

Ex-Chad dictator ordered to pay to victim

Former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre, sentenced to life in May for war crimes and crimes against humanity, was ordered by a court yesterday to pay up to 30,000 euros (\$33,000) to each of his victims.

A special court set up by the African Union to try Habre ordered he pay compensation to victims of rape, arbitrary detention and imprisonment.

The court's presiding judge, Burkina Faso's Gberdao Gustave Kam, did not state how many people were involved.

But the main lawyer for the victims of Habre's 1982-1990 rule, Jacqueline Moudeina, told journalists that a total of 4,733 civil plaintiffs were involved, including 1,625 who were direct victims of his regime, having either been detained or having escaped detention.

The court ordered Habre "to pay each of the victims of rape and sexual slavery the sum of 20 million CFA francs (30,490 euros) to each victim of arbitrary detention; prisoners of war and escapees the sum of 15 million CFA francs; and to indirect victims, 10 million," Kam said.

11 killed in Niger floods

Eleven people have died in flooding in Niger and 30,000 left homeless after vast swathes of the country -- including arid desert locations -- were deluged with heavy rain, the UN said yesterday.

The worst affected regions are both desert areas: Tahoua in the west, where seven people died and 5,321 people were left homeless, and Agadez in the north where three people were killed and 18,448 lost their homes, according to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

In the two areas, the freak weather claimed the lives of 19,536 cows, goats, sheep and camels while also devastating hundreds of acres of land, according to local authorities.

Images broadcast by public television showed roads cut off by streams and land littered with rotting animal corpses.

In the Agadez region annual rainfall seldom exceeds 130 millimetres and floods like those seen in recent days are rare.

But since June, as much as 115 millimetres has regularly been falling in a matter of hours, according to weather reports.

Nigerien authorities and the UN have been distributing food aid to help families displaced by the flooding.

Niger is in the midst of its annual rainy season, having struggled to overcome a severe food crisis caused by drought.

The rains are unlikely to ease the pressure on the country's food supply given the damage flooding -- caused by climate change -- has wrought on crops.

In early June the UN warned that flooding could affect 100,000 people in the poor desert country by the end of the year.

Crack down

The so-called Tiger Temple in western Thailand was closed in May after Thai wildlife officials discovered dozens of dead cubs inside a freezer.

"The shocking images from the Tiger Temple of tiger cubs frozen and prepared for the illegal trade provide clear evidence of what is really going on behind the scenes at these tiger farms and why they must be closed," said WWF tiger specialist Michael Baltzer.

Some tiger farm operators have insisted their aim is to provide tourists an opportunity to interact with exotic cats.

But WWF said the "incredibly high operating costs" of these farms made it more likely they were involved in black-market trade.

Tiger parts are sometimes used in Asian remedies which are claimed to boost virility or fight disease.

Tiger farms "undermine efforts to protect wild tigers and halt the illegal trade by complicating enforcement activities, and by normalizing and legitimizing the sale of tiger parts and products, which in turn drives up demand," WWF said.

A hastily-organised blanket closure of all tiger farms would however be disastrous for the animals, the organisation added.

Tigers living in farm-like captivity have become habituated to human presence and cannot simply be released in the wild, the group said.

It said a tiger resettlement plan needed to be in place before the farms were closed.

At a conference in St Petersburg in 2010, 13 Asian countries agreed to double the number of tigers living in the wild on the continent by 2022, which is China's next Year of the Tiger.

UN raps Malaysia over security law

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The UN's human rights body yesterday said it was "gravely concerned" by a new Malaysian security law coming into force next week that grants the government extraordinary emergency powers.

The government rammed the National Security Council Act through parliament last December, giving it powers to declare virtual martial law in areas of the country determined to be under security threat.

But critics of Prime Minister Najib Razak say he enacted the law as ammunition against any moves to oust him over a huge financial scandal.

The law, which comes into force on Monday, allows a National Security Council headed by the prime minister to suspend civil liberties in certain areas, giving government forces sweeping powers of search, seizure and arrest.

"We are gravely concerned that... the act may encourage human rights violations," Laurent Meillan, acting head of the UN Human Rights Office for Southeast Asia, said in a statement.

Meillan also expressed concern that the act could lead to "unjust restrictions" on free speech and assembly.

