

## Dead Zone

FROM PAGE 20

Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge, which was established in 1929 as a sanctuary for birds devastated by decades of hunting for their colourful plumage. Accessible only by boat, today it's a rare island off Florida not dominated by human activity and development.

When the birds come to nest, so too do biologists and naturalists who study the different colonies. But this year, the birds' exit has the state's avian biologists scrambling for answers.

"It's not uncommon for birds to abandon nests," said Peter Frederick, a University of Florida wildlife biologist who has studied Florida's birds for nearly 30 years. "But, in this case, what's puzzling is that all of the species did it all at once."

Doig said some of the Seahorse birds seem to have moved to a nearby island, but they're just a fraction of the tens of thousands of birds that would normally be nesting on the key right now.

To find answers, service biologists have been acting on the few clues they have.

First, they tested left-behind bird carcasses for disease or contaminants. Those tests came back negative.

Next, they researched possible new predators. Did raccoons swim over from another island? Perhaps some great horned owls flew out at night and started feasting?

Traps caught a few raccoons, which is common, but not enough to have created a wholesale abandonment. There were no telltale signs of owls.

## Family faces

FROM PAGE 20

become an Indian national," Suchitra said.

89 inhabitants of Gotamari and Bashkata, another enclave in Patgram upazila, so far have expressed their desire to become Indian nationals to the joint survey by India and Bangladesh that started three days ago and will continue till July 16.

The Indian officials registered their names and took their photographs.

Minoti's husband Binoy Chandra Barmon, 65, said everyone in his family except her daughter Suchitra wishes to become Indian nationals. His family includes his wife, two sons Ripon Chandra Barmon, 22, and Bipul Chandra Barmon, 28, and Bipul's wife Priyanka Rani, 19.

Binoy said most of the official processes have already been completed.

"We want to become Indian nationals willingly as we were born in an Indian enclave, and so we are Indian by birth," he said, adding there was no pressure on them.

Another inhabitant of the enclave Binod Chandra Barmon, 68, said five members of his family expressed desire to become Indian nationals, and they have already filled up the form.

"I have 20 bighas of land in the endave, and I will sell them taking permission from the deputy commissioner after completion of all official formalities," he said, adding they desire to become Indian nationals willingly.

Hatibandha UNO Mahbubur Rahman said all of these 89 inhabitants are from the Hindu community.

There are at least 217 Hindu people living in the two enclaves of Lalmonirhat and more of them may express their willingness to become Indians, said sources at the UNO office.

However, the Muslims living in the enclaves are unwilling to become Indians, they added.

There are 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh, including 59 in Lalmonirhat, 36 in Panchagarh, 12 in Kurigram and four in Nilphamari districts, and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves are in Cooch Behar district of Pashchimbanga in India. The Indian enclaves in Bangladesh comprise 17,149 acres of land while Bangladeshi enclaves in India cover 7,110 acres.

A joint census conducted in July 2011 found that 37,334 people live in Indian enclaves in Bangladesh and 14,215 people in Bangladeshi enclaves

## Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 20

Jambu and his four fellows were returning home along with cattle from India through the border around 4:30am. A patrol team of Chanta Baburhat BSF camp in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal opened fire on the cattle traders. Jambu was critically injured in the firing, according to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

Jambu then died in no-man's land.

A flag meeting between the BGB and the BSF was held near the border yesterday morning.

The BGB strongly protested the killing of the Bangladeshi in the meeting, said

Sree Shankar, Lohakuchi BGB camp commander, who led the Bangladesh side.

Later, police recovered the body from the no-man's land and sent it to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy, BGB sources said.

TRAFFICKING: MYANMAR SCENE

# Rising exodus but no arrests

REUTERS, *Nyaung Chaung*

The bamboo-and-thatch village of Nyaung Chaung in Myanmar's Rakhine State is typical of the places from which Rohingya Muslims flee. The fields don't provide a living, locals say. Jobs are scarce. Daily life is a series of humiliations from Myanmar's government, which officially considers them intruders and denies them citizenship.

Tens of thousands of Rohingya have fled Rakhine since the start of the year, joining perilous journeys on the boats of human traffickers through the Bay of Bengal.

But local officials say no one has been arrested for trafficking in the Myanmar state that supplies the vast majority of victims to this brutal trade.

