



**Ansar members searching for firearms near a Rohingya refugee camp in Nayapara of Teknaf in Cox's Bazar yesterday after armed robbers shot dead an Ansar commander and looted 11 firearms from an Ansar barracks inside the camp.**

PHOTO: STAR

## Jessore woman kills herself

'Torture by son' could be reason

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Failing to bear "torture by her son", a woman committed suicide by taking poison in Nischintapur village of Jessore Sadar upazila early yesterday. Deceased's younger son Dollar said his elder brother Rubel often tortured their mother Nazma Begum, 45, as their mother and Rubel's wife Khadiza Khatun quarrelled over different family affairs. Nazma was locked in an altercation with Khadiza over such a matter around 2:00pm on Thursday. When Rubel returned home from field, Khadiza complained to him against his mother. Rubel then beat up his mother, injuring her. He also hurled abuse at his mother, added Dollar.

Around 9:00pm, Nazma took poison. Nazma was taken to Jessore Medical College Hospital where she died around 2:00am.

Dollar said Rubel went into hiding after the incident.

Ilias Hossain, officer-in-charge of Jessore Kotwali Police Station, said no one lodged any complaint in this connection yet.

## EU-TURKEY DEAL

### Migrant arrivals falls sharply

AFP, Geneva

A controversial EU-Turkey deal dramatically cut the number of migrant arrivals in Greece last month, data showed yesterday, even as a row between Brussels and Ankara threatened to sink the agreement.

Last month 3,360 migrants and refugees landed on the Greek islands, compared with 26,971 in March -- an 88 percent drop, according to figures from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The EU border agency Frontex also reported what it described as a "dramatic" slowdown, saying it had registered 2,700 arrivals in Greece last month.

The figures are the first for a full month-long period since the EU-Turkey deal came into force in March and will be seen as a key measure of its effectiveness.

Under the March deal, Turkey agreed to take back migrants landing on Greek islands in exchange for incentives, including billions of euros in aid and visa-free European travel for its citizens.

The agreement is the cornerstone of the EU's plan to curb a crisis that has seen 1.25 million Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan and other migrants enter Europe since January 2015.

The new figures underline the powerful deterrent effect of the deal, and the closure of the borders in eastern Europe, which has discouraged many from making the crossing to Greece.

The most controversial provisions, including the mass return of migrants from Greece to Turkey and the exchange of Syrians, have not been implemented on a large-scale.

The agreement had run into widespread criticism from the United Nations, rights groups and several EU member states even before it came into force.

Medical charity MSF on Friday described it as "a historic abdication" of Europe's moral and legal responsibilities.

More than 850,000 people -- most of them fleeing conflict in war-ravaged Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan -- arrived on the Greek islands last year alone, and so far this year another 155,765 people have landed, UN refugee agency figures show.

## NY Fed responds

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The BB expects to get back a portion of the money.

BB Lawyer Ajmalul Hossain earlier told The Daily Star that the Fed was negligent in not taking appropriate action in respect of the fraudulent payment instructions that were received.

"The Fed requested information from Bangladesh Bank after they had actually made the payments. If the Fed made a query about some doubtful transactions, we think it was incumbent upon the Fed to at least send a message to the beneficiaries' bank to hold those payments and not make payments on instructions of the beneficiaries," he told The Daily Star in mid-April.

The Fed replied only to the queries raised by the Congresswoman.

It, however, did not say anything about why it did not stop payments of the funds from its system even though the Fed had suspected something wrong in the orders. Nor did it take any step to ask the banks in Sri Lanka and the Philippines to stop payments to the private beneficiaries.

The funds were not released to the hackers until February 9, five days after the Fed raised red flags and started sending out queries.

In its reply, the Fed said every payment that is executed by the New York Fed on behalf of its central bank account-holders results in an advice being issued to the account-holder, indicating that its instructions have been carried out.

"The advice is sent immediately after the payment is executed. It is the responsibility of the account-holder to review such notices," it said.

On February 4, cyber criminals sent 35 orders via the SWIFT financial messaging system to transfer roughly \$951 million from the BB account with the Fed to a number of private accounts in other countries.

The Fed executed five of the orders, transferring a total of \$101 million to four private accounts in the Philippines and one to the account of a non-governmental organisation in Sri Lanka.

The Fed didn't carry out the remaining 30 transfer orders, involving \$850 million, and instead sought reconfirmation from the BB.

