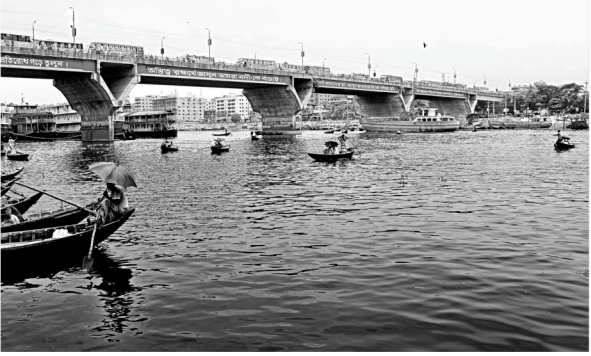

The once mighty Buriganga river is now known more for its black murky water. With around 100 encroachment and pollution points, the Buriganga's glory days seem to have gone. The photo was taken recently under the Second Buriganga Bridge near Midford Hospital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Lord Carlile disappointed as AL skipped dialogue

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Alexander Charles Carlile, independent member of the UK House of Lords, has expressed disappointment at the Awami League's decision to skip a dialogue on Bangladesh affairs in London.

In a statement yesterday, Lord Carlile said the aim of the dialogue was to provide an opportunity for a factual analysis of serious problems in Bangladesh, but the government delegation withdrew at the last moment without valid reason.

The lawmaker said he was disappointed by the "false statement issued by the Press Minister Nadeem Kadir of Bangladesh High Commission in London about the holding and conduct of the seminar."

Nadeem was not available for comment.

However, a delegation of BNP joined the dialogue titled "Terrorism in Bangladesh and Rule and Law" at the upper house of the British parliament on Tuesday.

According to sources, the government delegation comprised of Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman, International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi and former foreign minister Dipu Moni had been to London to join the meeting, but they didn't attend it "as they were not aware that the seminar was a private event".

Lord Carlile in his statement sent to all participants on July 12 said, "The seminar is not an official or public event. Rather, it is a privately organised and closed event ... it is taking place in the UK Parliament, where we apply the doctrine of free speech whether we like or dislike those with whom we may disagree: there will be no compromise of that doctrine."

Accordingly, the Bangladesh government delegation confirmed their attendance, he added.

BNP standing committee member Amir Khorsu Mahmud Chowdhury, party leaders Rumeen Farhana and Humayun Kabir took part in the dialogue which was also attended by Human Rights Watch's South Asia director Meenakshi Ganguly and two representatives of UK foreign ministry, according to sources in London.

KL sends back

FROM PAGE 20

airport's immigration lock-up. It also appealed for his release.

"Suaram calls for his immediate release and demands that the immigration department stop its persistent harassment against human rights defenders visiting Malaysia," it said in a statement.

Malaysia often denies foreign pro-democracy activists entry into the country without giving explanation, say rights activists.

The Asian Human Rights Commission urged the international human rights community "to immediately intervene in this case, and secure Adilur's release from arbitrary detention".

Meanwhile, Bangladeshi rights body Ain o Salish Kendra condemned the detention and expressed its deep concern over the incident.

"When rights activists all over the world are busy in defending human rights, such harassment of a rights activist is unexpected and alarming," it said in a statement.

Five 'rapists

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Jurain area on July 10.

As she shouted for help, Sagar stabbed her while Shamim hit her in the head with a stone and Jakir strangulated her, leaving her dead, said the DC.

While briefing newsmen at the DMP Media Centre, the police officer said the accused killed the women to cover up their crime.

Little care

FROM PAGE 1

Early last month, this correspondent saw encroachments choking the water flow of the Balu, the Shitalakkhya and the Turag at multiple points.

The Buriganga has around 100 encroachment and pollution points, officials said.

While the Balu is in its deathbed in Rupganj and Beraid areas, the Shitalakkhya is dying in Rupganj along Daktarkhali road and the Buriganga in Shyampur and Aminbazar areas.

Grabbing of the Turag became rampant after the authorities set up faulty demarcation lines in Tongi, Kamarpara, Dhour, Birulia and Mirpur areas.

A 2009 judgment of the High Court detailed the ways to reclaim the rivers from grabbers and save them from pollution.

The court ordered the deputy commissioners of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Munshiganj to demarcate the boundaries of the Buriganga, Shitalakkhya, Turag, Balu and Dhaleswari rivers as per CS and RS records and retain the eroded and reformed land as part of the rivers.

Following the verdict, demarcation pillars were set up along the waterline of the lean flow of the dry season, excluding around 2,500 acres of river foreshore and adjoining wetlands.

This encouraged many new land grabbers to occupy the excluded river areas by filling the water bodies with earth.

