





Chunks of a wall have dropped to the floor, left, at the students' dormitory of Sylhet Nursing College, top right. Following Wednesday night's earthquake, several large cracks were seen and the students vacated the dorm fearing it might collapse. A student is seen waiting to leave with her stuff at the entrance, bottom right. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Khas land

Apart from these landless people, over 30 thousand people of the union are directly involved in salt and fish farming on khas land.

"Though S Alam Group says it has only bought some 650 acres, you can see pillars set up by them on a large portion of the land," said Abdul Malek, general secretary of Gondamara Union Bachao Andolon, a platform of the anti-coal plant movement.

Talking to this newspaper on Monday, he said there has been a sense of uncertainty among locals, especially those living on Khas land, as they have no clear idea about how much land S Alam Group would

Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) M Shamsuzzaman said they don't need to know how much land a person or a private company purchases privately.

Assistant Commissioner (Land) Habibul Hasan said he just joined the office on Monday and he is still in the dark about this issue.

Half of the union doesn't have power supply, yet most of the locals are against the project because they are in fear of losing habitats and livelihoods, said Liakat Ali, a former union parishad chairman of Gondamara.

"They are really scared," said Liakat, also convenor of the Committee to Protect Habitat and Graveyard that initially led the

movement. "The government should build the power plant in a new char [shoal] where no people live," he said, urging the prime minister to take necessary

step in this regard. According to him, about 50 thousand people live in Gondamara union and the number of houses would be around 10 thousand.

160 doctors

FROM PAGE 1 2006, and their jobs were regularised

on March 18, 2008.

Iqbal Arslan -- the then secretary general of Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad, a pro-Awami League doctors' association -- later filed a writ petition with the High Court against the recruitment, citing irregularities in the process.

Following some 10 years of legal battle, the Appellate Division on February 22 this year declared the recruitment illegal.

The BSMMU did not pay salaries of the doctors for March.

On April 12, the aggrieved doctors filed a writ petition with the High Court which then ordered a status quo with respect to their service until the certified copy of the Appellate Division's verdict is released. The copy is yet to be pub-

ABM Safiullah, one of the peti-

tioners, said they attended offices on April 12. As the High Court had ordered the status quo, disallowing them from joining offices since April 13 was a violation of that order.

"The BSMMU authorities in the dark of night on April 12 issued an order that there should be actions to prevent us from joining our work. This is not going by the law," he told this correspondent.

Contacted, BSMMU Treasurer Prof Ali Asgor Moral said they have complied with the court order on maintaining the status quo.

"We acted as per our legal counsel's advice and stopped paying their salaries and prevented them from

working." Asked if the authorities could go for actions before receiving the certified copy of the Appellate Division verdict, the treasurer claimed, "Everything has been done legally."

Fed could but failed to stop cyber heist

attached to the system that would have shown the queries in hard copy print-

THE QUERIES AND THE LETDOWNS

In one of its queries, the Fed mentioned the payment instructions known in banking parlance as MT103 and then wanted more information on the official purpose of these transactions and the identity of the beneficiaries - Ralph C Picache and Enrico T Vazquez - and their connection to official business and the purpose of the wrong? payment.

fulfilled its risk management and due diligence requirements.

payment orders to Sri Lanka and Manila, the Fed sounded more alarmed, probably because of the number of the payment instructions it was receiving and also because it did Bank.

It sought a long list of information including the full details of the beneficiary. For individuals, it wanted to know their occupation and connection to the originating party, the the Fed had sent so many queries on Bangladesh Bank in this instance.

The hackers sent \$20 million to a Sri Lankan account in the name of ShalikaFundation (they had actually misspelt foundation). Fed was suspicious about it and wrote "for beneficiary 'ShalikaFundation' please provide nature of business and physical address." It also wanted to know the website references for all beneficiaries.

The Fed seemed to be cautious particularly about three individual beneficiaries - Jessie Christopher M Lagrosas, Enrico T Vazqez and Alfred S these three individuals.

It also wanted to know why the payments were being made by providing "the full details of the underlying goods and services covered by these payments."

And last of all and probably the most important question it made was, why the payments that represented payment of institutional loans and interest were being made to these individual beneficiaries.