Replying to the US Congresswoman's query that why the Fed blocked the last 30 transfer orders, but not the first 5 orders, the Fed said, "On February 4, the New York Fed contacted the central bank of Bangladesh to inquire about the purpose of certain pending payments that had not yet been executed.

"Consistent with our procedures and in part as a result of determining that there was potentially suspicious activity with respect to the pending payments, on the next day, February 5, the New York Fed reviewed all transactional activity in the Bangladesh account from February 4 that had been executed before the potentially suspicious activity was detected.

"Based on this review, on February 5 we again contacted the central bank of Bangladesh, this time with additional inquiries about the purpose of certain payments that had been executed the prior day."

It also said when the Fed received an authenticated payment instruction via SWIFT, there are additional processing steps that must take place before the Fed acts on the instruction.

Unlike the SWIFT authentication protocols, these steps are not designed to protect our customers from an unauthorised transfer. Rather, the New York Fed performs diligence to protect itself from unwittingly transferring dollars to a sanctioned jurisdiction or person.

"Automated systems screen the payment instructions for sanctions compliance and also to ensure the instructions are properly formatted. If an instruction fails one of these automated screens, a New York Fed

employee will manually review the payment instruction for the cause of the failure."

The Fed said the vast majority of authenticated instructions received from foreign official account holders are not flagged for manual review by the automated systems.

On the afternoon of February 4, the Fed said, after certain earlier payments had been screened and cleared for execution, several instructions submitted in a batch of 30 were flagged for sanctions compliance review.

"These instructions were nagged close in time to each other. As a result of the manual review or the group of nagged messages, the New York Fed determined that the activity in question was potentially suspicious and the payment instructions should not be executed without additional inquiry to the central bank, including an inquiry as to the intended purpose of the payments."

In response to the reply, Maloney, the Ranking Member of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Capital Markets, said, "While the New York Fed's response to my initial inquiry provides key information about the Bangladesh Bank incident, I remain concerned that there are critical security gaps in the international payment system.

"I will be urging the New York Fed to expedite its review of its security protocols to ensure that this kind of brazen cyber heist doesn't happen again. We must ensure the safety and soundness of international monetary transactions."

Maloney sent the letter to the Fed president on March 22.

The New York Fed provides banking services to about 250 central banks and other foreign official institutions. Foreign central banks establish accounts at the New York Fed in order to accommodate international monetary transactions, settle their US dollar obligations, and hold their foreign reserves.

## LIBYA ARMS EMBARGO

### US ready to loosen grip

AFP, Washington

The US government is ready to loosen a ban on arms exports to Libya, in a bid to help the country's fledgling unity government fight the Islamic State group, officials and diplomats have told AFP.

Under White House-backed plans, the United Nations would carve out exemptions to an embargo introduced by the Security Council in 2011, during Muammar Gaddafi's failed attempt to suppress a popular uprising.

"If the Libyan government prepares a detailed and coherent list of things that it wants to use to fight ISIL and responds to all the requirements of the exemption, I think that Council members are going to look very seriously at that request," a senior administration official told AFP.

"There is a very healthy desire inside of Libya to rid themselves of ISIL, and I think that is something we should be supporting and responding to," the official said, using an acronym for the Islamic State group.

Gaddafi's regime was deposed with the help of Nato airpower in 2011 and he was ultimately killed in October of that year, but the country has been in turmoil since.

Dozens of militia groups have carved up the country into virtual fiefdoms, and two rival governments have been formed.

Western nations and many Libyans have watched in horror as the jihadist IS group has emerged from the chaos to control a swathe of central Libya around Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte.

With its port and airport, there are fears the jihadists could use the Mediterranean city as a staging post for attacks on Europe.

## NIZAMI EXECUTION Pakistan 'to raise the issue at UN'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Amid an escalation of diplomatic tensions, Pakistan prime minister's Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz yesterday said the country would raise the issue of hanging of war criminal Motiur Rahman Nizami at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and other countries.

Speaking in the Senate, he regretted the executions of "political opponents" by the Bangladesh government saying "the Islamic world as well as world community is expressing their concerns over it," reports Radio Pakistan.

Aziz said the international community should take notice of the hangings, which are violation of human rights and the tripartite agreement between Pakistan, India and Bangladesh in 1974.

Leader of the House Raja Zafarul Haq said the Muslim countries should jointly prepare a plan to prevent the executions of political opponents in Bangladesh.

Earlier, the members of the House appreciated Turkey for 'withdrawing' its envoy from Bangladesh and said Pakistan should adopt a strong stance on the matter, added Radio Pakistan.