Around a third of the 6,000 boundary pillars have been placed at wrong spots along the four rivers, the national taskforce on saving rivers said in October last year.

An official of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), the primary custodian of the rivers, recently said the Balu river was not under surveillance and no effort was made to recover the foreshore of the Shitalakkhya.

According to an official estimate of the Narayanganj river port, the Shitalakkhya lost 1,860 acres, including 595 acres of its foreshore, due to faulty demarcation.

Ataharul Islam, chairman of the National River Protection Commission, blamed the faulty demarcation on drawing the lines of river banks without following the Cadastral Survey (CS) and Revised Survey (RS) records.

The authorities never properly protected the river foreshore despite the High Court order, he said.

"As a result, everyone set out demarcation lines randomly to their advantage to facilitate river grabbing. For example, demarcation pillars were set up along the Turag excluding its extensive foreshore."

In line with the HC order, the River Protection Commission proposed demarcating the four Dhaka rivers as per the CS and RS records and their actual length and width, Ataharul added.

He said demarcation of Dhaka rivers would be done afresh.

Last year, the National Taskforce on River Conservation also decided to conduct a fresh survey using the Global Positioning System to draw the foreshore lines as per the CS map.

A committee, led by the additional deputy commissioner for revenue of Gazipur, was formed to conduct a fresh demarcation of the Turag and the Balu, Ataharul said.

Seeking anonymity, a BIWTA official at the Dhaka river port said the fresh survey for demarcation of the 86km river route of the Buriganga, the Turag and the Balu began in February.

Around 80 percent of the work has been completed so far, he said.

But the Dhaleswari has been kept out of demarcation process although it is part of Dhaka's circular waterway, another BIWTA official said.

JS body blasts Shajahan

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brought by Shajahan, saying the responsibility of the committee was to oversee the ministry's performance, not to interfere in its work.

Chittagong Port Authority Chairman Rear Admiral M Khaled Iqbal assured the committee that they had already taken several "significant" measures to reduce the congestion. He hoped that the situation would improve soon.

In reply, committee members said they were not satisfied with the CPA's role in this regard.

Both the bulk carriers and container vessels are now facing long delays as the country's premier port has been experiencing vessel congestion for more than two months.

On average, the bulk vessels have to wait in the sea for 20 days or more while the container vessels' waiting time reached nearly six to 12 days due to non availability of jetties at the port.

Till yesterday, 11 bulk vessels and 10 container vessels were waiting at the outer anchorage for getting berth in jetty.

Importers said a huge amount of money was going out of the country as they were paying extra for importing goods following increased freight charges by shipping companies.

In the last meeting of the JS body on May 25, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association Director Munir Hossain expressed concern over the delay in getting berth.

He also expressed serious concern over the delay in loading and offloading of containers, forcing vessels to change their schedules.

"We need to change schedule of everything. We are missing schedule of mother vessels. Buyers are expressing their concern and disappointment over the issue," he said, according to the working paper of the last meeting.

He also said the government should communicate with buyers to tell them not to worry.

A member of the committee, wishing anonymity, said the JS body had earlier recommended several times taking measures to build new jetty at the port. "But the authorities concerned did not pay any heed to our recommendations."

"If we come up with suggestions, the ministry, in most of the cases, take them as interferences. This is really unfortunate," he said. "The minister wants to do everything at will. But the job of the committee is to oversee whether the minister and his ministry are working properly."

Two kms

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added.

Masud Rana, driver of a bus heading for Rajshahi, said his vehicle gets stuck for a few hours in the traffic jam every day.

"Dealing with queues of hundreds of vehicles every day has become difficult," said Sazedul Islam, a traffic inspector of Tangail police, adding, "The authorities of four-lane project and the Roads and Highways Department are now blaming each other for such a bad condition of the road."

Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shaharul Amin, deputy manager of SASEC Road Connectivity Project: Improvement of Joydevpur-Chandra-Tangail-Elenga Road to a Four-Lane Highway, said they were not responsible for the problem and that they already completed several hundred metres of road construction work in the area.

"The Roads and Highways Department is responsible for the rundown part of the road," he added.

"We are not denying our responsibilities. Repair work is going on," said Abdul Hakim, a sub-divisional engineer of the RHD in Tangail.

"Nonstop heavy rain is not only damaging the road badly, but also hampering the repair work," he said, adding that as a massive development work (four-lane project) was going on, people would have to face some difficulties in the next three to four months.

2 suspects

FROM PAGE 1

arrest on September 10 last year when law enforcers raided an Azimpur flat in the capital. His wife Ferdousi Afrin was among the three women militant suspects arrested from there.

CTTC officials said Basharuzzaman hailed from Rajshahi's Tanore upazila. He passed SSC from a local school and HSC from Rajshahi New Government College. He later moved to Dhaka. He went traceless six to eight months before the Gulshan attack.

