



A child celebrates the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Dog in Manhattan's Chinatown in New York yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 20 Bangladeshis

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Shamsher, who got registered Venus Overseas Holdings on May 4, 2010.

Moosa is the chairman of DATCO, a local manpower recruiting company.

The Daily Star could not reach Moosa for comments. It also tried to contact DATCO General Manager Mosharof Hossain, but he did not respond to phone calls.

Last year, Moosa was quizzed by the ACC over allegations of corruption and concealing wealth.

Two names -- Imran Rahman and Shahnaz Huda Razzak -- came up twice in the list. They used Dhaka Export Processing Zone Ltd in Savar as their local address, according to the report.

The duo opened shipping companies Ocean Ice and Southern Ice in October 2001. Both of them are directors of the firms, it said.

The leaked documents show Imran is an expatriate living in Vietnam.

Three companies -- Marzan Shipping, Quamar Shipping and Shams Shipping -- were registered against two brothers Mohammed A Awwal and Mohammed A Malek at different times between 1993 and 1997.

The two are based in Chittagong. Awwal is the chairman of Bengal Shipping in the port city and his brother Malek is its managing director.

Besides, KH Asadul Islam from the capital's Dhanmondi opened two companies -- Intrepid Group and Intrepid Capital -- on March 20, 2015. Farhan Aqueeb Rahman from the city's Gulshan is a director of Intrepid Group, according to the leaked documents.

This newspaper, however, could not independently verify the information mentioned in the ICIJ report.

"We will include these names in our ongoing enquiry," ACC Chairman Iqbal Mahmood told this correspondent yesterday.

He said the ACC has sought information from the financial intelligence units of different countries about the

Bangladeshis whose names came up in the previous leaks. But it has not yet received anything significant.

Last November, the ICIJ released data from the Bermuda-based offshore law firm Appleby, containing information on entities registered in more than 30 offshore jurisdictions.

A month later, the ICIJ released additional information from corporate registries from four secrecy jurisdictions that appeared in the Paradise Papers investigation: Barbados, the Bahamas, Aruba and Nevis.

The latest data comes from three corporate registries: the Cook Islands, Samoa and Malta.

With this release, information on more than 290,000 companies related to the Paradise Papers have been made available in the database, more than from any of the ICIJ's previous leaks.

The latest ICIJ report also mentions the name of Zulfikar Ahmed from Dhanmondi, who got registered a firm named Khaleda Shipping Company in Malta in May 1999.

Besides, Atikuz Zaman set up New Technology Investment Ltd in the European country in December 2011. He is a shareholder of the offshore firm. He mentioned Russia and Bangladesh as his linked countries.

However, he used his address in Moscow for the company's registration.

Another Bangladeshi, Tajul Islam Tajun, whose name had earlier cropped up in the Panama Papers, got registered four companies in June, 2005, using the same name, date and his address in Narayanganj. Faruque Palwan and Tuhin Islam Sumon were shown as directors of the four companies.

Moreover, Mahmood Hossain and Mohammed Rezaul Haque got registered offshore companies, showing Ireland and Bangladesh as their linked countries. Both of them opened the companies, using their Dublin addresses, show the documents.

The other names mentioned in the

report are: Amanullah Chagla from DOHS Baridhara; Mohammed Kamal Bhuiyan; Mahtaba Rahman from DOHS Banani; Md Fazle Elahi Choudhury from DOHS Baridhara and Yousuf Khaleque.

Talking to this newspaper yesterday, Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Abu Hena M Razee Hassan said the central bank would investigate the financial dealings and transactions made by the people whose name came up in the ICIJ report.

The BB usually investigates such allegations through Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit to verify whether the people in question laundered money abroad.

The ACC chairman, however, said it is very tough to proceed with this type of cases without specific information.

"If we ask for details of the Bangladeshis from Malta by only giving it their names and addresses, it will not give us anything," said the chairman.

He, however, said the ACC will launch an enquiry soon.

Earlier in November last year, the Paradise Papers revealed that businessman and BNP Vice Chairman Abdul Awal Mintoog got registered energy company NFM Energy Ltd in tax haven Bermuda on August 9, 1999.

