

2 Bangladeshis killed in BSF shooting

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot two Bangladeshi teenagers dead at Haskhalhi area in India yesterday morning.

The boys Sohel Rana, 14, and Harun-or-Rashid, 13, of Maheshpur Upazila of the district were about to cross the border with cattle when BSF personnel fired at them.

The seventh graders snuck into India around 9:00 am to smuggle some cattle into Bangladesh and were shot around two hours later, said HNP UP Chairman Shamsul Haque Mridha.

He added that another Bangladeshi man was shot on his leg at the time and managed to escape. Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Khulna Police Commander Abu Taher said the two boys and their deaths were left in a banana orchard.

Thendaih 58 BGB Company Commander Lt Col Jullur Rahman Khan said he was in BSF in protest and they are trying to hold a flag meeting.

Illegal hill cutting

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A section of government officials to cut the hills.

According to the Daily Star, State Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Bir Bahadur Ullah says MP said, "I didn't give permission to anyone to cut hills. Nobody can do it without permission from the government."

Departmental officials and environmentalists, plundering of hills posed a serious threat to homes and environment.

Dilip Kumar Banik, deputy commissioner of Bandar, said a section of politicians and opportunistic businessmen are plundering hills.

He said the district administration could not check the illegal activity due to "pressure from some political quarters".

Officials said though a committee was formed to conduct a survey on making a list of people vulnerable to landslides, it has been inactive for long.

Zumliam Amlai, Bangladesh chairman of the Parbatya Chittagong Adhikar Ghatana Samiti (Parbatya Chittagong Movement), said hills were being destroyed indiscriminately putting threat to biodiversity of the district.

Around 30 percent of the abandoned hills were totally destroyed, he added.

Road construction

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Road construction while giving its reaction to the proposed budget for 2017-18 at its Dhaka office yesterday.

The analysis also cited a previous study "The cost of road infrastructure in developing countries" which showed that the cost of road construction is increasing due to the cost escalation. The study of 2013, however, did not include Bangladesh.

According to the study, factors that push up construction cost in developing countries are the cost of construction materials, the cost of construction labor, and the cost of transportation.

The study also showed that corruption is a major factor in pushing up the construction cost in Bangladesh.

But there are inadequate measures in the upcoming budget to reduce time overruns and increase competitive bidding, said Zahid.

Speaking at the programme, Qureshi said the government has to take steps to reduce the cost of infrastructure particularly the roads and bridges varied from country to country because of different market prices for land acquisition and construction.

"I think it is very, very important to look at the different cost estimates for different projects," he said.

He said Zahid in his presentation mentioned that the cost of construction is increasing. "Not every road or not every kilometer of road is going to cost you exactly the same because the geology is different and the amount of excavation needed in different places can be very different," he said.

Britain in 'vicious circle' of hatred

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worky.

From opposition politicians to JK Rowling and cartoonists in the liberal press, condemning is building against a swirling current of hatred in Britain. To a white driver, a burning van into worshippers outside the mosque in north London, shouting "I want to kill all Muslims".

Neighbours of Darren Osborne, the Cardiff man arrested after the attack early Monday, said he was a heavy drinker who had become increasingly deranged after Islamist extremists used a vehicle and knives in a murderous rampage in London this month.

Tommy Robinson, former leader of the far-right English Defence League, made the link explicit in describing Osborne's attack as "revenge" for the bloodshed in London.

Rowling, for her part, pointed to heated rhetoric by Daily Mail columnist Peter Hain, as the Harry Potter author tweeted "lets talk about how the #FinsburyPark terrorist was the Muslims".

After the suicide bombing at a pop concert in Manchester last month, Hain wrote a column titled "Western Men. These are your wives. Your daughters. Your Sons. Stand up. Rise up. Demand action. Do not carry on as normal. Coward."

According to government statistics, British whites accounted for 91 of 260 arrests in terrorism-related offences last year, an increase of 28 percent from 2015 and the only ethnic group to show an increase.