Monirul recently said they were trying to arrest at least two or three out of the five "Neo-JMB" militants involved with Gulshan attack. Basharuzzaman and Mizan were among the five.

Another one of them is recently arrested Sohel Mahfuz, who was another supplier of arms and grenades used in the attack that left 20 people, mostly foreigners and two police officers killed.

The two remaining suspects are Hasidur Rahman Sagor alias Joypurhat Sagor, who also supplied grenades and firearms to the Gulshan attackers, and one of the organisers Rashed alias Rash.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque, who attended the crime conference as the chief guest, directed police to ensure that people were not being harassed.

DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia claimed harassment of people by DMP had drastically reduced and the quality of service at police stations had improved. "We are trying to bring down harassment of people to zero."

Picture

FROM PAGE 2

Sadar, was arrested by police on Wednesday after Obaidullah Saju, the religious affairs secretary of Barisal Awami League, filed a Tk 5 crore case in June in connection with distorting the image of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The court on Wednesday granted him bail.

US, EU police

FROM PAGE 20

functioning with no explanation.

On July 5, the Canadian national who ran AlphaBay, Alexandre Cazes, was arrested in Thailand. Earlier this week, Cazes was found dead in his Thai police cell, with police saying he apparently hanged himself with a towel.

AlphaBay's shutdown sent traffic flooding into the smaller Hansa marketplace.

But that new traffic, tens of thousands of users, was unaware that Dutch police had already secretly taken control of Hansa, giving them the ability to identify and track buyers and sellers of illicit goods.

The Hansa market has also now been shut down, said Europol executive director Rob Wainwright.

"By acting together on a global basis the law enforcement community has sent a clear message that we have the means to identify criminality and strike back, even in areas of the Dark Web," Wainwright said.

AlphaBay had been a massive marketplace for illicit goods, 10 times larger than the notorious Silk Road underground cyber marketplace shut down by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2013.

At the time it was shut down, it had more than 250,000 listings for illegal drugs and toxic chemicals, according to the US Justice Department.

It also had 100,000 advertisements for guns, stolen and fraudulent personal documents, counterfeit goods, malware and computer hacking tools.

The marketplaces operated underground on the Tor network, which allows anonymity for users.

With the takedown of AlphaBay and Hansa, authorities said they have frozen millions of dollars worth of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin used to settle online transactions without the buyers and sellers being identified.

They also seized from Cazes and his wife millions of dollars in currency, luxury cars, and homes in four countries, including a hotel he owned in Thailand.

Wainwright said the investigation had resulted in the identification of numerous organized crime figures and that intelligence leads have been distributed to law enforcement in 37 countries around the world.

"This operation is an example of the improving concerted ability of law enforcement to strike against criminals, even on the dark net," he said.

"This coordinated hit against these two marketplaces is just a taste of what is to come in the future."

Editors want

FROM PAGE 1

They made the demand in a statement adopted at a meeting held yesterday at The Daily Star office with Editors' Council President and Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar in the chair.

Expressing deep concern over the draft Digital Security Act, the council said section 19 of the proposed law contains all the anti-free press elements of section 57.

Although the law minister had said a few days ago that section 57 would be revoked, section 19 of the proposed law has the same repressive provisions like section 57 in an even harsher form, the statement said.

They said such sections go against the constitution and serve as a threat to the freedom of speech and journalism guaranteed by the constitution.

"We are also concerned that section 15 (5) of the draft would be a major impediment to freedom of thought and freedom of expression as someone's narrative of the history of the Liberation War and relevant issues will be regarded as a 'digital criminal offence' if that goes against the government's narrative," it said.

"Therefore, we call upon the government to totally remove such restrictive provisions in order to create a scope for lively discussion on the country's rich history of struggle and independence."

The Council voiced concern over the draft of the National Online Mass Media Policy, saying the provisions of the ICT act, including section 57, have been incorporated in this draft policy as it has been done in the Digital Security Act.

"We raise our concern over the draft, because the draft also has the provision to consider the so-called defamation of any individual or organisation as a criminal offence."

The editors urged the government to repeal all provisions that come as impediment to the freedom of speech.

"We demand scrapping of the provision that considers the so-called defamation of any individual or organisation as a criminal offence. We urge that it be made mandatory to go to the Press Council first for remedy of such issues," said the statement.

The editors said any kind of direct or indirect interference through the above mentioned laws on the established newspaper and electronic media and their digital media operations through websites and social media pages would not be acceptable.

However, they called on the unregulated online and social media platforms to be respectful to the existing media ethics and norms.

