

Attacks

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meetings of the Sub-group on Good Governance, Human Rights and Migration in February 2015 and the EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission in November 2015.

The main issues discussed were the protection of fundamental democratic rights, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, restrictive action against opposition and human rights activists, the situation of minorities and indigenous people, and violence against women and children.

The EU and its member states regularly follow the rights situation in Bangladesh through political dialogues, public diplomacy, development assistance and projects, engaging with Bangladeshi representatives, meeting rights activists and organising field visits to get acquainted with the situation on the spot.

The EU Heads of Mission have issued several statements on the incidents of violence. On 15 January 2015, the Heads of Mission also met the foreign minister to express their regret at the political violence and the resultant casualties.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on November 26 last year on freedom of expression in Bangladesh, condemning the attacks against secularist writers, bloggers, religious minorities and foreign aid workers and calling on the Bangladeshi authorities to bring an immediate end to all acts of violence, harassment, intimidation and censorship.

Earlier on 29 September last year, the HR/VP's spokesperson issued a statement condemning the killing of an Italian aid worker and calling for those responsible for the crime to be brought to justice.

A wedding

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11:00am. The special heart-shaped cake was made of raw beef and chicken for the newly-wed couple.

Through the ceremony, a lioness of the zoo got a male companion after more than a decade. The zoo authority brought the lion from the Rangpur zoo on September 5 this year.

While inaugurating the ceremony, Mesbah, also the president of the zoo's managing committee, said the marriage ceremony was a unique programme that would attract more visitors to the zoo.

He also expressed the hope that the number of lions at the zoo would increase through breeding and that the zoo authority would be able to bring tiger and other animals soon to make the place more attractive to animal lovers.

There was no lion at the zoo for nearly a decade. Two lionesses -- Nova and Borsha -- were born at the zoo in 2005. Their mother Lakki died in 2005 and father Raaz in 2008. Since then the lionesses were kept in the zoo without any companion.

The authority was searching for a male lion and learnt that there were two male lions in the Rangpur zoo. After negotiations, the two zoo authorities agreed to exchange one male and female lions.

Borsha was sent to the Rangpur zoo from Chittagong on August 28. There it will live with "Raza". A lion named Badsha was brought to the Chittagong zoo on September 5.

The lions and lionesses are still kept in separate cages so that they do not fight and adjust to the new environment, said Shahadat Hossain, veterinary officer of the Chittagong zoo.

So far the zoo has 367 animals of 67 species. But there is no tiger, zebra, giraffe etc.

Chowdhury Md Mongur Morshed, deputy curator of the zoo, said they hoped that the programme would infuse love for animals into people, especially children.

Govt suggests

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personal information by police or investigation agencies to make sure that they will not be involved in any anti-government activity if recruited as university teachers or administration staff.

As autonomous bodies, the public universities have so far not required to get verification of applicants' information done by police or investigation agencies, the ministry said in the notice signed by Deputy Secretary of the ministry Laila Arjumand Banu.

Therefore, the people involved in anti-state activities or criminal acts got chances to be appointed, it added.

Currently there are 38 public universities in Bangladesh, of which 37 are running their academic activities.

"In recent times, complexities have emerged over the appointment of teachers and staff at public universities. To resolve the issue two specific recommendations have been made upon intelligence agencies' reports provided by the Prime Minister's Office," the notice read.

The ministry requested the UGC to follow the government instructions, said an official of the ministry, wishing not to be named.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina calls on President of Switzerland Johann Schneider-Ammann at the UN headquarters in New York yesterday. PHOTO: PMO

Rampal would harm

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He said the report raised concern about the impact the power plant might have on aquatic resources, ecology, biodiversity and wildlife in and around the mangrove forest.

The Unesco requested the government to examine and verify those issues.

"But it couldn't say anything specific about the impacts," Manju said.

The UN body raised the concern without having correct information as it prepared the report largely on the basis of different studies conducted by other organisations. The Unesco itself didn't conduct any study, claimed the minister.

So there is no reason for the government to take the report very seriously. The government has answers to all the issues raised by the Unesco, he said.

Asked if the report contained any hint of excluding the Sundarbans from the World Heritage list or including it in the list of World Heritage in Danger, the minister said there was no such thing.

The Unesco prepared the report following the visit of its three-member team to Bangladesh in May. The report called for conducting a specific assessment of probable impacts of the thermal power plant and the dredging of the Passur river on the Sundarbans.

