Warning shot fired in Indonesian migrant boat stand-off

AFP, Lhoknga

Indonesian authorities faced pressure yesterday to allow dozens of Sri Lankan migrants stranded on a boat for almost a week to disembark, as witnesses said a warning shot was fired in chaotic scenes near the vessel

The 44 migrants, who include many women and children, have been stuck on the Indian-flagged vessel resting in shallow waters off Aceh province since last Saturday after it broke down en route to Australia.

The western province has refused to allow the migrants, who are believed to be minority Tamils, to disembark and have said the boat will be towed out to international waters to continue on its journey after repairs are completed.

Their refusal came despite Indonesian Vice President Jusuf Kalla ordering local authorities to allow them to disembark. Insurgents in Aceh fought against rule from Jakarta until 2005, and provincial authorities still disagree with the central government on occasion.

On Thursday five women attempted to disembark from the boat, which is now stranded by a beach in the town of Lhoknga, and a crowd of local villagers surged towards the vessel, an AFP journalist at the scene said.

Police fired a warning shot into the air during the chaos, the journalist said. Officials went to talk to the women and they climbed back aboard the boat. "There was quite a lot of distress, a

lot of crying," said Lilianne Fan, international director of Aceh NGO the Geutanyoe Foundation, whose team on the ground witnessed the incident.

Rampal power FROM PAGE 16

of energy finance studies at IEEFA, prepared the report. The study pointed out 10 key risks

of the project. According to the research, the

plant would impose upward pressure on electricity rates in Bangladesh; significant subsidies have failed to rein in costs of Rampal electricity; delay in constructing the plant would raise its capital costs and the project faces major community opposition.

Besides, there is no guarantee that the plant would achieve an 80-85 percent plant load factor (PLF) over the life of the project; the plant's reliance on imported coal would expose consumers to vagaries of global coal markets; the project site is on the channel of storm surge; there is lack of clear management plan for accidents and emergencies; and the financing of the plant would put Indian Exim Bank at risk. As Bangladesh electricity system is already loosing nearly \$1 billion a year, the Rampal would make the situation even worse, said the report.

The proposed 1,320-megawatt plant would be implemented by Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Limited (BIFPCL), a joint venture of Bangladesh Power Development Board and India's largest power producer, NTPC

Limited. The project, said the report, was being designed around outdated supercritical technology. It was being heavily subsidised by the Indian and Bangladeshi governments.

Without subsidies, the plant's generation costs would have been 62 percent higher than the current average costs of electricity production in

Bangladesh. The project poses specific risks to EXIM Bank as it is set to provide a loan of \$988 billion at interest rates well below market levels, said the

research. Although the global coal price is low now, it is more than possible that the cost of coal use would go up and the world would adopt more stringent carbon policy, the IEEFA said. "Rampal customers would bear the

brunt of such increases." The Bangladesh government has started to seriously pursue gridconnected solar power generation, aiming for 1.7GW of solar capacity by 2021 and 6GW by 2030. It has drawn investment capital proposals

from around the world in this sector, and could move significantly faster, the report added. Uzzal Chakraborty, managing

director of BIFPCL, said he couldn't understand why the report focused only on Rampal plant, whereas there are many other proposed coal-fired power plants in the country.

It would have been better had the research organisation discussed other coal-fired projects, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked whether the electricity price would go up, he said the government had been providing subsidy for gas to keep the electricity price low. But the electricity price would not increase that much as forecasted in the report.

UK PM urges tolerance

the country in two and sparked fiery debate on both sides, Cameron said it was time to "stand back".

"Where we see hatred, where we find division, where we see intolerance, we must drive it out of our politics and out of our public life and out of our communities," Cameron said.

Corbyn said the correct response to the killing was to strengthen Britain's democracy and free speech. "We all need to come together to

understand that everyone must have

protection and security in order to function in a democratic society," the Labour leader urged. Meanwhile, Britain's main political parties have announced that they will not contest the parliamentary seat left

vacant by the murder of the Labour MP. The Conservatives said this afternoon they would stand down in Batley and Spen "as a mark of respect" to the MP ahead of an unprecedented joint

statement by Jeremy Corbyn and David Cameron. The two party leaders, normally bitter rivals, jointly asked the nation to unite in a joint address in the constituency yesterdayafternoon.