So it is now clear from the Fed's queries that it had suspected something seriously wrong in the whole thing and yet it fell short of stopping the payments immediately by taking initiative until clarification came from the Bangladesh Bank.

ANOTHER CRUCIAL DAY GOES BY WITHOUT ACTION

The next day (February 5, Friday), the Fed sent more queries relating to the paid instructions and another 30 between 16.09 and 16.43 NY time. None of them were seen here because the printer was

disabled by the cyber criminals. The strangest thing is even though the Fed had suspected wrongs in the orders as evident by its numerous queries, it did not stop payment of the funds from its system. Nor did it take any step to ask the banks in Sri Lanka and the Philippines to stop payment to

were named cabinet members.

the private beneficiaries, including a and the Fed found the BB's mails and provide assistance as appropriate." casino owner in Manila.

And the fact is the funds were not released to the hackers' until February 9, five days after it raised red flags and started sending out queries.

On the 5th of February, the Fed had finally said it was unable to carry out the fake orders. Again the most important questions are: 1. Why did it not stop the heist was lost as the Fed did refuse payment as soon as it received the suspicious orders; and 2. Why it did not stop or recall the payments as it obviously had sensed something

Moreover, it also shows the Fed, This, the Fed said, was necessary as it being such a custodian of global reserves, did not have a proper alert system in place, otherwise it would In the following queries about the have suspected foul play in the first place and then acted accordingly.

This point gleans from the fact that point to make about the Fed's role. Bangladesh Bank had never made any fund transfer request upwards of \$26 million and never to any individuals. not receive any reply from Bangladesh So the moment such huge transfer orders to the tune of \$81 million were made in favour of individuals, Fed should have raised red flags and pro- lished." tected its customer's funds.

The other curious thing is although suspicion and did not get a single feedback, it should have immediately called or contacted Bangladesh Bank were received," he told The Daily Star. by alternative means which it did not do. No response from Bangladesh on their queries should have made it clear that something out of the ordinary had happened.

SHOCK AND FLURRY AT BANGLADESH BANK

BB officials had found the SWIFT raised by the Fed with the central bank. printer out of operation on Friday. They tried to fix the issue but could not solve it. When Bangladesh Bank offinot working and the printer dysfunctional, they immediately sensed something was not right. The BB sent its first message at 1.31pm on February 6 asking the Fed to stop payment. Then beneficiaries." they faxed the same mail to the Fed.

sages at 4.44pm and 6.03pm. Then they found out the phone number of the Fed from its website and called the number. Nobody picked up in New end had become a barrier. Strangely for the Fed that manages funds from countries all over the world, it did not feel necessary to keep a skeleton staff to respond to mails and answer calls in this type of situation, particularly, since it had already raised serious queries with BB and should have been expecting feedback.

Only if it had this system in place, the payment of funds could still be stopped since the hackers received the ments in question, and there is no

money from the banks on February 9. "I can't imagine that Fed keeps its office shut off on weekends. Even if it 16. does, they should have expected that Bangladesh Bank may contact them because of the seriousness of the issue and kept its eyes and ears open to any communication from Bangladesh,"

said a central banker. New York opened on February 8 dent occurred, and will continue to

acknowledged them.

Fortunately banks were closed on that day in the Philippines on account of the Chinese New Year. This is the reason that Rizal Banking Corporation could not release the funds to the hackers' designated account.

However the last opportunity to not order the Philippines banks to stop the payments until after the money had left the accounts.

Eventually the next day, February 9, Rizal Bank released the money to the hackers.

BB'S LAWYER BLAMES FED AND SWIFT SQUARELY

Queen's Counsel Ajmalul Hossain, who now handles the case for Bangladesh Bank, has a very precise

"As far as the Fed is concerned the main allegation that we, on behalf of Bangladesh Bank, have is that it paid out money from our account on the instructions of a third party," Hossain said. "That is now very clearly estab-

"It is very clear to me, from the documents that I have seen, that at the very least the Fed was negligent in not taking appropriate action in respect of the fraudulent payment instructions that

The payment instructions received were clearly inconsistent with all the previous genuine instructions that were given by BB.