"Even if we don't set up the power plant there, we would have to dredge the Passur to maintain navigability of the Mongla port," the minister told this correspondent.

He said the government would make the Unesco report public once the response to the report is ready.

About the progress of preparing the response, Manju said he met the prime minister with the report.

"The prime minister saw the report and wrote almost a page on the answers. She also gave necessary instructions," he added.

The government has formed a committee, led by the principal secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, to prepare the response. Secretaries of the ministries of environment and forests, shipping, and power have been made members of the committee. The response would be ready soon.

The Unesco expressed concern about the Sundarbans thrice in the last two years. Its report came at a time when Bangladesh India Friendship Power Company Ltd (BIFCL) is expected to ink a loan agreement with the Exim Bank of India and the physical work of the power plant is about to commence.

30 nations

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Thailand and major fossil fuel power the United Arab Emirates.

The Paris accord, sealed late last year in the French capital, commits countries to make plans to keep global warming at no more than two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels to try to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

To take effect, 55 parties responsible for at least 55 of global emissions of greenhouse gases must join the accord.

As of Tuesday, 29 parties behind 40 percent of emissions have given their consent, according to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The agreement received a major boost earlier this month when China and the United States, the two largest emitters, jointly acceded to the deal during a summit between Presidents Barack Obama and Xi Jinping.

French Environment Minister Segolene Royal told AFP on Monday that she was upbeat the accord would take effect before the next UN-led climate conference on November 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco.

The conference opens one day before the US election, in which Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who rejects mainstream science on climate change, has vowed to tear up the Paris accord.

Brazil's new president, Michel Temer, told the UN General Assembly earlier Tuesday that he would ratify the accord, saying that his biodiverse nation was committed to environmental protection.

Shift terminal

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river erosion.

Nijam Uddin Pathan, executive engineer of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), which supervises the ferry terminal, said the Roads and Highways Department and BIWTA were struggling to tackle the erosion by dumping sandbags at the affected points.

Sheikh Mohammad Nasim, deputy general manager of BIWTC, said they had been calling upon the BIWTA to shift the terminal to a safer place for the last three years.

The Daulatdia ferry terminal is situated at the mouth of the two major rivers -- Padma and Jamuna. It is under serious threat of being eroded. It should be relocated to a safer place immediately to keep the ferry service normal, he said.

"We wrote many times to the BIWTA authorities after 2013 to shift the ferry terminal to a safer place. But they have not taken any initiative to this end yet," he said.

Foye Ullah, president of BIWTC workers' union of Aricha unit, said Daulatdia ferry terminal should be moved to a safer place soon. He suggested shifting it to Kathalbari Akkas

Shift terminal

Ali Junior School area, half a kilometre from the Daulatdia ferry terminal.

This correspondent recently visited the Kathalbari area and found acres of higher ground, which is char land.

"The BIWTA could easily set up four to five landing stations there without acquiring land, he said.

Locals said the terminal was there before 1990. The BIWTA moved the terminal to Daulatdia to reduce distance.

Abdus Sattar, manager (marine) of BIWTC at Aricha office, said the distance between Paturia and Daulatdia is currently about four kilometres. The distance would be reduced by over half a kilometre if the terminal is relocated to the Kathalbari old terminal.

Asked why they have not taken any step for shifting the terminal after getting the BIWTC letters, Abdus Salam, joint director of BIWTA at Aricha office, said, "We are thinking about shifting the Daulatdia ferry terminal to a safer place. But it will take time because it depends on the department's decision and land acquisition."

"A decision will be made in this regard at an inter-ministerial meeting of the shipping ministry to be held soon," the BIWTA official hoped.

CORRUPTION FUGITIVE HUNT

China puts new focus on illicit assets

REUTERS, Beijing

China will step up efforts to recover stolen money taken overseas as part of its crackdown on corruption, state media said, after officials warned of the difficulty of tracking graft suspects and their illicit assets abroad.

Securing ill-gotten wealth from corrupt officials who have fled the country has been part of China's multi-agency "Sky Net" campaign launched in 2014, though authorities have especially touted the return of hundreds of fugitives.

China has been trying to get increased international cooperation to hunt down corrupt officials since President Xi Jinping began a war against graft nearly four years ago.

But some Western countries have been reluctant to help, not wanting to send people back to a country where rights groups say mistreatment of criminal suspects remains a problem, and also complaining China is unwilling to provide proof of their crimes.