The Liberal Democrats and Ukip soon after confirmed that they too would not contest the seat, meaning Labour's candidate is very likely to be elected unopposed - barring a challenge by independents or minnows.

The news comes as it is announced that Parliament will be recalled on Monday to allow MPs to pay tribute to Ms Cox. Many commentators have ques-

tioned whether the killing could be linked to the referendum that has stoked tensions by touching on issues of national identity and immigration. Both sides have halted referendum

campaigning as a mark of respect with only a week to go until the knife-edge vote on June 23. Cox, a former aid worker also

known for campaigns for Syrian refugees, was killed Thursday outside a library where she was supposed to meet constituents in Birstall, just a few miles (kilometres) from where she was

Abdallah, 56, told AFP he heard woman on the ground.

"Her face was full of blood," said Ben Abdallah, who campaigned alongside the Labour politician before she was elected to parliament for the first time last year.

Police arrested a 52-year-old man, named by media as local Thomas Mair. main" side prevailing.

Described as a friendly loner by neighbours, Mair also battled mental illness and allegedly had ties to white

Rothwell, told British media the gunman had shouted "put Britain first" repeatedly during the attack. Police say they are not seeking any other individ-

Angela Merkel urged British political parties to tone down the debate in the final week.

ation of... language do not help to foster an atmosphere of respect," she Cox, the first British MP to be mur-

dered since Ian Gow was killed by Irish

Republican Army paramilitaries in a car bomb in 1990, had complained to police earlier this year about "malicious communications". In March, police arrested a man

man in custody for Thursday's attack, the police said. The Times newspaper said police had been considering putting in place

US advocacy group the Southern Poverty Law Center said that Mair, who had lived in Birstall for decades, was a "dedicated supporter" of National Alliance, once the primary neo-Nazi organisation in the United

The advocacy group said he had spent over \$620 (550 euros) on reading material from the National Alliance, which advocated the creation of an all-white homeland and the eradication of Jewish people.

chased a handbook with instructions on how to make a gun, noting that witnesses told British media the assailant used a gun which appeared "oldfashioned" or "homemade". Cox, whose first speech in parlia-

ment defended immigration and diversity, lived with her husband Brendan and their two children aged three and five, on a houseboat on the Eyewitness Hichem Ben Thames near Tower Bridge.

two shots and saw the petite suggested Britons would likely vote to weighed on financial markets and sent the pound tumbling.

The pound rose with Asian stocks Friday after the previous day's selloff, as investors judged the tragedy increased the likelihood of the "Re-

Police sue Faizullah

FROM PAGE 1 and Jahin, 20.

Police said Faizullah, who had "admitted" to be a member of Hizb-ut Tahrir, divulged the five names during his primary interrogation.

Asked about their further details, a top police official who is involved in the investigation, quoted the arrestee and said they were also from the banned militant outfit.

"We're verifying the claims of Faizullah to find out whether he is telling the truth or trying to mislead the investigators," said the official, wishing not to be named.

Police sources said apart from Faizullah, Samil and Palash directly took part in the attack carried out on Ripon Chakraborty, a lecturer of mathematics at Government Nazimuddin University College, at his home.

The other three named accused were part of a "backup team".

The men were about to launch a similar attack in a different district, but their plan was foiled as Faizullah was caught.

Meanwhile, a Madaripur court yesterday placed Faizullah on a 10day remand in the case.

The court passed the order after Madaripur Sadar Police Station Subinspector (SI) Abdul Barek placed the

SI Ayub Ali filed the attempted murder case with the police station in on the spot. the early hours of yesterday.

No one from the victim's family was willing to file the case themselves, said police sources.