"There have been no trafficking cases in Rakhine State so far (this year). There is a police unit to track down human traffickers, so it's very rare in this area," Hla Thein, the Rakhine State Attorney General, told Reuters.

LOCAL MIDDLEMEN

Villagers give a very different account, linking local middlemen to a regional network that has been the subject of arrests abroad.

They say the link is a local man, Soe Naing - widely known as Anwar. His arrest in southern Thailand on April 28

led to the discovery of dozens of migrant graves along the Thailand-Malaysia border.

For years, Rohingya have fled poverty and persecution in Rakhine, boarding boats to Thailand, Malaysia and beyond to seek work and asylum. But clashes between Buddhists and Muslims in 2012 saw an explosion in the exodus, amid violence that killed hundreds and displaced more than 140,000.

As more than 100,000 fled, traffickers began holding migrants for ransom in jungle camps in Thailand and Malaysia. Untold numbers died on the journey.

In early May, Thailand began a sweeping crackdown on the trade after discovering scores of graves in abandoned trafficking camps along the Thailand-Malaysia border.

'BACK AND FORTH'

Since the crackdown, Anwar's family home - a rambling structure of bamboo and corrugated iron, slathered in sky blue paint - has stood empty behind a metal fence.

Local police have not yet paid a visit.

Police Lieutenant San Min, the head of the anti-human trafficking unit in Maungdaw township, whose office is a 10-minute drive away. "As far as I know, there hasn't been action against any human traffickers here."

# US upgrading

FROM PAGE 20

ranking in the eyes of the US State Department.

The upgrade follows international scrutiny and outcry over Malaysian efforts to combat human trafficking after the discovery this year of scores of graves in people-smuggling camps near its northern border with Thailand.

The State Department last year downgraded Malaysia in its annual "Trafficking in Persons" report to Tier 3, alongside North Korea, Syria and Zimbabwe, citing "limited efforts to improve its flawed victim protection regime" and other problems.

But a congressional source with knowledge of the decision told Reuters on Wednesday the administration had approved the upgraded status. A second source familiar with the matter confirmed the decision.

Some US lawmakers and human-rights advocates had expected Malaysia to remain on Tier 3 this year given its slow pace of convictions in human-trafficking cases and pervasive trafficking in industries such as electronics and palm oil.

This year's full State Department report, including details on each country's efforts to combat human trafficking, is expected to be released next week.

State Department spokesman John Kirby said the report was still being finalised and that "it would be premature to speculate on any particular outcome."

Obama visited Malaysia in April 2014 to cement economic and security ties. Malaysia is the current chair of the

10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It is seeking to promote unity within the bloc in the face of China's increasingly assertive pursuits of territorial claims in the South China Sea, an object of US criticism.

In May, just as Obama's drive to win "fast-track" trade negotiating authority for his trade deal entered its most sensitive stage in the US Congress, Malaysian police announced the discovery of 139 graves in jungle camps used by suspected smugglers and traffickers of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar.

Malaysia hopes to be a signatory to Obama's legacy-defining Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which would link a dozen countries, cover 40 percent of the world economy and form a central element of his strategic shift towards Asia.

On June 29, Obama signed into law legislation giving him "fast-track" power to push ahead on the deal.

## 95 more

FROM PAGE 20

them in the island after holding them captive in a Thai jungle for weeks.

Over 1,000 Bangladeshis have been rescued in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar in May after the issue of human trafficking through the Bay of Bengal got international media's attention.

Of them, more than 600 Bangladeshis returned home from those countries since June. Several thousand Bangladeshis, who had allegedly left home for jobs in Malaysia, still remain missing.

# SC for considering

FROM PAGE 20

Siddique and Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik.

The SC said police members should not be made accused outright of committing such offences, since they were working for protecting peace and law and order in the country.

Placing his arguments before the court, petitioner's lawyer Moudud Ahmed said the apex court might permit the HC to grant anticipatory bail in some particular cases.

The SC said the accused should first go to the lower court for getting bail as per rules. There are precedents for the High Court granting anticipatory bail to around 100 people in a minute, added the court.

At least 95 people were killed and 1,417 injured in violence and arson attacks during hartals and blockades enforced by the BNP-led 20-party alliance early this year.

The SC yesterday said if the accused are granted anticipatory bail, they could not be placed on remand and information about the incidents would remain undisclosed.