"None of them were to individuals. That is one factor," he pointed out. That was precisely one of the queries

"The Fed requested information from Bangladesh Bank after they had actually made the payments. If the Fed Vergara. It queried about the profes- cials started work on Saturday, made a query about some doubtful sional relationship, if any, between February 6 and found their system still transactions we think it was incum-used to access the payments deleted bent upon the Fed to at least send a information on SWIFT server. And that message to the beneficiaries' bank to hold those payments and not make payments on the instructions of the

> That instruction should have gone The BB officials sent two more mes- out immediately when there was a query. Obviously, it raised a red flag; this is in the public domain. No one disputes that.

"Why didn't the Fed act properly as York as it was Saturday and so its week- they should have, as bankers, to ensure the money was not going to third parties fraudulently?" Hossain asked.

Andrea Priest, vice president for media relations at the New York Fed, declined to comment yesterday.

Earlier in a statement, the Fed denied that its payment systems were breached.

"There is no evidence of any attempt to penetrate Federal Reserve systems in connection with the payevidence that any Fed systems were compromised," Priest said on March

"The payment instructions in question were fully authenticated by the SWIFT messaging system in accordance with standard authentication protocols. The Fed has been working with the central bank since the inci-

and illiteracy.

ise several programmes.

at Bangabandhu Bhaban, party central

portrait of Bangabandhu at

SWIFT'S QUESTIONABLE ROLE Bangladesh Bank has identified number of issues in SWIFT implemen-

When SWIFT installed the Real-time gross settlement systems (RTGS), a specialist funds transfer systems where transfer of money or securities takes place, it did not supply Operation

Here, the BB team also seemed to be obliviously of not getting such man-

After RTGS implementation, SWIFT servers have been interfaced with the whole BB network and SWIFT system became interlinked. SWIFT implementation team did not inform the BB

Also intriguing is the SWIFT messages requesting payment of funds were deleted from BB SWIFT Alliance Access Server.

"We also think that the online platform that was used and that was in use was compromised. The online platform contained not only the SWIFT's platform but also the Fed's platform and the BB platform.

"They were integrated. The integration was done by SWIFT itself. SWIFT obviously guarantees that their system is impregnable, but their system was clearly compromised. The investigation by SWIFT has not yet been completed, and we know for a fact there were a long time and a long gap between the requests by the BB for copies of the fake instructions and the receipts of the copies of those instruc-

"The inference we are drawing from the delay is that the malware that was is the reason why we think that the SWIFT server and the Fed were not as safe, metaphorically speaking, as the Bank of England," Hossain added.

The extent of the hacking unfolded very slowly. First it was believed that the hackers placed five requests to transfer \$101 million, but now as the Fed and SWIFT have come up with the full list of requests weeks later, it seems that the hackers actually made 70 requests to transfer \$1.94 billion. Banking and IT experts question why Fed and SWIFT should take such a long time to exactly determine the number

Officials of SWIFT did not immedi ately respond to e-mail for comment.

In a statement earlier, SWIFT said: "We reiterate that the SWIFT network itself was not breached. There is a full investigation underway, on what appears to be a specific and targeted

In the letter, Leibbrandt insisted that SWIFT's core messaging services were not impacted by the issue and those continue to work normally "There is no indication that our network has been compromised," he said

tation that may indicate weakness in SWIFT operations. college officials said.

Guide and necessary safety and security instructions to be followed by the BB's SWIFT operation team.

ual.

teams about any security hole.

of requests.

attack on the victim's local systems."

Gottfried Leibbrandt, chief execu tive officer of SWIFT, wrote a letter to its clients in Bangladesh on March 20.

Bangladesh free from hunger, poverty The ruling party leaders will place wreaths at the Memorial Monument at To mark the day, the AL and different Mujibnagar at 10:00am. The AL will socio-cultural organisations will organorganise a public rally at Sheikh Hasina Mancha in Mujibnagar at 10.30am. AL The ruling AL's programmes include General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam will preside over the rally.