Police were trying to arrest the other

On Wednesday and Thursday, police raided several places in the capital to nab the attackers. Faizullah, a student of Uttara High School and College, was also taken

Shahidul Islam, assistant registrar of Barisal Medical College and Hospital, where the teacher was undergoing treatment, said he was now out of danger.

tives from the Minority Watch yesterday met the deputy commissioner and the superintendent of police of Madaripur and demanded proper investigation into the incident and the

One lakh people

FROM PAGE 2

it is necessary to dredge the river so that it can capture additional water during

A large area in Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal and northern Bangladesh has been flooded as excessive water has been released through the two barrages in Sikkim and West Bengal states, reports our Kolkata correspondent Subrata Acharya.

The release of water has created danger of large-scale flood in Bangladesh's northern districts. Insiders said excessive water has

been released from the Gajoldoba barrage in West Bengal due to flash flood caused by untimely rainfall. The government sources say 1,200 cusec of water has been released, but locals claim the amount would be several times higher.

It has been apprehended that lowlying areas fed by the Teesta in Bangladesh will be affected by the

dent that the Barrage sources informed

flash flood. Contacted over cellphone, West Bengal Irrigation Minister Rajib Banerjee yesterday told this correspon-

him that 1,200 cusec water was released on Tuesday.

Asked if they had considered that the water released from the barrage might affect Bangladesh, the minister said, "The water has been released by Sikkim. As Sikkim is on the upstream when water is released, it will flow downwards. However, Sikkim should have given us a note before releasing the water." However, Rajib Banerjee expressed

sorrow over the creation of flood situations in Bangladesh. He said, "We don't want any neighbouring country to be affected due to us." West Bengal state government has

meanwhile issued a "Yellow Alert" from Domohani at Teesta to bordering Mekhliganj since Tuesday morning.

The western districts in West Bengal have been experiencing heavy rainfall for the last one week due to a depression. The rainfall caused pressure of excessive water on Gajoldoba barrage due to flash flood.

Local people have complained that the authorities concerned released water at Gajoldoba without any prior announcement.

CPJ lauds arrest of publisher Tutul's attacker

Seeks release of another publishing house owner Manik

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists a New York-based organisation, has hailed the arrest of Mohammad Sumon Hossain Patwari, a suspected member of a banned Islamist outfit who allegedly took part in the killing attempt on publisher Ahmedur Rashid Tutul in October last year. According to police, Sumon, 20, is

an alleged operative of banned Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT). "We welcome progress in the

investigation into the attack on publisher Ahmed Rahmi Tutul, and hope for developments in the cases of other Bangladeshi publishers and journalists who have been assaulted or killed," said Bob Dietz, CPJ's Asia programme coordinator.

Unknown assailants attacked Tutul and hacked Faisal Arefin Dipan of Jagriti Prokashani to death on October 31 last year.

On the other hand, the CPJ demanded immediate release of arrested Shamsuzzoha Manik, who owns Ba-Dwip Prakashan publishing

Manik was charged under Information and Communication Technology Act, which criminalises the criticism of religion.

First-ever Indian Eid visa camp ends

UNB, Dhaka

The first-ever 12-day Eid visa camp, arranged by the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, ended on Thursday.

Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Harsh Vardhan Shringla termed the effort a "milestone event" in the Bangladesh-India relations and mentioned that visa will not be a problem if anyone wants to visit India.

The camp began on June 4 and some 56,318 passports were deposited during the camp.

The applicants will get one year multiple entry visas, which will cover Eid, Diwali and the Christmas celebrations.

College student

FROM PAGE 1 mobile phone set.

at gunpoint.

Following this, some 10-12 criminals entered the house of Asif around 2:00am and took the family hostage

Hearing Asif and his other family members' screams, locals surrounded the house. The criminals then opened fire on Asif, killing him

While the criminals were fleeing they also fired on the locals. Monir Hossain, Mohammad Mohan and Mohammad Belal were hit by bul-

The deceased's family alleged that Shahed and Shanto were involved in

the attack. However, this correspondent could not contact Shahed or Shanto for comments as they went into hiding.

The injured were admitted to Noakhali Medical College Hospital. As their condition deteriorated, they were shifted to a private clinic for better treatment.

2,500 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 16

Around 4,00,000 Bangladeshis are working legally in different sectors in Malaysia, but there is no exact number of the undocumented Bangladeshis there, said sources at the high commission.

