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# One judge, 2,000 cases

Lower courts hamstrung by judge shortage

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Each lower court judge, on average, is overburdened with around 2,000 cases for their hearing and disposal.

A total of 1,397 judges have been dealing with more than 27.5 lakh cases across the country.

Sources at the Supreme Court and the law ministry attributed such a huge case backlog to shortage of judges, stemmed out from delays in the recruitment of new judges.

The appellate and the high court divisions of the apex court have also been facing shortage of judges due to retirement and deaths of some judges in the last couple of months.

The backlog of cases is growing every day, causing immense sufferings to justice seekers.

Against such a backdrop, the government has taken initiatives to recruit new lower courts judges in phases through Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC). A process for appointment of 207 judges is underway, according to law ministry sources.

Many assistant judges and judicial magistrates would be promoted if the 207 judges were recruited to lower courts, Additional Registrar of the HC Md Sabbir Faiz told The Daily Star.

This would also see disposal of more cases and ease in litigants' sufferings, he added.

SC sources said a total of 397 posts of lower court judge currently remain vacant.

Requesting anonymity, a law ministry official said the BJSC in March had picked 207 candidates through a comprehensive recruitment process which included a preliminary test, written and viva voce exams. It recommended that the law ministry appoint them as lower court judge.

The following month, the law ministry sent its documents to the home ministry for police verification. But the ministry was yet to send the police verification reports, he told this correspondent.

The official said the government would complete the recruitment process upon receiving the police verification reports.

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A seller holds up two large hilsas for buyers at the fish market in the capital's Karwanbazar area yesterday. The price of the fish has gone down now due to good catch. Prices range from Tk 550 to Tk 3,000 a kg depending on size.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## TRACKING LONE WOLVES THREAT Counter-terror chiefs want help of social media

AFP, Washington

As jihadist attacks are increasingly being carried out by home-grown "lone wolves," top counter-terror chiefs of four Western powers said Thursday they need more support from social media companies to detect potential threats.

While traditional intelligence methods are foiling large-scale plots coordinated from abroad, the officials from the United States, Britain, Germany and Canada said that isn't enough to uncover attacks by self-radicalised individuals like those this year in Britain that have killed dozens.

Paddy McGuinness, the British deputy national security adviser for intelligence, said many countries are still too focused on foreign-derived attacks planned or directed by the Islamic State group or al-Qaeda.

After the four attacks in Britain this year, he said at a Washington intelligence forum, "We are dealing with conspiracies that really do not involve an overseas element."

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## China, Pak take swipes at Trump's Afghan policy

US shuts Habib Bank over terror financing concerns

AGENCIES

The top diplomats from China and Pakistan took swipes at President Donald Trump's newly unveiled Afghanistan policy yesterday as they called for new talks with the Taliban to resolve the 16-year conflict.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing stood firmly behind its "ironclad friend" Pakistan, even though "some countries" did not give Islamabad the credit it deserved in fighting terrorism, a pointed reference to the US.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif's first trip abroad to Beijing this week appeared to highlight how ties between the two all-weather allies have grown even closer while Pakistan's critical relationship with the US is disintegrating amid mutual recriminations and distrust.

Wang and Asif announced that China, Pakistan and Afghanistan will hold a new series of three-way talks later this year in China to push forward settlement negotiations with the Taliban while the US doubles down on its military campaign, reported AP.

Trump infuriated Pakistan last month when he accused Islamabad of providing extremists safe

haven and threatened to withhold military aid. He further raised alarms in Pakistan when he raised the prospect of recruiting archrival India into the US strategy in Afghanistan.

US officials said this week that \$225 million in military aid for Pakistan have been suspended while about 3,500 additional troops will head to Afghanistan to reverse the Taliban's battleground advances and gain leverage in negotiations.

"It's our firm view that there is no military solution in Afghanistan, the focus should be on a politically negotiated settlement," Asif told reporters in Beijing. "China is playing a very constructive role in this regard."