In April, Huang Shuxian, deputy

China puts new focus

head of the graft-busting Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, said that the task was "very difficult".

"While the previous priority was collecting evidence in overseas man-hunts, the recovery of assets acquired illegally in China will be a new anti-corruption initiative in the coming months," the official English-language China Daily newspaper reported yesterday, citing an unnamed senior public security official.

The official said police will work with China's central bank to crack down on officials who have transferred billions of yuan in illegal funds to foreign accounts through money laundering or underground banks.

"Several more fugitives will be extradited from Europe and South America in the near future," the China Daily cited the official as saying.

China does not have extradition treaties with the United States, Australia or Canada, which according to state media are popular destinations for its suspected economic criminals.

India backs off

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previous leaders have adopted, even at times of major tension including the 2008 assault on Mumbai in which 166 people were killed by gunmen who came from Pakistan.

Senior security officials on the ground in Indian-ruled Kashmir, facing a hardening of separatist attitudes in response to the rise of Modi, say they can manage the impulsiveness of his hardcore Hindu nationalist allies.

"This country has a very robust bureaucratic set-up to take care of their inadequacies," one senior army officer said, on condition of anonymity.

Any military action against Pakistan would be carefully weighed on its merits and against less risky alternatives such as diplomatic pressure, economic measures or covert action.

"It's a tactical decision," the officer said.

DIPLOMATIC WARFARE

On Tuesday, a team from India's National Investigative Agency gathered more evidence from Uri including blood samples, DNA and the GPS devices that the four attackers carried. The assailants were killed by the army.

Indian government officials are hoping they can establish the route they believe the gunmen took to cross the Line of Control from the Pakistani side, because it would help mount a diplomatic offensive against Islamabad for harbouring militants.

An official at the Indian interior ministry said the government was preparing to make a case before the United States to encourage it to take economic measures against Pakistan for failing to act against insurgents operating from its soil.

Washington has already cut back military and economic aid to Pakistan, in part because it says Islamabad did not target the Pakistan-based Haqqani militant network blamed for a widening insurgency in Afghanistan.

"You will see multiple serious action against Pakistan, the results will hurt

their economy," the Indian interior ministry official said.

One problem for Modi's government is that, by promising an appropriate response to the attack and raising expectations of a punitive strike, officials in his administration could now lose face with its core nationalist constituency.

Another is that retaliatory measures carry a risk of a bigger conflict between India and Pakistan, who have fought three wars since independence, two of them over the nuclear flashpoint of Kashmir.

"There are no easy options, but not doing anything is also not an option," said an Indian defence source.

OPTIONS AND RISKS

Military officials in New Delhi and Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, have cautioned against rushing into cross-border strikes that members of Modi's right wing Bharatiya Janata Party were baying for in the hours after the raid.

One option long on the table is a small group of soldiers carrying out a fast attack on one or two Pakistan army posts across the border that are suspected of helping militants sneak into Kashmir, the defence source said.

Another option that the Modi's administration is seen as more likely to explore than its predecessors is targeted assassinations of leaders of militant groups based in Pakistan.

But India's operational and intelligence capabilities to carry out such operations are unproven and carry the risk of going wrong.

"India may well decide to introduce some subtle means of punishing Pakistan into its policy toolkit," wrote Michael Kugelman, a South Asia analyst at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson Center on an Indian website Rediff News.

"Forget about sending in troops or raining down missiles, but don't rule out certain types of furtive activities, including occasional covert operations that target specific terrorist leaders or facilities."

Even home not safe

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said, quoting some of the bus passengers.

Police were trying to arrest the driver, he added.

On information, police and members of fire service recovered the bodies and sent those to Rajshahi Medical College morgue for autopsies.

Bashir's two sons Alif, 7, and Rahat, 6, narrowly escaped the accident as they were sleeping in a separate bed in the same room where their parents were sleeping.

His elder son Hridoy, 15, who works as an assistant to painters, was not at home at that time.

Bashir along with his family had been living in the thatched house on railway land for the last couple of years.

The 10 wounded included four of his neighbours and six bus passengers. Eight of them were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Of the injured, the condition of two

was stated to be critical.

Some of the injured bus passengers said the bus was scheduled to leave for Dhaka from Nachol of Chapainawabganj at 10:00pm. But it left Nachol two hours later.

"It was travelling at a very high speed to make up the lost time, and the passengers were repeatedly alerting the driver about the speeding," said bus passenger Mamunur Rashid.

