



**HELLO
MAYOR ...**

A LITTLE RESPECT, PLEASE?

National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's memorial plaque is left in an appalling condition on the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Sonargaon intersection in the capital. The texts inscribed on it, below, are totally illegible. The colour of the pillars, which had several flyers pasted on it, has also faded. The state of the plaque not only testifies to the negligence on the authorities' part, but it also says a lot about the sense of respect lacking in our society and poor appreciation of history. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



HIRING OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN KL Confusion remains over lifting of ban

No time frame set yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Malaysian ministers have said their government is planning to lift the ban on recruitment of foreign workers. However, a decision is yet to be made.

Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai yesterday told Malaysian journalists that his country was lifting the freeze on hiring foreign workers for four sectors -- manufacturing, construction, plantation and furniture -- which were facing a major shortage of workers.

"In view of the acute shortage, we have to lift the suspension to allow these sectors to bring in foreign workers," the minister said, reported Malaysian English daily The Star Online.

Without putting any definite time frame on the resumption of recruitment, he added that the Malaysian cabinet was looking to improve the system for hiring foreign workers.

Workers are important for the productivity of these sectors, so if employers face too many uncertainties in hiring workers, it would not go well for Malaysia's economic growth, Liow pointed out.

On April 29, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi also told journalists that his government would soon announce a decision on recruitment of foreign workers.

Datuk Seri Sakib Kusmi, director general of Malaysian immigration department, on Monday told the

New Straits Times that the employers would be allowed to bring in migrant workers again after next month if they could prove that they cannot find Malaysians for the jobs.

On February 18, Malaysian Human Resources Minister Richard Riot and Bangladesh's Expatriates Welfare Minister Nurul Islam signed a memorandum of understanding on recruitment of 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers through the G2C Plus system over the next three years.

But the following day, Malaysia suspended recruitment of workers from abroad.

BD OFFICIALS OPTIMISTIC
Officials at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur expected that the Malaysian government would soon start the process of hiring workers from Dhaka.

"We are very hopeful for the resumption of workers' recruitment by June or July," Bangladesh High Commissioner Shahidul Islam told this newspaper over the phone on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a survey by the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers found that 84 percent manufacturers were facing shortage of labour, with half of them claiming that they had not been able to deliver all the current orders, according to a recent report run by The Star Online of Malaysia.

The survey showed that 146 companies required 13,270 new workers this year to meet their business needs and replace the unfit or returning workers.

RAMPAL POWER PLANT

Indian bank urged not to finance it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 70 NGOs and green groups from home and abroad have appealed to the Export-Import Bank of India to abandon its plans to finance the construction of the Rampal coal power plant in Bangladesh and save the Sundarbans wetlands from destruction.

A global coalition, including BankTrack, Greenpeace International, Rainforest Action Network, and Indian and Bangladeshi green groups, made this appeal yesterday to save tigers.

The open letter of the coalition has called upon Exim Bank of India to live up to its own promise to "recognise its obligations as a citizen of the world" that acts "with due regard to public interests" and therefore not to support the destructive Rampal coal plant.

The Exim Bank of India currently intends to provide a \$1.6 billion loan to the sponsor of the project, the

Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Ltd, a joint venture between the Indian and Bangladeshi state-owned electricity providers.

The 1,320 megawatt Rampal power plant, already under construction, is located just 14 kilometres from the edge of the Sundarbans Reserve Forest, a Unesco World Heritage area.

Critics of the project point out the potential for widespread contamination of the extraordinarily rich ecosystem of the Sundarbans, which would risk wiping out the endangered Bengal tigers, of which only around 100 tigers remain in the forest, as well as affecting numerous other species.

Sharif Jamil, founding member of National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans and joint secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), a coalition of Bangladeshi environmental organisations, expressed his concerns on the climate impact of the project.

Together, against all terrorism

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neighbours," Jaishankar said, adding, "We are in touch and we work closely bilaterally and closely together on those matters."

Briefing reporters after the 90-minute meeting, the Bangladesh foreign secretary said Bangladesh and India are working bilaterally to eliminate extremism and terrorism. "We are also working regionally and internationally..."

He said during the meeting they exchanged notes and said, "Our and their [Bangladesh and India] analysis have a lot of similarities."

Asked about Bangladesh, India and the US working together to counter violent extremism and terrorism, Foreign Secretary Shahidul said, "We are working bilaterally [Bangladesh and India] in this regard. We have discussed about further strengthening the existing mechanism to contain terrorism more effectively."

Jaishankar while briefing reporters said his purpose for the visit was to review the bilateral ties. It is little less than a year since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh when a number of important agreements and

understandings were reached, he said.

"So we sat down to look at the progress in all those issues. I must tell you we had a very good report to present ... we have really moved forward in a number of areas," he said.

The Indian foreign secretary said they reviewed the possibility of more power and LNG supply to Bangladesh from India.

"We looked at some of the power projects which are coming up, including by the Indian private sector in Bangladesh."

He said they had a very positive feedback on coastal shipping.

Jaishankar said they also looked into the reports on Line of Credit, which India offered for a number of projects, and eight of them have been done so "we are in a position to move forward".

Foreign Secretary Shahidul said big strides have been made in various fields, especially the joint working groups on new areas like blue (maritime) economy. "The progress made in the last few months was beyond expectation and was smooth," he added.

He said they discussed the issues related to the borders of the two

countries. The chiefs of the border guards have been sitting for talks and the discussions were progressing satisfactorily.

On a question about Modi's letter to Hasina, he said the Indian prime minister invited the Bangladesh prime minister to attend a summit of Bimstec member countries on the sideline of the BRICS Summit to be held in Goa in mid October.

