliamentary sessions and government programmes but barely broadcasts the opposition activities.

An estimated 60 percent of the population do not have access to private satellite channels, and surveys indicate almost 80 percent of citizens receive their information from television, the report claims.

"The government required all private stations to broadcast, without charge, selected government news programmes and speeches by the prime minister," it says.

The Awami League government, like its BNP predecessor, issued new broadcast licences to political supporters and denied them to political opponents, the report mentions.

Individuals and groups generally get engaged in the expression of views via the internet, although some activists state that fear of prosecution under the ICTA has limited their online activism.

The Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) filtered internet contents the government deems harmful to national unity and religious beliefs.

The 2013 amendment to the ICTA increases penalties for cybercrime, makes more offenses ineligible for bail, and gives law-enforcement agencies broader authority to arrest violators without a court order.

## 'No to Rampal plant'

FROM PAGE 16

develop the plant in Khulna division as a joint venture with Bangladesh's Power Development Board.

Activists are concerned the plant, less than 10 miles from the protected Sundarbans mangrove forest, would lead to its environmental degradation from increased ship traffic, dredging, and pollution of air and water.

Before Modi arrived in Dhaka, activists urged the leaders of the two countries to stop the plant. On 21 May, the National Committee to

Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports held a rally in front of the National Press Club. If the project wasn't stopped, the secretary of the organisation said it would escalate the movement.

On June 5, other organisations such as National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, and Paribesh Bachao Andolan renewed their call to scrap the plant.

Their fears are not unfounded. India's first environmental rating of coal-fired thermal plants was published by the Green Rating Project of the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi.

Since NTPC refused to collaborate, the rating was based on primary data

and publicly available information. In India, the company operates 25 thermal plants and a further nine under joint venture collaborations. Six of these plants scored poorly on environmental parameters, rating a mere 16 to 28 percent compared to the best possible rating of 80 percent.

Last month, three French banks declared they will not invest in the project. Stanislas Pottier, Global Head Sustainable Development of Crédit Agricole, said, "Crédit Agricole SA Group has no plans to finance the Rampal coal power plant, in Bangladesh, given our intervention rules and the risks associated with this project."

While Jean-Michel Mépous, sustainable development and social and environmental responsibility director of Société Générale, said, "Societe Generale does not provide any financial advisory services and is not currently contemplating any financing related to the Khulna coal-fired power project, located in Rampal, Bangladesh."

BNP Paribas, one of the corporate sponsors of the UN climate summit to be held in Paris in December 2015, also declined to invest in the plant.

Bank Track, a coalition of organisations tracking the financial sector, released its analysis of the Rampal plant under the Equator Principles, an

environmental and social risk management framework for financial institutions. In its executive summary, the reports says,

"The analysis shows that serious deficiencies in project design, planning, and implementation and due diligence obligations render the project non-compliant with the minimum social and environmental standards established by the Equator Principles, as well as the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standards."

This failure to achieve even minimum standards could make any financial institution nervous of funding the project.

Loans are expected to fund up to 70 percent of the \$1.5b project, while India and Bangladesh will fund the remaining 30 percent equally. However, the Bangladesh Planning Commission refused approval.

It said the project was not compliant with the country's existing policy nor was the funding and ownership of the plant clear. This leaves even the 15 percent Bangladesh stake in the project uncertain.

Even before funds can be raised to build the first plant, the Bangladesh power Development Board has inexplicably started acquiring land for a second plant.

## 100 families face eviction threat

FROM PAGE 16

refused to bow to the threats and pressure from the land grabbers.

The indigenous people mostly depend on jhum cultivation and forest resources for their livelihood.

The villagers submitted a written complaint against the land grabbers to the upazila administration on May 12. But the local administration did not take any action in this regard.

On May 29, a scuffle between the locals and the workers of Gazi Rubber Plantation broke out when the indigenous people protested the land grabbing.

Following the incident, the company filed a case with Lama Police Station, and Koy Hla Ching Marma, a karbari (chief of a neighbourhood) of Ruposhi Puraton para, was arrested on May 30.