Anti-Muslim hate crimes are also rising yearly and there have been police far spikes in attacks like the attack in London and the November 2015 massacre at the Batacun center hall in Paris.

Police yesterday questioned Osborne of deliberately moving down



A message that reads "hate not hate" is written on a bouquet of flowers left near Finsbury Park Mosque in the Finsbury Park area of north London yesterday.

Muslims in the attack. Reports said Osborne's behaviour had become erratic in recent weeks, and that he was living in a tent in the woods after splitting up with his long-term partner.

Until this week, the assassination of pop singer Jo Cox a year ago was the most visible manifestation of the far-right fanaticism in Britain.

But many Muslims say they have long been suffering from daily abuse which has only intensified as tensions surface over flapjacks such as Europe's refugee crisis and Britain's Brexit vote to quit the EU.

Some attacks are physical or verbal, others involve graffiti, or the smearing of faces and vomit, or the burning bacon on car windshields.

Fiaz Mughal, founder of Tell Mena, a group that collates figures on anti-Muslim incidents, said the hatred that appeared to have motivated Osborne did not come from nowhere.

The biggest factor fomenting anti-Muslim feeling is Islamist violence, he said.

"But sadly, whenever you have a major incident, you have headlines and opinion writers who are allowed to spew out some of the most inflammatory content simply to spawn click-bait and newspaper sales," Mughal said.

"It makes what people feel privately respectable and real," he said, arguing that an attack like Osborne's was inevitable in that context.

Raffaele Pantucci, a counter-terrorism expert at the Royal United Services Institute, concurred that the spread of "poisonous rhetoric" from far-right websites to mainstream media and politics legitimised it in public discourse.

"It's unfortunately a vicious circle," he said, pointing to extremist reactions among some Muslims, "and it's going to be hard to stop in this fertile atmosphere."

When money beats Eid rush

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service provider, said they were getting "good response" ahead of the Eid festival.

They already have several bookings and still have scope for more, Farhad told The Daily Star on Monday.

The company, which started its venture in 2012, has six helicopters (three, four, six and seven seats) and passengers can fly for as little as Tk 71,300 to 180,000 depending on individual buyers.

Police yesterday questioned Osborne of deliberately moving down

He, however, expressed apprehension that the service may be disrupted due to bad weather.

Tanjeeb Mazumder, the flight operations manager of BRB Air Limited, said they were booked for June 22 to 24, but have been booked for one week ago.

He said they charge Tk 1 lakh per hour for their six-seater helicopter and passengers have to pay for roundtrips.

He said demand for helicopter service has been on the rise for the last few months. Their monthly average service hours were 25 to 30 in last year, it is 40 to 45 hours now, he said.

Sheikh Asad, flight operations manager of Square Air Limited, said the demand for helicopter service increases before Eid every year and they are seeing the same increasing demand patterns this year too.

He said foreigners, businessmen and political leaders are their main clients. Square has one six-seater and one four-seater helicopter and they charge

Govt may back

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to the multiple VAT rates.

More than 100 goods and services are under the existing VAT net. To implement the new law, Mughal even offered a concession, raising the VAT-free turnover ceiling to Tk 36 lakh from Tk 30 lakhs to make businesses happy. Firms with this annual turnover were to be completely out of the scope of the indirect tax.

He also proposed raising the upper limit for VAT registration to Tk 1.5 crore, up from Tk 50 lakhs, in line with demands from businesses.

In addition, he offered VAT exemptions for 1,043 items including essential commodities and services, basic education, healthcare and medical services, medicines, life-saving drugs as well as farm products.

Despite all this, Mughal could not win hearts of many consumers, businesses and some of his colleagues in the same debate in the House.

On June 19, several ministers and influential Awami League lawmakers strongly criticised Mughal's tax and VAT proposals, a scene rarely seen in parliament these days.

The Bangladeshi economy has expanded a lot over the last two years and has expanded a lot over the last two years and has expanded a lot over the last two years.

The law, which is planned to be implemented online, seeks to ensure proper record keeping and accounts by businesses so that the collected VAT reaches the exchequer properly.