Remanding an accused for interrogation is part of the investigation. The law enforcers came under attack and were injured in subversive activities, but they did not open fire on criminals in self-defence, added the court.

Nowadays, police don't torture the accused during interrogation on remand for fear of law, the SC said.

It asked Moudud, also a BNP standing committee member, whether the victims would accept the accused granted anticipatory bail without being interrogated by cops.

The lawyer said the HC was not hearing many anticipatory bail petitions after the declaration of the guideline by the SC.

Attorney General Mahubbey Alam opposed the review petition on grounds that the SCBA had no right to

move such a petition since it was not aggrieved by the SC verdict.

The incumbent SCBA is dominated by pro-BNP lawyers.

SC GUIDELINE

The Appellate Division on February 24 last year expressed disappointment at an HC bench for "failure to follow its guideline" while granting anticipatory bail to BNP leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain in a money laundering case.

It said the HC should scrutinise the First Information Report with "expected diligence", and would not grant anticipatory bail "where the allegations are of heinous nature".

If satisfied in all respects, the HC will dispose of anticipatory bail petitions instantly without issuing any rule, and will not grant such type of bail to an accused for more than four weeks, the SC judgment said. "Anticipatory bail shall not survive post-charge sheet stage."

The HC judges will mention the reasons for granting anticipatory bail to an accused and "shall give reasons for their satisfaction on this unraveling point," said the apex court. "Political threshold of the [bail] petitioner or claimed rivalry, by itself, without further ado, shall not be a ground for entertaining an application".

If an allegation of bias is aired against a particular magistrate or a group of magistrates or judges, cause of suspicion must be specifically spelt out, said the Appellate Division.

In the review petition filed on June 18 last year, the SCBA said the HC is now reluctant to hear anticipatory bail petitions, and as a result, some innocent litigants were being made victims of police harassment.

Meanwhile, an HC bench yesterday granted anticipatory bail for four weeks to BNP leaders MK Anwar, Tariqul Islam, Abdul Awal Mintoo and Amanullah Aman in 56 arson and vandalism cases.

## Ministry probes

FROM PAGE 20

Police took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he died around 11:30am.

His four-page suicide note, recovered by police, holds Secretary Hannan responsible for his death.

"I gave money to Liberation War Affairs Secretary MA Hannan for declaration of South Chittagong district unit of Muktiyoddha Command Council. Even after repeated requests, he did nothing about this," reads the note as cited by an official of Shahbagh Police Station.

"When I went to his home to get my money back, Hannan grabbed me by the neck and pushed me out of his home. That's why I am committing suicide."

Talking to this newspaper yesterday, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq said the joint secretary (administration) of the ministry has been assigned to find out whether Hannan misbehaved with Ayub.

"The information is necessary for the departmental inquiry."

The joint secretary will also probe if there was any illegal exchange of money regarding the formation of the South Chittagong district unit. He has been given three days for the assignment, the minister said.

Yesterday, Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said they were verifying the authenticity of the suicide note. "We will collect handwritings of the victim from his family," he said.

Asked whether police will interrogate Hannan, the OC said they will but not now.

As the door of the hotel room was closed from inside and the note bore a seal of the freedom fighter's name engraved on it and his several signatures, it might be authentic, a police official told this newspaper preferring anonymity.

On Tuesday, victim's cousin Amir Hossain filed an unnatural death case with Shahbagh Police Station. It is under investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Branch of police and Shahbagh police.

HANNAN'S STATEMENT

Refuting the allegations, Hannan in a statement on Wednesday claimed that he did not even know Ayub. He also denied receiving any money from any freedom fighter or insulting anyone.

The declaration of the Chittagong (South) district unit is under the jurisdiction of the Muktiyoddha Sangsad Central Command Council. The ministry or any individual has nothing to do in this regard and it is not believable that anyone would visit the residence of the secretary over the issue, he added.

However, Ayub's daughter Koli Akter told our Chittagong correspondent, "My father was trying to be the commander of Chittagong South unit of Muktiyoddha Command Council. So he was lobbying for the last seven months in Chittagong and Dhaka.

## Cheap vaccine

FROM PAGE 1

children under five years of age. Around 2.8 million cases of cholera are reported every year and over one billion people are estimated to be at risk, according to the icddr,b.

The success of this vaccine can be a ray of hope for the cholera-endemic countries like Haiti and Zimbabwe.

The study by Dr Firdausi Qadri, director of icddr,b's Centre for Vaccine Sciences, and her colleagues took place between 2011 and 2013 in the urban slums of Mirpur in Dhaka city, an area with a high rate of hospitalisation for severe dehydrating cholera.

"Our findings show that a routine oral cholera vaccination programme in cholera-endemic countries could substantially reduce the burden of disease and greatly contribute to cholera control efforts," said Dr Qadri.

"The vaccine is cheap -- two doses cost around a third of the price of the other licensed vaccine Dukoral," she said.

The research sample included 2,67,270 people who are considered to be at "high risk" because of factors such as living in overcrowded quarters, unsafe sources of water, poor sanitation and unhygienic living conditions. The researchers aimed to assess the level of protection provided by a two-dose regimen of Shanchol against severe dehydrating cholera. The vaccine was administered through routine government services in the densely populated urban area.

The participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups: those who received Shanchol vaccine, those who received Shanchol and an intervention that encouraged hand-washing and drinking water treatment with chlorine, and those who received no intervention at all.

The results showed the incidence of severely dehydrating cholera was reduced by 37 percent in the overall study population, irrespective of their vaccination status.

The incidence of cholera decreased by 45 percent in the group that received both vaccination and hand-washing-water treatment intervention.

The rate of hospitalisation among those who received the full two doses of the vaccine decreased by more than 50 percent.

For individuals who were vaccinated, it was shown to confer 53 percent protection two years after the vaccine was administered, the study said.

The vaccine was well tolerated with no serious adverse effects reported, according to the icddr,b.

# Ashraf loses portfolio

FROM PAGE 1

change to her one-and-a-half-year-old cabinet formed through the one-sided parliamentary election in January last year.

Mosharraf is the father-in-law of Hasina's daughter Saima Wazed Putul. A member of Faridpur district Awami League, he was also a minister in the previous AL government in 2009-2014. In the 1980s, he served as the chief engineer of the local government engineering bureau under the LGRD ministry.

He will take the new charge at the LGRD ministry on Sunday.

The cabinet may see more changes after Eid, sources said, adding that some controversial ministers might be shown the door.

Since restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991, general secretary of the party in power has always held the LGRD ministry portfolio. In the past, no ruling party ever removed its general secretary from ministry job.

Ashraf's removal, which came two days after the move reportedly began, surprised many in the cabinet and the ruling party.

Sources said the PM was displeased with him as he skipped Tuesday's meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec). She then immediately ordered the cabinet division to take measures for the change and the cabinet division prepared the file accordingly.

Reports of Ashraf's removal had made rounds on Tuesday, but they turned out to be rumours later in the evening.

Ashraf, who had met the PM after the Ecneec meeting and went to his home district of Kishoreganj that day, had himself dismissed the media reports as rumours.

Asked why then he was removed, a senior minister said, "I had a talk with the prime minister yesterday [Wednesday] after the parliament session. After the conversation, I was certain that Ashraf would remain LGRD minister. I myself was surprised to hear the news."

Another source said Hasina withheld the decision for a day as she sought to know from Ashraf whether he would be able to "actively discharge" his duties as LGRD minister.

Yesterday noon, Ashraf went to the Prime Minister's Office and held a one-to-one meeting with the PM. The decision of his removal came following the meeting.

A number of ministers and AL leaders said the PM removed Ashraf as several cabinet members had been complaining against his "inactiveness" as a minister. They also alleged Ashraf became unreachable over the phone and also in person.

According to LGRD ministry sources, Ashraf remained absent from the office often and officials had to rush to his residence with files for his

# Waiting for Khaleda

FROM PAGE 20

joining the ruling party soon, and then we'll all live happily ever after.

The Daily Star's Wednesday report says that Awami League's strategy of coaxing as many opposition men as they can into joining the ruling party could cripple the BNP, especially in districts that are seen as its strongholds.

Many of these BNP and Jamaat men are on the run. Others are being harassed by cops.

The AL sees nothing wrong with this exodus from the sinking ship that is BNP. Its Presidium Member Nuh-Ul-Alam Lenin was quoted as saying, "If any good organiser from BNP comes to the Awami League, it will strengthen our organisation. But we have to be alert so that nobody uses the name of our party to do wrong stuff." AL Organising Secretary Khalid Mahamud Chowdhury says, "Those who uphold the spirit of liberation and are not involved in war crimes can join the Awami League. I don't see any problem here."