## 35 infected

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also the head of an anthrax-monitoring team in the district.

Prof Mahmudur Rahman, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), said the disease was a "regular phenomenon" in Sirajganj and Meherpur.

"There is nothing to panic. The affected ones are being treated," he said.

He also suggested that people should neither slaughter any sick animal like cow or goat nor eat their meat.

Shahed Mohammad Sadekul Islam, civil surgeon of Sirajganj, said apart from providing treatment to the affected people, the district health office also started generating awareness about anthrax among the locals.

The district livestock department also started vaccinating the cattle in the affected areas against the disease, he added.

## Army gets along

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seats in parliament which gives it a veto on changes to the constitution.

In the first week of her administration, military lawmakers made clear their opposition to a bill creating a position of state counsellor - a powerful advisory role for Suu Kyi - by refusing to participate in a vote on it.

But yesterday, Min Aung Hlaing struck a conciliatory tone.

"We're carrying out our duties under the leadership of the government. This is in accord with constitutional provisions," he said when asked about the relationship between the military and Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD).

He said the army reported important matters to President Htin Kyaw, who is a Suu Kyi loyalist hand-picked by her, and, when necessary, to Suu Kyi as well.

He said the military had to seek the approval of the president when it came to certain budget matters.

The 2008 military-drafted charter bars Suu Kyi from becoming president because her children are not Myanmar citizens. Her late husband was a British academic. She is state counsellor and foreign minister.

## Recent attacks

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"terrorists" who seek to stifle independent thought and violently attack those who disagree with them.

"We believe the government is working to address this problem. Our focus is on supporting their efforts to do so effectively while still respecting human rights."

Trudeau said Bangladesh has a proud and historic tradition of being a pluralistic society that values diversity and welcomes the free exchange of ideas.

"These are the very values that these extremists are attacking," she said.

When she was asked to what extent extremist organisation like al-Qaeda or ISIS established their foothold in Bangladesh, the US State Department spokesperson said, "I believe the Government of Bangladesh has spoken specifically to your question."

She also said the US would continue to stand with the Bangladesh government as they took a look at violent extremism across the spectrum. Since February 2013, five secular online activists, a publisher, a gay rights activist and his friend have been hacked to death allegedly for their secular writings and views by militants in Bangladesh.

## Seven injured

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Road in Barisal city.

Johnson Merry Guha, assistant secretary of Baptist Church in the colony, claimed that in 1969, this land was donated by British citizen Reverend Gordon Soddy to Bangladesh Baptist Association, a wing of Baptist Church Trustee.

It's a non-transferable and non-saleable property. It's designated for sheltering the homeless families of the community, she said.

She added that a case is pending with a court against the Olympic Properties Limited, which claims to have purchased the land.

"We would have vacated the land had the court ordered it. But the influential company has all along been trying to evict us using muscles."

Suprova Baroi, a member of the community, said eight to 10 hired goons carrying sticks took part in the attack in presence of Ansar Ali Howlader, general manager of Olympic Properties, and other labourers and officials of the company.

However, the land grabbing bid failed as the community members refused to leave.

Of the injured, Ranjit Mallik, president of Baptist Bastuhara (homeless) Colony, Shova Bala and Jiban, were

admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Contacted, Ansar Ali Howlader said the company bought the property from Reverend Asim Kumar Baroi, secretary of Bangladesh Baptist Association, for Tk 8.82 crore on February 8, 2012. It planned to construct a private medical college and child hospital at the site.

When the Christian community people came to know about the deal, they lodged a case and took out a court injunction against the land.

In 2012, Reverend Asim had admitted selling the land. But, according to Johnson Merry Guha, nobody has the right to sell the trustee's property.

Asked about yesterday's incident, Ansar Ali said it was an internal clash of the community as some of the residents wanted to evacuate the place and others stopped them.

Asked about his presence there, he said he went there to take control of the company's property but left as the clash broke out.

Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Barisal Kotwali Police Station, said police visited the spot.

He added, "Nobody has the right to evict the Baptist community. If the court issues an order, we will act accordingly."

## Promotion for prestige

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including the fuel cost for his car, as a joint secretary. He would now earn over Tk 1.02 lakh, including the house rent. The house rent of officials residing in government quarters is deducted from their salaries.

About 200 deputy secretaries and senior assistant secretaries are likely to be upgraded to the ranks of joint secretary and deputy secretary in a day or two. That means the government would have to spend an additional Tk 20 lakh a month for them, according to a senior secretary.