Visiting the places recently, it was seen that around 350 acres of jhum land have been grabbed by Gazi Rubber Plantation.

"They [Gazi] snatched our ancestral jhum land. We want our land back. We want justice," Padui Mro, a karbari of Konau para told this correspondent.

U Sha Prue Marma, wife of arrested Koy Hla Ching Marma, said, "Land grabbers filed a case against those who protested the grabbing. They 'managed' police who arrested my husband."

Refuting all allegations, Asim

Kumar Chando, consultant of Gazi Rubber Plantation, said they did not evict anyone from their ancestral land.

The official said they "bought" some 625 acres of land in Longkyong, Dordori and Sorai mouza from the indigenous families. He also claimed to have obtained a No Objection Certificate (NOC) signed by them.

However, Chong Pung Murong and Cha Hla Koin Marma, headmen of Long Kyong and Dordori mauza, claimed that the organisation committed forgery during the signing of the papers.

Asim denied the allegation too.

Contacted, Bandarban Superintendent of Police Devdas Bhattacharya, who has recently been transferred to Chittagong Metropolitan Police as an assistant commissioner, said they had sent some of their officers to the scene on June 5 to look into the matter.

He said more indigenous families of the area might get evicted if the influential rubber plantation owners did not stop grabbing land there.

Gazi Rubber Plantation has illegally purchased around 700 acres of land in Lama upazila "managing" the upazila administration, headmen and local union parishad chairman said. They grabbed more than 2,000 acres of land of the indigenous people in the upazila, locals claimed.

They said they approached Bandarban Deputy Commissioner Abu Jafar several times in this connection, but to no avail.

Contacted, the DC said, "We have received an application from the victims affected by Gazi Rubber Plantation. The UNO concerned has already been told to look into the matter."

Asked about the alleged paper-forgery, he said, "Action will be taken if anyone is found guilty."

Since the 1997 signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, thousands of acres of indigenous land mainly in Lama, Naikkhanchhari, and Alikadam upazilas of the district have been grabbed by influential private rubber plantation owners and horticulturists with the alleged involvement of district administration, headmen, karbari and local leaders said Jumlian Amlai, president of Parbatya Chattagram Forest and Land Rights Protection Movement (Bandarban Chapter).

"Gazi Rubber Plantation has violated the Hill District Council Act of 1989 and CHT Manual of 1900 as they have illegally purchased mouza lands, 'managing' upazila administration, headmen and union parishad chairmen," said KS Mong Marma, a member of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council.

<b>Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh</b>			
Directorate of Primary Education Section-2, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216 www.dpe.gov.bd			
<b>Corrigendum to Invitation for Bids (IFB)</b>			
<b>Name of Country: Bangladesh</b>			
<b>Name of Project: Third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-III)</b>			
<b>Credit Number: 4999-BD</b>			
<b>IFB Title: Procurement of Laptop-3930 Units</b>			
<b>Package No. GD 308.01</b>			
Memo No. 38.151.180.007.113.00.374.2015-2276;			Dated: 23 June, 2015
The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)'s Invitation for Bids No. 38.151.180.007.113.00.374.2015-1858; Dated: 11 May, 2015 for procurement of Laptop 3930 units (Lot-1= 1175 units, Lot-2= 1346 units and Lot-3= 1409 units) under package No. GD 308.01 published in The Independent on 12 May 2015, The Daily Star on 14 May 2015 and The Dainik Amader Shomoy (দৈনিক আমাদের সময়) on 12 May 2015 is hereby amended as follows:			
Para No.	Conditions to be amended	Previous provision	Amended provision
09	The deadline for the submission of bid	Date: 30 June 2015 Time: 2:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT+6 hrs)	Date: 20 August 2015 Time: 2:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT+6 hrs)
All other aspects of the invitation for bids will remain unchanged. This corrigendum shall be an integral part of the bidding document.			
<b>F. M. Enamul Hoque</b> Director (Finance) Directorate of Primary Education Section-2, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216 for Program Director, PEDP 3			
GD-2228			