Some officials said some businesses opposed implementation of the VAT and SD law as it would curb the scope of VAT evasion and bring transparency and accountability in the tax system.

The government made the latest VAT law an advice from the International Monetary Fund to increase revenue collection.

The government initially planned to enforce the law from July 2015 through automation of the VAT administration under a 100 per cent project, financed mostly by the World Bank.

But its enforcement was delayed twice by its enforcement.

On June 9, the IMF's Executive Board approved the government move to implement the law and expected annual revenue collection would rise.

The World Bank, at a briefing at its Dhaka office yesterday, strongly endorsed the new law, saying higher economic growth and revenue generation would hinge on its effective implementation.

"I do believe the introduction of VAT is investment-friendly. It takes away many of the discretionary and non-transparent nature of some of the existing taxes," said WB Country Director Qimiao Fan.

Muhith should quit

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from the bank's head.

"The finance minister should face legal procedure for providing bail-free money to banks. I urge finance minister to resign from his position with honour."

There are no jobs by the government to stop, the IFJ lawmakers said.

Bablu pointed out that there are default loans of around Tk 1.16 lakh crore. If the money can be realised, there is no need for VAT and excise duty on bank accounts, he said.

"A culture of impunity now exists in the banking sector."

"On the one hand, the finance minister is increasing VAT. And on the other hand, he is protecting looters of banks by providing bail-free money to banks," said MP Kazi Feroz Rashid.

Referring to ministers' criticising Mughal for proposing an increased excise duty on bank accounts, Feroz said they didn't have moral right to criticize the budget as had been approved in a cabinet meeting before it was placed in the House.

A special cabinet meeting was held on June 19, where the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair on the matter discussed with the cabinet.

The proposed budget was approved unanimously in the meeting, sources at the parliament said.

None of the ministers nor state

Charges pressed

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April 30 last year and waited him to death.

Nikhil's wife Arati Rani Joradar filed a case with Gopalar police the same day accusing unidentified assailants.

Ashek Kumar Sinha, officer-in-charge of Tangail District police, said they have filed a case with the court, but the case of Shakharia village in Gopalar, on September 2 suspecting his involvement in the killing.

The arrestee gave a confessional statement before a Tangail court the next day admitting his involvement.

In his statement, Momen told the court that they had planned to kill Nikhil for his "derogatory" comments on Islam and Prophet Muhammad (S.M).

Momen, 37, was arrested with Md. Cader, 37, and Md. Mottiar alias Nazrul of Belkuchi in Sirajganj and Nazrul of Debanjanj (Pancharh) rented a house to monitor and kill him, he told the court.

Bangladeshi

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during her employment that she would go to jail and then be sent back to Bangladesh if she worked for anyone else according to the complaint.

At first, Hamidur did not pay her at all, but sent about \$600 per month to her husband in Bangladesh, the complaint said. In October 2013, Hamidur did pay the employee \$600 for her work that month, according to the complaint.

Hamidur never paid either the employee or her husband the \$420 per week wage stipulated in the original contract, according to the complaint.

Hamidur is also charged in the complaint with committing identity theft by setting up a sham bank account in the employee's name to receive her payments.

He is also charged with paying the employee a wage in kind, by paying lawful wage. In fact, the complaint said, Hamidur and his wife controlled the account.

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The move comes at a time when prices of coarse rice, mostly consumed by the poor and lower middle-income people, have not up to Tk 48 a kilogram at the retail level - a record 47 percent increase from the market price in June last year.

Crop loss due to flashfloods in haor regions and hung attacks in Boro fields in the north-western districts have added to the backdrop to the rice price going up from early April. With the rice stock in public granaries hitting a 10-year low - only 1.85 lakhs tonnes - the government is substantially incapable of intervening in the market situation, while importers have little interest in importing rice since with 28 percent tariff the business is not cost-effective.

Neither in a rather delayed move, the government has gone for 3.5 lakh tonnes of rice import under public sector initiative. At the same time it has come up with a package of policy supports to encourage the private

Govt towers

sector to import rice, which would in turn subside the unusual hike in rice price.