"We call on the government to revise the act to bring it in line with international human rights norms and standards," he said.

Authorities in several countries are investigating allegations that invest-

ment fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad, or 1MDB, which Najib founded and oversaw, was looted on a massive scandal over several years.

Najib has stifled domestic pressure by cracking down on critics within his ruling party, scuttling investigations, and arresting whistleblowers and journalists.

But international pressure has risen after the US Justice Department last week launched moves to seize more than \$1 billion in assets it says were purchased with money stolen from 1MDB.

The detailed Justice Department filings included accusations that a high-ranking Malaysian government official, clearly referring to Najib, conspired in the massive theft along with associates of the premier, including his stepson.

Najib and 1MDB deny wrongdoing. Najib's ruling party has tightly controlled Malaysia since 1957 but increasingly faces accusations of massive corruption and repression.

Najib on Thursday defended the security law, saying it was needed to prevent terrorism in Muslim-majority Malaysia.

"My government will never apologise for placing the safety and security of the Malaysian people first," he said in a statement.

Human Rights Watch has called the act "truly frightening" and "a tool for repression".

US State Dept

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Spokesperson John Kirby said, "I have seen reports that a US citizen was killed in a police raid in Dhaka."

"We understand that there's an ongoing law enforcement investigation on the matter, and so I'd refer you to local authorities for more detail on that," he told a questioner.

"I can only confirm that we've seen reports that a US citizen was killed in a police raid in Dhaka," the spokesperson told the questioner when insisted repeatedly for confirmation of Shazad's US citizenship.

The journalist then asked, "Aren't you trying to find out?"

In reply, Kirby said, "And out of respect for the privacy of those affected ... we're going to decline further comment."

Earlier on July 1, an American citizen of Bangladeshi origin was brutally killed along with 22 others in a militants attack at a Gulshan cafe.

BLOCK RAIDS INTENSIFIED

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) intensified the block raids it began during Ramadan in the wake of the attack on Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan.

"The block raids will continue in randomly selected parts of the capital," Deputy Commissioner (Media) Masudur Rahman of DMP told The Daily Star.

Officials of different police stations, however, said the raids are being conducted mostly at bachelor and student messes.

Police raided 11 buildings at East Rajabazar, Panthapath and on Indira Road from 10:30pm on Thursday to early hours of Friday.

GG Biswas, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, told The Daily Star that the raids mainly targeted flats housing students.

He added that nobody was detained in the drives.

200-year-old

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"As many as 6,511 male prisoners have been shifted to the newly-built central jail by 9:00pm," said Jahangir Kabir, senior jail super of Dhaka Central Jail.

He added 25 additional prison vans from other jails around Dhaka were brought in to shift the prisoners amid tight security.

Inspector General (IG) of Prisons Brig Gen Syed Ifekhar Hossain monitored the transfer process.

Initially, the authorities had planned to complete the shifting today, but because it involves huge security arrangement, they decided to finish the job yesterday.

The IG prison received the prisoners at the new central jail with flowers.

More than 2,000 policemen and border guards were deployed in and around the Dhaka Central Jail to avert any untoward incident and ensure smooth shifting of prisoners.

Earlier in the morning, the IG prison said the Dhaka Central Jail accommodated more than 8,000 prisoners against its capacity of 2,600.

Originally, the prisoners were scheduled to be shifted to the new jail by April, but it was not possible for various reasons, including security matters.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated the new central jail on April 10.

The prison authorities said the

Earlier, Jamaluddin Mir, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said 60 members of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) conducted block raids in Mohammadpur's Nabodoy and Turag housing areas from 11:00pm on Wednesday to 4:00am on Thursday.

He said they searched 30 to 35 buildings. The official added that cops also checked whether apartment owners provided police with information on their tenants.

Meanwhile, investigators have been questioning detained militant suspect Rakibul Hasan, who is under treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Masudur Rahman of DMP.

There is a splinter in Hasan's right leg and it will need a surgery, said DMCH Deputy Director Khwaja Abdul Gafur.

Early Tuesday, police stumbled across a militant den during a block raid in Kalyanpur. Before striking the hideout, police captured Rakibul around 1:30am.

Following information gleaned from Rakibul, police launched the operation "Storm 26" around 5:50am. Nine militants at the den were killed in ensuing gunfight.

Inspector of Mirpur Police Station Sajjad Hossain said a case filed in this connection was transferred to Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of the DMP.

Investigators have been examining evidence found at Holey Artisan Bakery and the Kalyanpur den, said Deputy Commissioner (Media) Masudur Rahman of DMP.

He added they are trying to find whether the militants exchanged information using mobile devices.

Meanwhile, Rahela Begum, mother of Raihan Kabir, who was among the nine militants killed at Kalyanpur, told journalists that she would request the authorities to hand her over his son's body.

relocation was intended mainly to improve the facilities and living condition of the inmates.

The jail authorities received the land in Keraniganj from the Dhaka deputy commissioner's office in May 2004. They later handed it over to the Public Works Department to construct the structures.

The construction began in 2008.

FACILITIES IN NEW CENTRAL JAIL
The new central jail has been built on 194.41 acres of land for Tk 406 crore. It has the capacity to accommodate 4,090 prisoners, including 100 male adolescents, 30 mentally challenged male prisoners, 200 woman inmates, 40 female adolescent prisoners and 20 female mentally challenged prisoners.

Besides, 60 classified wards and 400 cells have been constructed for dangerous prisoners.

A 200-bed hospital and a day-care centre would be set up on its premises at Rajendrapur under South Keraniganj adjacent to the Dhaka-Mawa Highway.

According to Banglapedia, the Old Dhaka jail was built on 36.76 acres of land in the eighteenth century.

A "criminal ward" was built in Dhaka in 1788, says the website of the prison authority. Later, the prison was built on Nazimuddin Road which became one of the largest jails in the country.

Flood engulfs

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Our Gaibandha correspondent adds, flood badly hit four upazilas of the district -- Sundarganj, Gaibandha Sadar, Fulchhari and Shaghata.

Road communications between Gaibandha town and Shaghata upazila headquarters remains snapped as Gaibandha-Shaghata road went under water at different points.

Locals were yesterday seen dumping sand bags at Ullabazar point on the road to save it from washing away by flood water.

Over 20,000 people of Shaghata upazila have been marooned in different char areas on the Jamuna basin. The upazila administration has opened 12 flood shelters for the affected people.

Many areas in Dhaka, Manikganj and Faridpur are being inundated by water coming from the northern region.

11 years on

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Of them, JMB leaders Shaykh Abdur Rahman, Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai and Ataur Rahman Sunny were sentenced to death earlier in other cases filed in connection with militancy, said Ashok Kumar Das, additional public prosecutor of the court.

All the three were later hanged.

Of the other accused, Javed Iqbal, Chittagong divisional commander of the militant outfit, is now in jail.

The fifth accused Jahidul Islam Sumon alias Boma Mizan was snatched away by suspected JMP operatives when he was being taken to a court in a prison van in Mymensingh on February 23, 2014.

Ashok said he could not understand why police did not produce the witnesses before the court for long though the case involves the killing of one of their colleagues.

Chittagong Metropolitan PP Fakhruddin Chowdhury said it was for the police to produce witnesses before the court.

"Police were the victims in the attack and they are also the witnesses in the case," he said, adding, "If they do not produce witnesses before the court on time, how will the trial be completed?"

Contacted, Devdas Bhattacharya, additional commissioner (crime and operation) of the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), said he did not know why the witnesses did not go to the court.

"Maybe, they did not get the summons. I don't know it, but we are looking into the matter," he added.

Devdas said he told Nirmalendu Bikash Chakraborty, additional deputy commissioner (prosecution) of the CMP, to contact the witnesses and ensure their presence before the court during the next hearing.

Contacted, Nirmalendu said they would comply with the court order.

Trials of several cases involving militant attacks around the same time have long been completed and their verdicts executed.

For example, seven JMB members were given capital punishment on May 29, 2006, in the case for killing two Jhalakathi judges -- Shaheed Sohel Ahmed and Jagannath Pandey. They died in a suicide bomb attack on their way to the Jhalakathi court on November 14, 2005.

The verdict was executed on March 21, 2007.

On April 6 this year, the Supreme Court upheld the death penalty for JMB leader Masumur Rahman Masum in two cases filed for killing a litigant and injuring some others by carrying out a bomb attack at Laxmipur court on October 3, 2005.

Then on April 12, the apex court sentenced JMB activist Amjad Ali, another accused in the case, to imprisonment until his death.

India to give

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of Indian origin of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan have applied for citizenship but unable to provide proof of their Indian origin.

As a result, these people are forced to apply for citizenship by naturalisation under the Citizenship Act which required 12 years of residency as qualifications for naturalisation in terms of the law, said the minister.

This denies them many opportunities and advantages which are available only to Indian citizens even though they are likely to stay in India permanently, he added.

There are thousands of Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Christians and Parsis who have entered India after facing religious persecution in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan without any valid document.

These refugees have been facing difficulty in getting Long Term Visa (LTV) or Citizenship and the existing law does not allow anyone granting Indian nationality if he or she can not show proof of documents on country of birth and therefore they have to stay at least 12 years in India.

In its election manifesto before the 2014 general elections, India's Bharatiya Janata Party had declared India as "a natural home for persecuted Hindus" who "shall be welcome to seek refuge".

During election campaigning in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made a distinction between Hindu and Muslim refugees from Bangladesh and argued that the former should be accommodated.

Dhaka seeks extradition

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his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh in New Delhi on Thursday.

Hoque, as per the NIA charge sheet filed in the Burdwan blasts case, was a key player in Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh's (JMB) larger conspiracy to topple Sheikh Hasina's government in Bangladesh and establish Sharia law there.

Khan, who also called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was assured by the latter of India's full support to Dhaka in its war on terror in the wake of the recent attacks faced by it, the latest being at an upscale restaurant where alleged IS-inspired JMB cadres killed 22 people, including Indian girl Tarishai Jain.

Khan is said to have pressed for Hoque's extradition to face trial in Bangladesh for furthering JMB's con-

spiracy against the Hasina government. Singh, on his part, has agreed to examine the request.

During his questioning by NIA, Hoque had revealed that he had gone to Bangladesh and stayed at Jatrabari in Dhaka and also in Mirpur for nearly one and a half months and was trained in bomb-making by one Bashir alias Talha and Anish alias Kausar. Bashir is the son of senior JMB member Saidur Rahman.

During the delegation level talks, India and Bangladesh agreed to enhance cooperation on anti-terror front with Dhaka saying that New Delhi will be "side-by-side" with it in fighting terrorism. They also finalised amendment to the bilateral extradition treaty to facilitate prompt exchange of each other's wanted terrorists and other criminals.

Recover stolen

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persons using stolen credentials.

Bangladesh Bank has also agreed to share with the Fed a report into the heist that was prepared by U.S. cyber security firm FireEye, said a source close to the Bangladesh central bank with direct knowledge of the decision. Officials in the United States have been asking for that for some weeks.

The New York Fed had no immediate comment on the letter nor on the FireEye report.

Bangladesh Bank spokesman Subhankar Saha could not immediately be contacted for comment outside regular business hours.

The Philippines' central bank said it would not comment in a case in which there were ongoing investigations. RCBC said in a statement the bank supported the efforts of Bangladesh Bank in recovering funds from "the parties who ultimately received them".

After going to RCBC, the money was mostly laundered through the Philippines' casino industry and now the trail has gone cold.

Almost six months have passed since hackers broke into the Bangladesh central bank's computer systems and sought to transfer away as much as \$951 million - eventually managing to steal \$81 million in one of the biggest-ever cyber heists. Most of that money is still missing and the culprits have not been identified.

There has also been friction between Bangladesh Bank, the New York Fed and payments network SWIFT, over which the payment instructions were issued. But relations seem to be improving to an extent, at least between the New York Fed and Dhaka.

CASINO INDUSTRY LAUNDERING

A source close to Bangladesh Bank who has direct knowledge of the recovery process said some Bangladesh Bank officials will fly to Manila next week in an attempt to hasten the recovery.

The source said Baxter's letter was

an indication that the Fed was now working with Bangladesh Bank after initially holding the South Asian bank responsible for the heist.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir told reporters on Tuesday that his Philippine counterpart had nearly completed an investigation into how the \$81 million wound up at RCBC, and that he hoped for the swift return of the stolen funds.

Kabir also said he hoped the Philippine authorities would hold RCBC responsible for disbursing the stolen funds that landed in accounts there.

RCBC has blamed the manager of the branch where the funds were transferred.

"We had these rogue employees or officers that were able to do these things," Cesar Virata, corporate vice chairman of RCBC, told Reuters this week. "It can happen to any bank."

He added: "I think the Bangladesh government should find out first who was responsible for remitting their funds."

In another sign of improving cooperation between Bangladesh Bank and the New York Fed, a team of officials from Bangladesh will hold meetings with Fed officials in New York between Aug. 15 and Aug. 19, according to two sources in Dhaka.

The "technical" meeting will discuss more about the heist and look at processes to be put in place to prevent such events from happening in future, said the source close to Bangladesh Bank.

A New York Fed official who requested anonymity said the goal of the meeting "is to understand what happened, what remediation steps have been taken by Bangladesh Bank to meet its contractual obligations, and to begin a path to normalize operations."

The initial FireEye report submitted to Bangladesh Bank in March and seen by Reuters had blamed a sophisticated third party for the attack and had identified around 35 "compromised" Bangladesh Bank assets.

Turkey targets businesses

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the reshuffled armed forces met Erdogan at his presidential palace in Ankara.

Ninety-nine colonels have been promoted to generals and admirals, although Chief of staff General Hulusi Akar -- who was held hostage during the coup attempt -- stayed in his post along with the heads of the navy, land and air forces.

Meanwhile, Erdogan yesterday accused a top US general of being on the side of Turkey's coup plotters after commenting that the country's turmoil could downgrade military cooperation with Washington.

Quoted by US media, US Central Command chief General Joseph Votel had said the coup bid and subsequent round-up of dozens of generals could affect American military cooperation with Turkey.

In particular, Votel suggested the US had lost key Turkish military interlocutors who are now in jail and accused of being behind the coup.

"Know your place!" Erdogan told Votel, using one of his favourite expressions of anger.

"The coup plotter is already in your country, you are already feeding him," he said, referring to the US-based cleric Gulen.

Turkey is a key member of the US-led coalition fighting Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria, with its Incirlik air base used as a launch hub for raids on the group.

Turkey, however, yesterday insisted its military would keep up the fight against IS, saying the armed forces would emerge stronger from the purge.

Meanwhile the probe into coup plotters shifted focus to the financing of Gulen's activities in Turkey, with what appeared to be the first major arrests targeting the business world.

Security forces in the central city of Kayseri detained the chairman of the family-owned Boydak Holding company, Mustafa Boydak, and two other top executives, state-run Anadolu news agency said.

He and the two other executives -- Sukru and Halit Boydak -- were detained at their homes. Efforts were continuing to detain former chairman Haci Boydak as well as Ilyas and Bekir Boydak, for whom warrants have also been issued.

Mustafa Boydak is also the head of the chamber of commerce in Kayseri, a

fast-growing city dubbed one of the "Anatolian Tigers" for the growth and prosperity it has enjoyed under Erdogan's rule.

Family-owned holding companies form the backbone of the corporate economy in Turkey, and Boydak Holding has interests in furniture, energy and finance. It notably owns the prominent Istikbal and Bellona furniture firms.

The nationwide crackdown has also sought to wipe out Gulen supporters from the legal system, media, education and civil service.

Gulen himself, in self-imposed exile since 1999, strongly denies the charges against him and has called on the United States to resist Ankara's pressure for his extradition.

The 21 reporters appearing in court were among dozens of journalists and former newspaper staff issued with arrest warrants earlier this week, to the anger of rights groups.

Bur Cavusoglu defended the detentions, saying: "It is necessary to make a distinction between those who carried out the coup and who are engaged in real journalism."

Authorities have also ordered the closure of a total of 131 newspapers, TV channels and other media outlets under the three-month state of emergency declared in the wake of the coup.

Erdogan, who has dominated the country for 13 years, survived the coup thanks to his supporters who took to the streets to counter rebel troops in tanks and warplanes. The clashes left 270 people dead.

Floating

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Mahmud Hossain, a social worker, said, "This situation is terrible and it's affecting the children's education in the area."

Contacted, Maniruzzaman, assistant upazila education officer of Mehendiganj, said: "We have sanctioned Tk 3 lakh so that a temporary tin-shed can be built for the school on the bank of the Tetulia."

Asked if the government has any plan about the school's future, Akhtaruzzaman, the upazila education officer, said he could not comment as he did not have adequate information about the status of the school.