He said the prime minister has decided in principle to attend.

Responding to a question on the Teesta water sharing issue, the foreign secretary said problems regarding water, drought and the environment have been discussed.

Earlier in the morning, the Indian foreign secretary had a breakfast meeting with a group of eminent citizens at Hotel Sonargaon. The attendees expressed confidence that both Bangladesh and India could resolve their pending issues maintaining good relations.

Prof Anisuzzaman, rights activist Sultana Kamal, former lawmaker Prof Abdul Mannan, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former foreign secretary Shamsheer

Mobin Chowdhury, CEO of Massranga TV Syed Fahim Munaim, Editor of Dhaka Tribune Zafar Sobhan, Editor of Sangbad Altamas Kabir, Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad of PKSE, lawyer Tania Amir, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, former Army chief Lt Gen M Harun-ar-Rashid, AK Faiyazul Haq Raju attended the meeting among others.

The meeting lasted nearly two hours.

Emerging from the meeting, Prof Anisuzzaman told waiting journalists that they discussed about the bilateral relations and how it could be improved.

Asked whether the issue of Bangladesh, India and the US working together came up for discussion, the noted educationists said the Indian foreign secretary told them that he had learnt about it from the newspaper in Dhaka.

"I don't think there is any such base of it."

On the issue, Sultana Kamal said, "There was no such concrete comment from him."

Former AL lawmaker Prof Abdul Mannan quoted the Indian foreign secretary as saying, "America said this, we did not say so."

Hackers steal

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11.2MB for City Bank, and 312KB and 95KB for DBBL and Trust Bank respectively, according to Data Breach Today.

However, information whether the hackers stole money from any of the affected banks was not available.

Preliminary analysis shows that each of the zip files contains at least some customer information or account credentials, said Data Breach Today.

A primary researcher in this case, who requested anonymity, says that the data posted for each of the banks appears to be old -- the latest being from City Bank dates to August 2015. This, he says, raises a question about whether the leaks are the result of recent breaches, as claimed by Bozkurtlar, or if the group has simple aggregated data from older incidents and posted it.

In case of DBBL, the 312 KB archive appears to contain records of customer banking transactions -- either physical or internet banking.

In case of Trust Bank, the file with two spreadsheets contain, among other things, user ID, email, username and encrypted passwords. The latest file is from June 2015.

In case of City Bank, the 11.2 MB dump has a single spreadsheet, which appears to contain the personal information of at least 1 million bank customers. Details include: full name, father's name, mother name, date of birth, age, mailing address, contact number, permanent address and email. The most recent data is from August 2015.

When contacted, Mashrur Arefin, additional managing director of City Bank, said the entire thing is very murky to the bank, and it was investigating the claims.

"We still believe that it is a hoax. We have been told so by the data hacking detection expert we are working with. As of yet, we have not any idea whether it is an incident of hacking or not."

"So far, the samples we have checked, only two or three percent of the names mentioned there are our customers. The rest 97-98 percent of the names are unknown to us. We are actually putting it in the hands of experts."

"City Bank has checked 58 pieces of data and found only two names of its customers."

He, however, admitted that the dumping of the data shows the vulnerability of Bangladesh's banking system.

Arefin also said the bank's Indian consultant told the bank that it has become a daily affair in India. "They make a hue and cry about data leaks and are making opportunities for a number of consulting firms to do business."

The news of the data leaks came three months after Bangladesh Bank lost \$81 million in the biggest ever banking heist in history. Investigators are yet to catch the perpetrators.

Abul Kashem Md Shirin, deputy managing director of DBBL, rejected the hacking claim as baseless.

He said the bank's customer data have not been stolen.

The data which have been dumped online are already published data and contain the locations or names of branches and ATMs, he said. "They have taken the data and posted on their website."

He said the bank's published ATM monitoring data, which are available with the bank's vendors, were shown as leaked.

Akram Sayeed, head of IT at Trust Bank, also said information relating to the bank was not correct.

"Secondly, our customers are not facing any risk, as their information, our database and data have all remained well-protected."

He said these claims might have been made to create panic.

The Turkish hacking group has taken credit for the recent attacks on Qatar National Bank and UAE's InvestBank.



Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, 3rd on the right row, is meeting his Bangladesh counterpart Shahidul Haque, in white shirt on the left row, at the state guesthouse Padma in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION

Tension in Bandarban

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group, 'Arakan Army,' said the sector commander.

The BGB is investigating the matter and preparing a protest letter to be sent to the authorities on Myanmar side, he said.

The helipad of the camp inside the remote Sangu Reserve forest of the upazilla was slightly damaged by the shelling, said Lt Col Reza of 57 BGB Battalion.

Additional forces of the BGB have been deployed at border points and patrols have been intensified, he added.

Meanwhile, tension is mounting at the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar, local people said.

BGB chief Maj Gen Aziz Ahmed said Bangladesh had expressed concern and conveyed a strong protest to the Myanmar Army and Myanmar Border Guard Police following the incident.

They have been warned that if any further shell is fired aiming at Border Operation Posts in Bangladesh, the BGB will retaliate and "they will have to take the responsibility for that," he told The Daily Star by phone.

"They, however, denied shelling. It has been assumed that the shells were not aimed at us," he said, adding those might have landed inside Bangladesh territory during a fight inside Myanmar against

Arakan Army as the width of the bordering area is very narrow.

Replying to a query, the BGB boss, however, said this type of high transitional weapons is used by the Myanmar Army.

On August 26 last year, Myanmar's separatist group Arakan Army swooped on a BGB patrol team in remote Boro Modak area of Thanchi, leaving two border guards injured.