The decision to slash the import duty came just a day after Bangladesh Bank advised a 10 per cent hike in the import duty on rice importers to open ICGs (letters of credit) with zero margin, meaning the importers will not have to make advance payments to importers.

The high import duty was slashed in 2015 and 2016 in efforts to give a cushion to local growers against cheap Indian rice flooding the markets.

The government has made a move to cut the duty when the price of rice import dropped to a four-year low with traders blaming the high duty.

Speaking at a programme in the capital, the World Bank chief economist in Bangladesh, Zahid Husain said, "The government needs to get the right decision about the import duty to check the price hike."

Importers have already stockpiled

Nasa finds

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orbit as Earth," he said.

With the addition of this latest release, Kepler has now identified 4,034 planet candidates, and 2,335 of them are thought to be confirmed as exoplanets. The mission has also found 50 candidates similar in size to Earth, with more than 30 of them confirmed.

The 10 newly discovered Earth-size planets are the smallest ones detected to date. Three are in similar orbits to the distance to its host star. But researchers don't know much more than that.

In comparison, our solar system looks like it has three planets in the habitable zone of the sun: Mars, Venus and Earth. "I would only want to live on one of those," said Susan Thompson, a Kepler research scientist.

This new data from the Kepler mission also suggest that within the "family tree" of exoplanets found, the small ones far outnumber the large ones. Earth-like planets and super-Earths and gaseous mini-Neptunes.

This potentially dividing line between the habitable planets and those that are inhospitable to life as we know it, the researchers said. Before Kepler, the population of exoplanets was largely expected to be full of Jupiter-size planets. Now, we know that exoplanets can be cold gas giants, hot Jupiters, ocean worlds, ice giants, lava worlds and rocky planets.

It also recommended forming a pool of data on planets, providing the means and expanding electronic government procurement (e-GP) to increase transparency and accountability.

With this new data, the catalog suggests that about half of the exoplanets in our galaxy are either gaseous, with no surface, or have such a heavy atmosphere that life as we know it would not be possible. But Kepler's ability to find and confirm exoplanets and rocky Earth-size planets also provides candidates for future observation by space telescopes.

This is the final catalog detailing Earth-size candidates and confirming the existence of Kepler's first discovery during the first four years observing part of the constellation Cygnus. The researchers also believe it to be the most detailed catalog of exoplanet candidates.

The news comes during the Kepler Science Conference and NASA's Kepler exoplanet week, to celebrate the successes of these missions and the scientists who have made exoplanet discoveries possible.

Since launching in 2009, Kepler has been watching more than 200,000 stars in one part of the sky to determine exoplanet candidates, based on the slight dimming of light emitted by stars when potential planets pass across them.

As there has been to discover more Earth-like planets in the habitable zone of a star, where water can pool on the surface of a planet and potentially support life.

The Kepler mission will end in October, but the team will use data measurements for the scientific community as a way to pass the baton to future missions.

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stressed the importance of good journalism and "good media behaviour," adding that laws should take a multi-faceted approach.

At a news conference, Managing Editor Fiona Chan, who chaired the workshop on fact-checking, said her group called for a regional task force to verify rumours for major events such as elections. Her group also urged the government to journalists with the technology and tools to fact-check falsehoods, involving university students in fact-checking projects as part of their course module and launching campaigns to raise awareness on the scourge of misinformation.

Hong Kong University lecturer Anne Kruger, who led the workshop on news

media literacy, said besides making this a key part of the education curriculum, there is a need to reach out to the elderly who are more vulnerable to fake news. This could be done through community ambassadors and role models, and through the use of WhatsApp, which older people typically use to access and share messages and social media links.

The two-day event brought together news and media professionals, practitioners and technology experts publishers to examine the rise of misinformation and explore initiatives in Asia to fight its spread and improve media literacy. Participants committed to a joint effort in promoting some of the event's proposals, which they will review at the WAN-JERA's Digital Media Day

in Singapore.