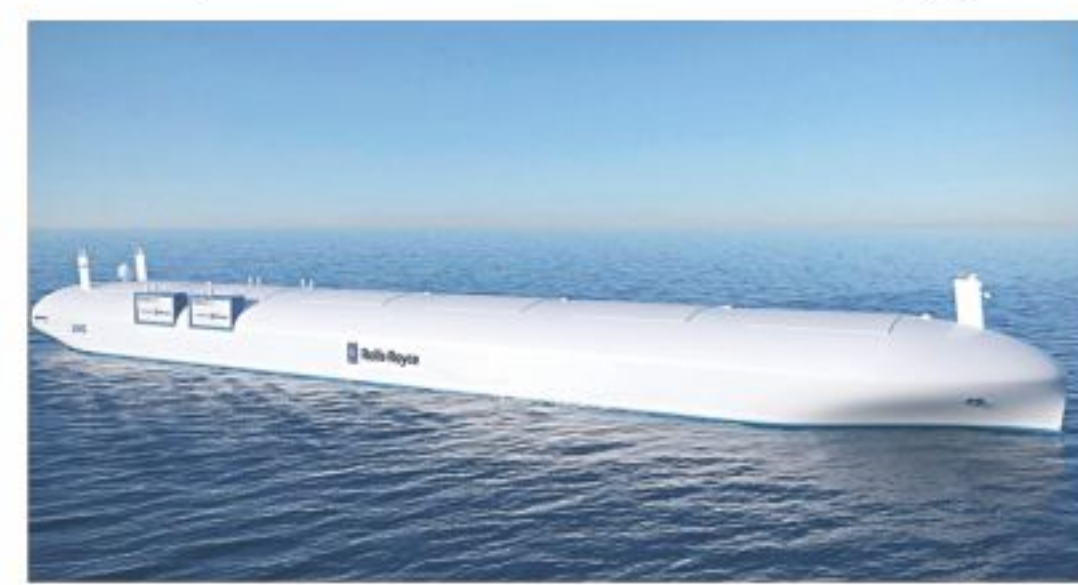
Pakistan has repeatedly rejected US accusations that it is abetting groups like the Taliban-linked Haqqani Network, a position that China has backed.

"The government and people of Pakistan have made huge sacrifices in the fight against terror for everyone to see and the international community should recognize that," Wang said.

Meanwhile, US banking regulators ordered Pakistan's Habib Bank to shutter its New York office after nearly 40 years, for repeatedly failing to heed concerns over possible terrorist financing and

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## Unmanned 'ghost' ships are coming



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The Yara Birkeland isn't an ordinary cargo ship. If all goes well, the vessel, currently being built for a Norwegian agricultural fertiliser company, will become the world's first fully autonomous cargo ship when it launches in 2020.

Current international shipping law states that ocean-going vessels must be properly crewed, so fully autonomous, unmanned ships aren't allowed in international waters. As such, the Yara Birkeland will have to operate close to the Norwegian coast at all times, carrying out regular short journeys between three ports in the south of the country.

But change is afoot in the maritime sector, and earlier this year the UN's International Maritime Organisation (IMO) began discussions that could

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## MIRPUR TERROR DEN Rab wraps up 88-hour op

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion concluded its search operation at a Darussalam house in the capital yesterday, three days after a raid that saw seven people, including militant suspect Abdullah, dead.

After the 88-hour-long operation, Rab claimed that Abdullah used the top floor of the building for making bombs and also as a workshop for his business.

On the fifth floor, Rab personnel yesterday checked 23 big refrigerators and found two of those tied with improvised explosives, claimed Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of Rab's legal and media wing, during a briefing on the spot.

The elite force claimed to have seized 17 strong bombs, 30 improvised hand

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## 400 sued over AL infighting in Kushtia

UNB, Kushtia

A case has been filed against 400 people of Bakhoil village in Sadar upazila in connection with Thursday's factional clash of ruling Awami League that left two people dead and 20 others injured.

Komlesh Das, sub-inspector of Islamic University Police Station, filed the case yesterday for obstructing the work of police and assaulting them. Of the accused, 300 were unknown, said Ratan

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After a hazardous rooftop journey on the train, passengers get off at Kamalapur Railway Station. The city is getting busy with more and more Eid holidaymakers returning to the capital in big numbers. The photo was taken around 3:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Mega quake kills 32 in Mexico

8.1 tremor triggers small tsunami, destroys buildings

REUTERS, Mexico City

At least 32 people were killed after a massive 8.1 magnitude earthquake, one of the biggest recorded in Mexico, struck off the country's southern coast late on Thursday, causing cracks in buildings and triggering a small tsunami, authorities said.

The quake was apparently stronger than a devastating 1985 temblor that flattened swathes of Mexico City and killed thousands, but this time, damage to the city was limited.

A number of buildings suffered severe damage in parts of southern Mexico. Some of the worst initial reports came from the town of Juchitan in Oaxaca state, where sections of the town hall, a hotel, a bar and other buildings were reduced to rubble.

Alejandro Murat, the state governor, said 23 deaths were registered in Oaxaca, 17 of them in Juchitan.

A spokesman for emergency services said seven people were also confirmed dead in the neighboring state of Chiapas. Earlier, the governor of Tabasco, Arturo Nunez, said two children had died in his state.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) said the 8.1 magnitude quake had its epicenter in the Pacific Ocean, 54 miles (87 km) southwest of the town of Pijijiapan in the impoverished southern state of Chiapas, at a depth of 43 miles.

Rescue workers labored through the night in badly affected areas to check for people trapped in collapsed buildings.

Windows were shattered at Mexico City airport and power went out in several neighborhoods of the capital, affecting more than one million people. The cornice of a hotel came down in the southern tourist city of Oaxaca, a witness said.

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PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 9

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

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SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION