



A Karimon (locally made three-wheeler auto rickshaw) plies the Dhaka-Rangpur highway near Banani Bus Stand in Bogra yesterday, defying a ban on three-wheeler auto rickshaws on 22 national highways.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

## China bans

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organisations' self-censorship", the ministry said, adding companies should "remove the products accurately, be aware of the bottom line and improve their service".

Anyone who does not comply "will be punished severely according to the law", it said.

China's Communist Party oversees a vast censorship system -- dubbed the Great Firewall -- that aggressively blocks sites or snuffs out content and commentary that is pornographic, violent or deemed politically sensitive.

Popular social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are inaccessible in the country, as is YouTube.

Several Western news organisations have accused Beijing of blocking access to their websites in the past, including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg.

## Khaleda calls

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countrywide nonstop blockade programme, demanding the holding of a fresh election under a non-party government.

The alliance sponsored the blockade along with a series of frequent hartals that continued till April 5. Over 100 people were killed and a large amount of properties was damaged during the time.

On April 5, Khaleda surrendered before the special judge's court at Bakshi Bazar and later returned to her house from Gulshan office where she stayed for 92 days. This move of Khaleda apparently ceased the opposition's violent movement.

The opposition alliance is yet to call off its anti-government movement formally as Khaleda has recently claimed that their blockade programme is still in effect.

An announcement is likely to come on blockade after the meeting, said sources in the alliance.

The meeting is also significant as it is going to be held before the BNP chief's upcoming visit to London this week. BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir will not be available in the meeting as he is now in the USA for treatment.

## Charge sheet

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was arrested by the police at a check-point in Wari. One of the arrestees has given confessional statements before a Dhaka court.

With this progress, DMP Joint Commissioner Monirul said the DB would place a charge sheet and continue working to arrest the others involved in the killing.

Detectives suspect that members of the same outfit, Ansarullah Bangla Team, stabbed Niloy, 28, to death, in his flat in the capital's Goran on Friday.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan claimed that law enforcers had obtained sufficient clue in Niloy killing case.

"We are scrutinising those ... We don't want to do anything on the basis of imagination," he told reporters after a programme in the capital's Gendaria yesterday.

Replying to a query, the home boss urged bloggers not to attack anyone's religious sentiments through their writings.

Action will be taken as per law against those found guilty of hurting religious sentiments, he added.

## Nigeria says blocked thousands from joining foreign terror, crime groups

AFP, Lagos

Thousands of Nigerians have been blocked from travelling abroad in a bid to stop them becoming involved in foreign terrorism, prostitution or other criminal activity, immigration officials said yesterday.

Almost 24,000 nationals aged 17 to 35 were turned back at the border between January 2014 and March this year, the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) told AFP.

"There have been reports in recent times of some Nigerians departing to join terrorist groups especially in the Middle East and north Africa," said NIS spokesman Chukwuemeka Obua.

The crackdown sought to prevent young Nigerians being "lured into terrorism, prostitution, slavery and other untoward activities abroad", the NIS said in a statement.

Nigeria is struggling to end a six-year insurgency by Boko Haram Islamists that has claimed more than 15,000 lives and displaced 100 times that number in the north-east.

But the country has also become a "catchment area for recruiters" abroad because of high unemployment, the NIS said.

Among the most high-profile Nigerians convicted for overseas terror offences is 28-year-old Umar Farouk Abdulmutalab, a failed suicide attacker with connections to Al-Qaeda, popularly referred to as the "Underwear Bomber".

He was hailed as a hero by Al-Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden after trying to blow up a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit, Michigan, on Christmas Day 2009 and is serving four life terms in the United States.

Nigerian media reported at the

weekend that two cousins from Kano in the north were caught at the weekend trying to cross from India into Pakistan, with eventual plans join up with the Islamic State group in Iraq.

The NIS said foreign terrorist organisations had syndicates to arrange travel documents, visas, tickets and money for their Nigerian recruits.

"To counter this, the NIS now engages in intense profiling of travellers. We have always had problems of Nigerians going abroad for greener pasture," it added.

"We look at the age of the intending traveller and the person he is travelling with, put them by the side and profile them thoroughly."

## 6 progressive

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Barisal Reporters' Unity.

The so-called Ansar BD posted photos of these six people.

In the post, it also announced the beginning of its activities in Barisal division: "Mashallah, we are successfully start work in division."

Following the threat, Henry Swapan, on behalf of the six, yesterday filed a general diary with Barisal Kotwali Police Station and sought security.

"We're looking into this," said Abdur Rouf, deputy commissioner (south) of Barisal Metropolitan Police.

On Friday, blogger Niloy was brutally hacked to death inside his home in the capital's Goran area by a group of suspected Islamist militants. Hours later, a group identifying itself as Ansar Al Islam sent an email to different media outlets, claiming responsibility for the murder.

## Why schoolbag

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schoolbags that weigh more than 10 percent of the children's body weight, and against use of any schoolbag by pre-primary children.

The rule came following a writ petition collectively filed by three Supreme Court lawyers seeking an HC directive on the government to formulate a law or rule or policy on the use of schoolbags by children.

The law secretary, the education secretary, the director general of Directorate of Primary Education, and the chairman of National Human Rights Commission have been made respondents to the rule.

Last month, the Indian state of Maharashtra ruled that schoolchildren should carry bags no more than 10 percent of their weight.

Children are developing spinal deformities because of heavy bags they carry to schools, said SM Masud Dolon, one of the petitioners, citing a report of a national daily that quoted experts' opinion on this.

"The students carry overweight bags as their school authorities compel them to carry many books, papers and instruments," Dolon told The Daily Star, referring to the Maharashtra government regulation.

Farzana Tonni, mother of a class V student, said apart from six textbooks, her son carries three exercise books and a diary for noting down homework as per the teachers' instruction. Besides, he keeps a few more exercise books for his coaching.

"His bag looks bulky but I can't help

him. He often goes to school without eating his breakfast," she said.

"He looks tired when he returns home after school and coaching. He tells me his shoulder aches when he carries the bag on one shoulder for a long time," Tonni added.

Citing from the petition, Deputy Attorney General Motaher Hossain Sazu said a student in the country has to carry a bag weighing 30 to 40 percent of his or her body weight.

The DAG also said there is no law in the country prohibiting the school authorities from compelling students to carry heavy bags.

The HC bench of Justice Moeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Md Ashrafur Kamal issued the rule after hearing the writ petition filed by lawyers Masud Dolon, Ziaur Rahman and Anarul Karim on August 9.

"There would be some physical problems if kids carry overweight bags. They may later develop pain in their neck or back," Prof Dr M Amjad Hossain, an expert orthopaedist, told The Daily Star.

The former head of Orthopaedics and Trauma Surgery of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital said parents often come to them with their children complaining of pain in waist or back.

"Nowadays children have limited scope for playing and doing other physical activities. Therefore, carrying heavy bags poses health risks for them," Dr Amjad said, suggesting that there should be a weight limit for carrying schoolbags.

## Bad days

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Harmful chemicals such as Ethophen and Ethrel are widely used by the pineapple farmers in Madhupur region to give the fruits a bigger size and better look and to ripen immature fruits in order to make more profit.

But the excessive use of these chemicals in fruits can cause vomiting, dizziness, liver and kidney complications and even cancer, according to local officials of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

"If farmers want, they can use growth hormones in little amount before the plants start flowering," said Agriculture Officer Hazrat Ali.

"But most farmers use the chemicals indiscriminately and whenever they feel like. This is bad," he added.

DAE Deputy Director Abul Hashim of Tangail said they were holding different motivational and training programmes to create awareness among the local pineapple growers against the unprescribed use of chemicals.

## SC asks

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Executive Editor Swadesh Roy for publishing an article on the matter and fixed August 13 to deliver a verdict on the rule.

The TV report was aired with a photo of the chief justice, the attorney general told reporters at his office, adding that the SC would examine whether the channel had committed any contempt of court by broadcasting the report and holding the talk show on a sub judge matter.

Before issuing the suo moto order, the Appellate Division heard opinions of the attorney general and former attorney general Mahmudul Islam on the matter.

They told the court that broadcasting reports and talk shows on something that was part of court proceedings was tantamount to contempt of court, and that the SC could not ignore it.

## Govt to buy

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new dredgers are available, more 232 lakh cubic metres of waterways could be dredged each year by using those dredgers.

In future, the government is going to lay more emphasis on the river and railway routes than the roads. As part of the plan, more dredgers would be purchased, said the planning ministry official.

Besides, the Ecne approved a project involving around Tk 37 crore for the development of Sonahat Land Port in Kurigram's Bhurungamari upazila.

According to the proposal, when the project is implemented, the export and import activities between Bangladesh and India will increase.

The Ecne also gave a nod to five more projects involving a cost of Tk 299 crore.

## India's Modi to visit UAE on August 16-17

AFP, New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will head to the United Arab Emirates this weekend, New Delhi's foreign ministry said yesterday, in the first visit by an Indian premier in more than three decades.

Modi will visit from August 16 to 17 and plans to meet his UAE counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum as well as Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, a foreign ministry statement said.

# ISIS frees 22 Assyrian Christians in northeast Syria

AFP, Beirut

The Islamic State group released 22 Assyrian Christians that it had abducted in northeastern Syria almost six months ago, activist groups said.

They were among more than 200 members of the Christian minority who were kidnapped by ISIS in February as it swept through the Khabur region in the northeastern Hasakeh province.

The Assyrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the fate of the minority, said the 22 hostages included 14 women.

It published photographs of the former hostages, showing several elderly women weeping as they were greeted by a priest.

The release was "the result of the

tireless efforts and negotiations by the Assyrian Church of the East in the city of Hasakeh," the group said.

A second group, the Assyrian Network for Human Rights, also reported the release, saying those freed were from two villages in Khabur, Tal Shamiram and Tal Jazira.

Director Osama Edward said negotiations were ongoing to secure the release of the additional 187 hostages being held by ISIS.

"There is a positive atmosphere around the negotiation," he told AFP, adding that no additional releases could be confirmed yet.