The party will also organise a discussion at the city's Krishibid Institution Auditorium at 3:00pm tomorrow. The PM will place a wreath at the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the AL president, will be present as the chief

SYLHET NURSING COLLEGE

Students leave dormitory as it develops cracks in quake

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Students of Sylhet Nursing College vacated their dormitory yesterday after numerous cracks developed in its walls due to Wednesday's earthquake.

Besides, the dormitory shook during a storm yesterday morning, students said. A total of 375 students lived in the

hostel. After the storm, many refused to stay there. An expert team from the local fire service and the Local Government

Engineering Department already completed an inspection of the building, but was yet to submit a report. The authorities requested the girls to find another place to stay until the

team submits its report, said Shilpi Chakrabharty, principal of the college. The students then left the building. A large number of them started staying

in classrooms as they have exams

going on. Some students told The Daily Star that they feared accidents might occur after the hostel was damaged by the earthquake. As the dormitory started shaking heavily during the storm,

some students started crying in fear. The college was established in 1982 and was named Sylhet Nursing Training Centre. It was a four-storey building. Initially, the ground floor was used as academic compound and the upper floors as hostel for students,

In 2011, the training centre became Sylhet Nursing College and the academic activities were shifted to a new building. The old building has been used only as girls' hostel since then.

The hostel was overcrowded as it accommodated 375 students against its capacity of 250.

The heavy storm shook the building, panicking the students into leaving it, said Hasna Alam Omi, president of Students' Welfare Association.

Principal Shilpi said, "The hostel building has not been declared abandoned. Experts are working on the issue. As the students refused to stay, we asked them to vacate the building."

Syed Haque

FROM PAGE 16 told The Daily Star.

The poet, chief advisor of the Parishad, his family and members of the organisation asked people of the

country to pray for his quick recovery. The distinguished writer who has a unique linguistic style and has worked on a wide range of subjects

Editors Guild

was born on December 27, 1935.

"While a majority of these cases have been filed by activists said to belong to the ruling party, at least one of them has been filed by an assistant public prosecutor of the government. If convicted Anam faces a prison sentence of up to 175 years," notes the Guild statement.

The harassment began during the recent 25 years celebrations of The Daily Star, when Anam was asked by a TV channel anchor which reports he regretted publishing as an editor. Anam candidly admitted that it was some reports he published in 2007 of uncorroborated allegations of corruption made by military intelligence against the current prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, when she was out of power, it says.

Soon after the interview he faced a storm of criticism in social media including by the son of the current prime minister who wrote on Facebook that he wanted, "Mahfuz Anam behind bars and on trial for treason," reads the statement.

It adds that the prime minister reportedly said in a recent public discussion that she wants Anam to resign from the newspaper and is quoted to have said: "Editors will be tried just like we are trying war crimi-

Anam has said he is "flabbergasted" at the cases filed against him, noting that the material published in 2007 was "national news, covered by everybody". He pointed out that even today in Bangladesh, journalists are under pressure to uncritically publish material, among them accounts of civilians killed in confrontations with law enforcers, the statement mentions.

"The Editors Guild of India strongly condemns such pressure tactics against a distinguished colleague and supports his request that Bangladesh government turn off the campaign to harass and intimidate

The Guild will register its concern with the Bangladesh High Commissioner in Delhi as well as the Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka and request them to use their good offices to bring the matter to an amicable end, it said.

Mujibnagar Day today FROM PAGE 16 President Abdul Hamid and Prime to engage themselves in building 7:00am. Bangabandhu was arrested and flown to Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued

Pakistan after the Pakistan army had separate messages on the occasion. cracked down on the Bangalis on the The president in his message said, night of March 25, 1971. He was "Independence is the greatest achievedeclared the first president of the ment of the Bangali nation. It's our People's Republic of Bangladesh, while moral duty to present the proper history vice president Syed Nazrul Islam of our struggle for independence to the hoisting of the national and party flags became the acting president. young generation." He hoped the young generation office and its all district unit offices Tajuddin Ahmad was appointed as

the first prime minister, while would know the true history of the across the country at 6:00am. Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed, M Liberation War and involve themselves Mansur Ali and AHM Quamaruzzaman in nation-building.

In her message, Hasina urged people Bangabandhu Bhaban in the city at guest.