The ruling party is not just putting pressure at the grassroots of BNP-Jamaat, it is also putting heavy pressure at the top.

A couple of days ago, a court issued arrest warrant against 28 BNP men including Rafiqul Islam Mia and Aman Ullah Aman on charges of setting vehicles on fire in Mirpur in January.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Wednesday the government would form special tribunal for quick disposal of cases against Khaleda for her "instructions for arson attacks" during anti-government demonstrations.

We seem to have already forgotten about BNP senior leaders Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Salahuddin Ahmed.

Meanwhile Khaleda Zia is clueless about any political strategy to fight back. Her trust on diplomatic pressure faltered; her non-stop violent blockade against common people brought shame on her party, and clearly she lives in her own cloud while her party leaders don't know where to turn. She

signatures.

He is also allegedly inactive in the party activities and grassroots leaders are unhappy about this.

On Tuesday, Finance Minister AMA Muhith made an outburst over Ashraf's absence in the Ecneec meeting. There, officials placed project proposals involving Tk 6,076 crore under which every lawmaker would get Tk 20 crore for development work in their constituencies in the next five years.

As neither the LGRD minister nor State Minister Moshir Rahman Ranga was there to explain the projects, Muhith proposed postponing the discussion, meeting sources said.

Muhith also expressed annoyance at this.

The PM, who chaired the meeting, also appeared annoyed. She sought to know why Ashraf was absent and said she would remove him from the ministry, said the sources.

Ashraf was serving as the LGRD minister in his second stint. He was first given the portfolio in 2009 when Sheikh Hasina formed government after winning the December 2008 election.

Ashraf, son of Syed Nazrul Islam who was acting president of the Bangladesh government in exile during the Liberation War, served as the state minister for civil aviation and tourism ministry of the 1996-2001 AL government.

His removal from the ministry also raised questions over his fate as the party general secretary. His current three-year term in the post expires in December.

Ashraf, who was made general secretary through the party's 2009 council, held the LGRD portfolio of the 2009-2014 AL government. He was re-elected AL general secretary in the December 2012 council.

Earlier during the 2007-08 caretaker government tenure, he played a vital role in keeping the party intact in the absence of party chief Hasina and general secretary Abdul Jalil, both of whom were in jail. At the time, he served as the acting general secretary.

As the AL retained power through last year's January 5 polls, Ashraf was made the LGRD minister again.

AL leaders close to Ashraf claimed the PM removed him from the ministry so he could focus on reorganising the party.

Hours after his removal, Syed Ashraf joined an ifter party organised by the Awami Jubo League, the youth front of the AL, on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital.

There, he did not make any remark about his removal, but bitterly criticised BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for "resorting to falsehood" and urged her to take part in the next national polls.

"Don't try to interrupt the democratic process of the country," he said, adding that if the democratic process

is now seeking heavenly intervention in iftaar party prayers.

So what would be the best solution for BNP? It's best for her and her senior leaders to join the Awami League. It will be a win-win situation for both parties (plus Jamaat)—as they would get to have some pieces of the power cake that the AL has been having alone since 2009. For AL, there will be "peace" in the country.

There will also be no differences on political ideology. There would not be any secular vs non-secular politics; pro-liberation vs anti-liberation issues; progressive vs fundamentalist split. All ideals will dissolve into one -- make money and send it abroad.

Those who thought up this amalgamation of BNP and AL men might get Nobel Prize in Chemistry for successfully mixing oil and water (proven by the mixing of BNP-Jamaat and the AL). They may get a Peace Prize too for a new era of harmony where the lamb and the lion drink from the same spring.

Later on, however, the BNP leaders who have joined the AL could stab the AL in its back at the right moment. It had happened before and it can happen again.

Till that time, let us enjoy this peace in politics.

## SC now asks

FROM PAGE 20

complete report.

Khandaker Mahbub told The Daily Star that a professor of Cardiovascular Department at the BSMMU had earlier advised Fakhrul to go abroad for proper treatment.

Sagor Hossain Lion, another counsel for Fakhrul, said his client would not get released until the apex court grants him bail in the cases.

On June 21, the HC gave bail to Fakhrul in the three cases filed with Paltan Police Station on January 4, 5, and 7 under the Explosive Substances Act.

Later, the government filed the three petitions with the SC seeking stay on the HC orders.