Assyrians numbered about 30,000 among Syria's 1.2 million Christians before the country's conflict began. They lived mostly in 35 villages in Hasakeh.

# Egypt to try Brotherhood chief for 2013 Cairo clashes

AFP, Cairo

Egypt yesterday referred Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Badie to trial for staging a protest at a Cairo square where several police and hundreds of Islamist protesters were killed in 2013 clashes.

Badie, who has already been sentenced to death in two other trials, was charged in connection with the killing of policemen when security forces dispersed the protest at the capital's Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square on August 14, 2013.

Security forces stormed two protest camps of supporters of ousted president Mohamed Morsi in Rabaa Al-Adawiya and in Nahda Square, also in Cairo, that day.

At least 817 demonstrators died in Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square alone, Human Rights Watch has said, calling it "one of the largest killings of demonstrators in a single day in recent history" in Egypt.

The interior ministry said at least 10 policemen were killed after coming under fire from protesters during the unrest.

Badie and several others were referred to trial yesterday for "organising and participating in an armed gathering... and for murdering citizens and policemen," a prosecution statement said.

It did not specify how many other accused were referred to trial along with Badie. They all face the death penalty if convicted.

# Malaysia DPM's brother

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Hamidi is executive chairperson, aims to provide an online system where, for a fee, workers can be registered and monitored from Bangladesh and Malaysia.

Zahid is also home minister, and the approval of foreign workers into Malaysia comes under his ministry's purview.

Real Time's online system - dubbed Workforce Management & Networking System (Workman) - is similar to that provided by Bestinet, a firm owned by former home minister Azmi Khalid.

Bestinet's agreement with the government was suspended earlier this year after outcry by recruitment agents in sending countries over its high service fees.

When contacted, Hakim confirmed that Real Time was eyeing the deal but stressed that it was not a government contract. Rather, it is in collaboration with the Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies (Baira).

"We have the model of a system where we get a payment for a package [service] and we can send people [from Bangladesh] for 60,000 Bangladeshi taka (RM3,000), including the air ticket."

"This is not a government contract. Yes, their government [Bangladesh] need to approve because it involves citizens but they are only monitoring," Hakim said.

If approved, agencies such as the Immigration Department and Manpower Department will be linked to Real Time's system and all recruitment agents must go through Real Time to send workers to

Malaysia.

He, however, refuted any claim of nepotism, arguing that he was experienced in the field and that in a democratic country he could do anything, other than be a drug pusher.

Documents show that Real Time was incorporated in March this year.

Hakim is listed as executive chairperson in the Real Time proposal and other correspondence, but he is not registered as an office-bearer with the Companies Commission of Malaysia.

Instead, his son Mohd Akmal, 25, is a director, along with former Home Ministry deputy secretary-general Raja Azahar Raja Abdul Manap, and one Salihah Kasim, 25.

Salihah shares the same address as Abu Hanif Abul Kashem, another director of both Real Time and Warisan Juara Padu, a Bangladeshi national and Malaysian permanent resident.

Abu Hanif is also listed by Baira as an "overseas representative of Baira", in a letter to Zahid dated June 24.

According to Hakim, there are at least two other firms vying for the deal, but the Bangladeshi government is keen on the Real Time system.

"I met with Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Nurul Islam on Sunday and he is very happy with our system," he said.

Baira has also endorsed the system in the June 24 letter signed by its president Abul Basher to Malaysian home minister.

However, Baira Vice President Ali Haider Chowdhury denied that Baira had any stake in Real Time.

# No manipulation

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The expatriates' welfare ministry official also said the Bangladesh side, during the meeting, demanded that the cost of labour migration be low and the process safe to avoid the repetition of the situation in 2007-08.

During those years, excessive workers, hired against "fake" demands, were either jobless or forced to work with little or no pay. Hundreds of Bangladeshi manpower brokers were involved in the process, hiking each worker's migration cost to Tk 1.6 lakh to Tk 2.4 lakh against the government-fixed rate of Tk 84,000.

The expatriate minister yesterday said the two sides were yet to finalise any mode of the labour recruitment or the migration cost. He also said more discussions were required.

"However, apart from the private sector, workers can also go to Malaysia through the G2G [government-to-government] system," he said.

He also advised all not to pay any broker for jobs in the Southeast Asian country.

Nurul said the government this time was more serious to ensure a

disciplined system for sending workers to Malaysia so that no one would be exploited.

"Whether it is G2G or B2B [business-to-business] arrangements, there will be a service centre in Malaysia. After workers' arrival there, the centre will take them to the company concerned," the minister said.

Plantation, factory, construction, housekeeping, babysitting are the major sectors where Malaysia wants to recruit Bangladeshi workers, he said.

The four-member Malaysian delegation came to Dhaka after the country's home minister in June declared that they would recruit 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers in next three years through the B2B system.

After nearly a four-year ban in 2009 following massive labour abuses in 2007-08 through private sector recruitment, Malaysia resumed hiring Bangladeshi workers through government arrangements in 2012.

However, until now only some 10,000 Bangladeshis were recruited for the country's plantation sector. The other sectors are yet to be opened for Bangladesh.