A joint secretary would get over Tk 84,000 a month as salaries and allowances, up from over Tk 75,000 as a deputy secretary.

Besides, there are around 800 deputy secretaries and senior assistant secretaries who have been trying to get promotions.

After the latest promotions, the government now has 452 additional secretaries against some 120 posts, 882 joint secretaries against 350 posts and 1,298 deputy secretaries against 830 posts.

Seeking anonymity, a joint secretary of the agriculture ministry told this correspondent that promoting officials on in situ basis would continue until the end of 2018 when most of the recently promoted additional and joint secretaries will retire from service.

"It's true that the government will have to spend additional money now. Had our promotions been given in due time, we would have earned much more money and honour. We became victim of a promotion system where politics, lobbying and influence dominated over merit and performance," claimed another joint secretary.

Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam on Thursday told this newspaper that although the promoted officials will get higher salaries

and perks, most of them will remain in situ, meaning they will discharge their previous duties at the same offices.

**MORE PROMOTIONS PLANNED** Sources in the agriculture ministry said the government has made another move to promote the officials of the 21st and 22nd batches of the Bangladesh Civil Service within three to four months.

The annual confidential and intelligence reports and reports on discipline of the officials have already been sought by the public administration ministry to evaluate their merit and performance.

Sources added that the authorities concerned have recommended names of 437 admin cadre officials for promotion. The list will include 25 percent more names from 27 other cadre services.

## 80 killed

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However, Dr AKM Saiful Islam, professor at the institute of water of flood management of Buet, said, "It seems the frequency of lightning has increased slightly."

Referring to studies carried out abroad, he said if the global temperature rises by 1 degree Celsius, it could increase the number of lightning strikes by up to 12 percent.

He also pointed out deforestation and the anomalous behaviour of weather as probable reasons behind the rise in lightning storms.

According to reports published in The Daily Star, at least 635 people were killed by lightning between 2010 and 2015. The actual number is believed to be much higher since many incidents go unreported.

The newspaper reports suggest that 51 percent of the victims are farmers, and most of them are struck by lightning while working in the fields.

## Saudi women face

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The issue has been a source of growing debate in the kingdom, with high profile cases leading to almost 35,000 tweets under a trending Arabic hashtag which translates as "Flogging of A Woman Checking Her Husband's Phone".

Al-Temyat, a legal adviser who described himself as a "member" of the Saudi government's Family Security Programme, confirmed in an interview with the Makkah newspaper that individuals would be brought before the court if a lawsuit was filed against them.

The legal guidance comes in spite of much-vaunted attempts at social reform under King Salman. The Family Security Programme is part of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, which was established by a Royal decree and designed to improve access to social services and develop local communities under the objectives of "Vision 2030".

A female twitter user said "They [men] get annoyed of women 'only' checking her husband's phone, whilst a woman lives all of her life in an 'inquisition'. Whether that is regarding her clothing, sayings or behaviour."

Another person called Salim tweeted saying that in order to make marital life "less complicated, a husband should share his private life with his life so they can live a life free from suspicion and doubt".

On the other hand, Abdurahman highlights other significant problems in the Saudi community, stating: "what about a man who beats his wife? What about a man who does not give his wife her rights? The law should do something about this too."

In his interview with Makkah, Al-Temyat said checking someone's phone was a Ta'zir offence, coming

under judicial discretion because it has no definition or prescribed punishment under Islam.

He said the law would apply to all individuals checking their partner's or friend's phone, if there were witnesses or evidence that the offence took place.

The judge's ruling will be based on the damage caused to the victim, the person whose privacy has been violated, he said.

As a result, the judge's verdict on the type of punishment will be based on caused damage, deciding between jail, receiving lashes and a fine - or possibly all three.

## 3 mortar shells

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area, some two kilometres off the Myanmar border.

"This type of high transitory weapons might be used by the Myanmar Army or the separatist group [Arakan Army] of Myanmar."

The shells were kept at the Bulu Para BGB camp. An expert team from the Bangladesh Army team was expected to visit the camp on Saturday to dispose of the weapons, he said.

The sector commander also said the situation on the border was under control and that they were investigating the matter seriously.

On Wednesday night, six mortar shells were fired targeting the BGB camp from Myanmar border.

In retaliation, the BGB fired two mortar shells.

The attackers could not be traced as the incident happened at night, the sector commander said earlier.

Tension has been prevailing on the border since the incident.

Additional BGB members were deployed and the patrol on the border was intensified, said Col Habibur.