Reshma's sister Ruksana Begum, who along with her mother lives in a nearby house of Bashir, questioned, "We have lost our sister and her husband, but what would happen to their children?"

Amena Bibi, mother of Reshma, said she woke up deep at night after hearing a bang. She came out of house and saw that the bus damaged their houses.

The bus driver, supervisor and helper managed to flee the spot.

Police seized the bus and took it to Rajpara Police Station.

Myanmar refugees outpace Syrian arrivals in US

REUTERS, Chicago

The resettlement of refugees from Middle Eastern countries, particularly Syria, has been the centre of a heated political debate after President Barack Obama last year pledged to resettle at least 10,000 refugees from the war-torn country in the United States.

But refugees from Myanmar, whose leader Aung San Suu Kyi visited Washington last week, have quietly outpaced Syrian arrivals in recent years, even as Syria's civil war intensifies, with an increasing number coming from the marginalized Rohingya Muslim community, according to State Department figures.

From Oct 1, 2015 to Sept 15, 11,902 Myanmar nationals were resettled in the United States, according to figures from the Refugee Processing Center, operated by the State Department, compared to 11,598 arrivals from Syria over the same time period.

That was out of a total of nearly 79,600 refugees who arrived in the United States in that period. The largest group, numbering just over 15,000, were from the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo. Arrivals from Syria, where Islamic State and other radical groups are active, are subject to additional screening processes, according to the White House.

State Department figures show the number of Rohingya arrivals from Myanmar jumped from just over 650 in the 2014 fiscal year, to 2,573 last year. This year, 2,173 have arrived as of Sept. 15.

During a meeting with Suu Kyi in the Oval Office last Wednesday, Obama announced that the United States would remove sanctions originally imposed on the country in 1997, when it was ruled by a military junta that brutally suppressed pro-democracy movements and showed little regard for human rights. The decision raised alarm among rights groups, who are concerned about the plight of the stateless Rohingya among other ethnic minorities.

The Rohingya have long been persecuted in Myanmar, where they are viewed largely as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh though many have lived in the country for generations.

Increased freedom of speech since the military stepped back from direct rule in 2011 has allowed for the unleashing of long-held anti-Muslim sentiment.

Around 125,000 remain confined to temporary camps on Myanmar's Rakhine State following waves of deadly violence in 2012 between Buddhists and Muslims. Most were stripped of their ability to vote in last year's election.

Most Rohingya tend to come to the United States after spending years in Muslim-majority Malaysia and being granted refugee status by the United Nations.

Melineh Kano, Executive Director of RefugeeOne, a resettlement agency in Chicago, which is home to one of the largest populations of Rohingya in the United States, said Rohingyas made up more of the total number of refugees arriving from Myanmar to the city recently.

"The number has increased considerably over the past year, year and a half," she said.

Nasir Bin Zakaria, who founded the Rohingya Culture Center in Chicago, estimates that there are just over 1,000 Rohingya in the city. He fled Myanmar after being forced to work as a porter when he was 16-years-old, he said.

Obama has also called for Myanmar to end the persecution of Rohingya in order for it to succeed in its democratic transition, a key achievement of his foreign policy agenda.

Nasir Bin Zakaria said that the ability to move around freely and legally made life in Chicago far better than in Myanmar and Malaysia, but it is not without its own challenges for refugees. The city of 2.7 million is struggling with a surge of killings, with 509 murders this year, according to the Chicago Police Department.

First oil in two years leaves key Libyan port

AFP, Benghazi

An oil tanker left a key Libyan port early yesterday with the first crude shipment from the terminal since fighting halted exports there in 2014, an official said.

Oil is war-ravaged Libya's key asset, and rival administrations have been vying for control of territory and oil resources since the 2011 uprising that overthrew dictator Moamer Gaddafi.

"The Maltese-flagged vessel Seadelta has just left Ras Lanuf port with 776,000 barrels of oil, going to Italy. This is the first shipment of oil from Ras Lanuf port since November 2014," said Omran el-Fitouri, oil exports coordinator at the port.

The shipment is the first to leave any of the four ports along Libya's eastern "oil crescent" since they were seized by military strongman Khalifa Haftar last week.

His forces handed management of the ports to the National Oil Corporation (NOC), which said that crude exports would resume "immediately" from Ras Lanuf and another of the ports, Zuwaytina.

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