The Editors' Council demanded withdrawal of all false cases filed across the country by the government officials and members of the ruling party against editors and journalists.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam; Ittefaq Editor (acting) Tasmima Hossain; News Today Editor Reazuddin Ahmed; The Financial Express Editor AHM Moazzem Hossain; Manabzamin Chief Editor Matiur Rahman Chowdhury; Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta; Kaler Kantha Editor Imdadul Haq Milon; Bangladesh Pratidin Editor Nayeem Nizam; Daily Sangbad Editor (acting) Khandaker Muniruzzaman; Jugantor Editor (acting) Saiful Alam; Banik Barta Editor Dewan Hanif Mahmud; and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman attended the meeting.

[Translated from Bangla]

Aborigines in Australia

FROM PAGE 20

60,000 years ago.

A key site in the debate is Madjedbebe, a remote rock shelter in northern Australia's Kakadu region that is the oldest-known human occupation area in the country.

New evidence uncovered by a team of archaeologists and dating specialists during a dig there, including the oldest ground-edge stone axe technology in the world, has pushed back their presence even further.

The findings, published in the journal Nature this week, set a new minimum age for the dispersal of modern humans out of Africa and across south Asia.

"It's hugely significant in tying down what happened," the University of Queensland's Chris Clarkson, the lead author who led the team that excavated the site, most recently in 2015, told AFP.

"It means that we can set the minimum age for modern humans coming out of Africa, which until now has been a bit tenuous. We can now say with certainty that they arrived in Australia 65,000 years ago."

It also indicates that they arrived on the continent before the extinction of Australian megafauna such as giant wombats, kangaroos and lizards.

In addition to showing the deep antiquity of Aboriginal occupation, the dig also revealed evidence of activities and complex lifestyle, including flaked stone tools and grinding stones.

"The site contains the oldest ground-edge stone axe technology in the world, the oldest-known seed-grinding tools in Australia and evidence of finely made stone points which may have served as spear tips," said Clarkson.

"Most striking of all in a region known for its spectacular rock art are the huge quantities of ground ochre and evidence of ochre processing found at the site, from the older layer continuing through to the present."

It was clear the population was "technologically sophisticated".

Some 11,000 artefacts were discovered in the lowest layer from the 2015 dig, with the team carefully assessing the position of each one to ensure they matched the ages of the sediments in which they were found.

Extensive dating by optically stimulated luminescence methods -- which estimates the time since mineral grains were last exposed to sunlight -- showed a general pattern of increasing age with depth, and provided a timeframe that the scientists said was far more accurate than before.

The new dates for Madjedbebe fit well with genetic analyses indicating modern humans left Africa between 60,000 and 80,000 years ago.

At that time, there were much lower sea levels and the crossing distance from the islands of Southeast Asia to Australia was shorter than today.

"This would have been the first major water crossing ever by humanity," said Clarkson.

The Mirarr clan, traditional owners of large parts of Kakadu and western Arnhem Land, have now closed access to Madjedbebe, but applications have been made by archaeologists to examine other sites in the area to see if they have the same sequences.

"This study confirms the sophistication of the Australian Aboriginal toolkit and underscores the universal importance of the Jabiluka area," said Justin O'Brien, chief executive of the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, which works to advance the interests of the Mirarr.

"These findings reinforce the need for the highest level of conservation and protection for this site."

Charge sheet

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Arman had been on a two-day remand after his arrest by the cyber crime team of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Unit on July 12 in the capital's Malibagh. The victim filed a case with Ramna Police Station the day before bringing charges of rape and cyber crime against him.

In the case statement, the victim said the accused had raped her repeatedly since 2008 and had been threatening to post her images and videos online.

BCL wants

FROM PAGE 5

Contacted, BCL President Tipu and GS Sujan yesterday said new leadership streamlines an organisation, and they also want new leadership.

While talking with reporters at CUCSU, Mashiur then said during their visit, they had talked to different stakeholders and would submit their report to central executive body.

Contacted over the phone, BCL central committee President Saifur Rahman Shohag yesterday said they had yet to get the report.

The central body will take the next course of action based on the recommendations of the report, he added.

CIA halts

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concession, given Assad's grip on power, although not on all of Syria, "but it's a signal to Putin that the administration wants to improve ties to Russia."

Trump is under intense scrutiny by Congress and a special counsel investigating Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and whether Trump's campaign had ties to the activity. Russia has denied US intelligence agencies' allegations of Moscow meddling, and Trump has denied collusion between his campaign and Russians.

A downside of the CIA program, one of the officials said, is that some armed and trained rebels defected to Islamic State and other radical groups, and some members of the previous administration favored abandoning the program.

Before assuming office in January, Trump suggested he could end support for Free Syrian Army groups and give priority to the fight against Islamic State.

A separate effort by the US military effort to train, arm and support other Syrian rebel groups with air strikes and other actions will continue, the officials said.