Currently, Malaysia is not hiring

any foreign workers after the government of the Southeast Asian country announced suspending recruitment of foreign workers from all countries, including Bangladesh, on February 19, a day after Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur signed a deal over hiring workers.

On February 18, Malaysian Human Resources Minister Richard Riot and Bangladesh Expatriates' Welfare Minister Nurul Islam signed a memorandum of understanding on recruiting 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers through G2G Plus mechanism over the next three years.

Zahid Hamidi, however, told Malaysian parliament that the suspension had caused a loss of some (Malaysian Ringgit) RM24 billion, reports The Star. The country's Human Resources

Ministry, the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) and several agencies were conducting a study to determine how many foreign workers the country needs in its different sectors, he said. "The findings and recommenda-

tions will be submitted to the Special Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers which will decide on what best to do," The Star quoted Zahid as saying.

EU rolls over Crimea sanctions for a year

AFP, Brussels

The European Union yesterday rolled over for another year sanctions imposed to protest Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, which the bloc deems illegal. The announcement comes amid

growing speculation the bloc will in coming days also renew much wider economic sanctions against Russia for aiding and abetting pro-Moscow rebels in eastern Ukraine. "The European Council (of mem-

ber states) has extended until June 23 2017, the restrictive measures adopted in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia," a statement said. The Crimea sanctions prohibit

certain exports and imports, and ban investment and tourism services by EU-based companies there. The sanctions were imposed in the

wake of the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. The broader sanctions targeting economic sectors in Russia were imposed after the shooting down of

Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in July

2014, blamed by the EU on pro-

Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine. EU diplomatic sources say the economic sanctions will likely be extended for another six months from end-July on the grounds that Russia has failed to live up to its commitments to the Minsk ceasefire accord in

The extension is set to be approved despite growing calls in some EU countries for them to be relaxed.

The EU has also imposed a separate set of visa ban and asset freeze sanctions against individual Russian and Ukrainian figures for backing the separatist cause in early 2014. These measures run until September. The conflict in eastern Ukraine has

claimed some 9,400 lives and plunged relations with Moscow into the deep

At the same time, some EU member states led by Italy make the case that Russia is a neighbour and its help and cooperation is needed in tackling key shared problems, such as the Islamic State terror threat.

For its part, Russia says the sanctions regime is pointless if damaging, and President Vladimir Putin regularly insists Crimea will never be given back.

Yesterday, Putin told a top economic forum in Saint Petersburg he was ready for a fresh start -- if the EU also played its part.

"We hold no grudge and are willing to reach out to our European partners but obviously this can't be a one-sided game," Putin said, stressing that it was the EU's introduction of sanctions which had led to the "collapse" in relations.

Yemen shells 'wound 2' at Saudi border

AFP, Riyadh

Shelling from Yemen has wounded two people in southern Saudi Arabia, the kingdom's civil defence agency said late Thursday, in a rare breach of calm along the border.

The civil defence's Twitter account said the shelling occurred in the Tawal area of Saudi's Jazan region, without providing further details. Dozens of civilians and Saudi

soldiers were killed in fire from Yemen along the border after a Saudiled military coalition launched operations in March 2015 against Iranbacked Huthi rebels who overran much of Yemen.

Indian court jails 11 fire on February 27, 2002 that was

FROM PAGE 16

quate."

eastern Ukraine.

term till the end of life to all the accused," said public prosecutor RC Kodekar after the sentencing. "So (the judgement) is not at all

Judge PB Desai had earlier ruled the massacre at the Gulbarg Society complex was a spontaneous attack, rejecting claims of a pre-planned conspiracy against Muslims.

satisfactory. It is lenient and inade-

Yesterday, he described the religious violence as "one of the darkest days of civil society in Gujarat" and urged the government not to commute, shorten or otherwise alter the sentences. NO HELP CAME

More than 100 people have already been convicted over the riots, including one of Modi's former state ministers who was jailed for instigating some of the killings. Jafri has said her husband, a former

opposition Congress party lawmaker, repeatedly called police for help, but none came. She is fighting a separate legal battle demanding that Modi and others be

held responsible for failing to stop the The issue has long dogged Modi, who was accused of turning a blind eye to the violence as head of Gujarat state.

He was cleared of any wrongdoing in 2012 by a Supreme Court-ordered investigation. The violence was triggered by the

death of 59 Hindu pilgrims in a train

initially blamed on Muslims. Hindus bent on revenge rampaged

through Muslim neighbourhoods in some of India's worst religious riots since independence from Britain and partition in 1947. More than 300 witnesses gave evidence during the years-long trial that

began in 2009 but was delayed by legal challenges. Several of the original accused have since died. Police were deployed in large num-

bers at the court in Ahmedabad ahead

of the sentencing, which was attended by the defendants' families. Rights activist Teesta Setalvad, who has been campaigning for justice for the riot victims, said her trust would

appeal against the lower sentences handed to 13 men. "We had argued for exemplary life imprisonment for all the 24 accused,"

she said. "We are very disappointed with the lesser sentences. We made a strong case that all of the accused were part of a willfully armed mob ... we will appeal

this," said Setalvad. A day before the sentencing the government cancelled the foreign funding licence of the non-profit trust run by Setalvad alleging misuse of

Setalvad, 54, has repeatedly accused the government of targeting her because of her fierce criticism of Modi following the deadly Gujarat riots.

Health hazards ignored

FROM PAGE 16

A normal-sized pineapple sells for Tk 15-20, while a bigger and more yellow pineapple for Tk 20-30.

"We use the hormones on local pesticides shop owners' instructions because we don't know about the proper use of the hormone," said Sumon Miah, a pineapple grower at Mohishmara village.

Farmer Yusuf Ali of Digholbaid village said all the pineapples of an orchard are not ripe at the same time.

"About 10 to 12 fruits are ripe at a

time, and taking a few pineapples to the market for sale every time is not profitable," he said. Spraying the hormones on the mature fruits before harvesting helps

ripen all the fruits of an orchard

together, he added. Abdul Aziz Company, a pesti-Madhupur, said, "As the local agricultural officials are not available to the farmers, they come to us for

Using hormone during budding stage cannot be much harmful as its effect does not last for many days. But if the hormone is used on the mature fruits, its effect may linger, said Abdul.

mones."

Agricultural officials have echoed the same.

Though it is written on the bottles containing the hormones that these are not harmful to human health,

physicians have mentioned that con-

suming the chemically-treated fruits

may cause diseases. "Regular consumption of hormone-treated fruits can cause different diseases of kidney and liver," said Khan Mohammad Saiduzzaman, consultant of medicine at Tangail

Medical College Hospital. According to the Agricultural Extension Department in Tangail, pineapple is cultivated on about 10,000 hectares in Madhupur and adjacent areas and over one lakh tonnes are produced a year.

SM Shahid, Madhupur upazila unit vice-president of Sachetan Nagorik Committee, urged the local agriculture department to conduct more research on pineapple and its cultivation and motivate the farmers to grow the fruit without hormones.

The department should also engage cides shop owner at Garo Bazar of farmers and agriculture officials, who have years of experience in pineapple farming, in this awareness campaign, he added. suggestions about using hor-Abul Hasim, deputy director of the

Agricultural Extension Department in Tangail, said the department along with the district administration has been holding different programmes to create awareness among the pineapple growers. "The local farmers are also becom-

ing conscious of the issue, and we hope to bring down the excessive use of hormones in the next two to three years. We may be able to export the fruits to foreign countries then," he added.

FROM PAGE 16

supremacists. Another witness, cafe owner Clarke

uals. In Berlin, German Chancellor

"The exaggerations and radicalis-

who was given a formal warning but later released. He was not the same

additional security for her, with commentators wondering whether all MPs should have extra protection.

The centre also said Mair had pur-

Before Cox's murder, opinion polls leave the EU, in a prospect that

arrestee before the court with a 15-day remand prayer.

accused.

on the drive.

Meanwhile, a team of representaarrest of the attackers.