The ICIJ in 2013 and 2016 leaked secret data where names of some Bangladeshi individuals and entities cropped up.

The ACC investigated the matter, but could not reveal anything significant.

### ASI hurt

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He said police suspected that the criminals were muggers.

Police seized the two motorbikes from the spot.

The CMP deputy commissioner said they were interrogating the detainee.

The acting chairman of Arrippur's local council Salma Khatun likewise expressed her personal gratitude for his activities.

"After his father's death times were really hard," Shahidul's mother recalls. "I did what I could for our survival. Things are a little better now, and I encourage his hobby. We are happy."

"I am really pleased that he does such praiseworthy things," says Shahidul's wife. "We still struggle sometimes, but we are all supportive of his efforts."

"I only want that no student should ever have to give up study for a lack of school supplies," says Shahidul.

interfering in the election. Trump denies any collusion by his campaign.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats told the Senate Intelligence Committee on Tuesday that he had already seen evidence Russia was targeting US elections in November, when Republican control of the House of Representatives and Senate are at stake, plus a host of positions in state governments.

"Frankly, the United States is under attack," Coats said at an annual hearing on worldwide threats.

Russia would try to interfere in the 2018 US midterm elections by using social media to spread propaganda and misleading reports, much as it did in the 2016 campaign, intelligence chiefs said at the hearing.

## China deploys

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The idea is believed to be popular among members of online military forums as long as they can keep their ranks and entitlements.

It comes as part of China's plan to plant at least 84,000 square kilometres (32,400 square miles) of trees by the end of the year, which is roughly equivalent to the size of Ireland.

The aim is to increase the country's forest coverage from 21 percent of its total landmass to 23 percent by 2020, the China Daily newspaper reported.

Zhang Jianlong, head of China's State Forestry Administration, said by 2035 the figure could reach as high as 26 percent.

"Companies, organisations and talent that specialise in greening work are all welcome to join in the country's massive greening campaign," he said.

"Cooperation between government and social capital will be put on the priority list."

## Architectural

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For locals such as Ashoke Kumar Bhattacharjee, the president of the Baroda Kanta Math preservation committee, efforts to protect the monument can't come too soon. "In 2001 the building was damaged. Thieves stole the metal apex covers from the towers along with doors and window fittings. The math is already in a reasonably dilapidated condition; if the archaeology department does not take steps for its preservation in the very near future, the whole structure may face demolition. I fear the math may be lost."

Indeed the preservation committee sent a letter to the department two years ago requesting the site's protection. No discernible initiative to do so has thus far been undertaken,

Bhattacharjee says. "To the contrary, the upazila administration has leased the site to six people for their own use.

Five years ago we did manage some repair work, with funds allocated by the Prime Minister's Office, but further repairs and upkeep are needed."

Still without official recognition as a site under the Antiquities Act 1968 locals can only watch as brickwork cracks deepen and rain leaks through the structure's roofs.

"I went there recently," says Hizla upazila's nirbahi officer Abu Zafar Rashid. "Previously I was unaware that the land had been leased. I intend to take the initiative to address that situation."

## Construction

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roof of the 500-seat auditorium collapsed around 10:20am, injuring nine workers, said Abdul Ahad Khan, officer-in-charge of Gafargaon Police Station, quoting locals.

The injured were rushed to Gafargaon Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared Jahan dead. One of the wounded was moved to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated, the OC said.

Md Wahiduzzaman, assistant engineer of Mymensingh Zila Parishad, said the construction work involving over Tk 6 crore was awarded to a local firm, Ratan Enterprise, in August 2016, and the work was scheduled to be completed this year.

Johirul Islam Ratan, owner of the firm, was asked to stop the work of the roof as they found problems in its construction. But he did not stop, the engineer said.

Banani Biswas, secretary of the Zila Parishad, said a nine-member committee, headed by its Chief Executive Officer HM Lokman, had been formed to investigate yesterday's incident and asked to submit a report within 10 days.

This correspondent could not reach Ratan over phone for his comments.

## Woman killed

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"The housewife's husband and father-in-law are Bangladeshi expatriates living in Saudi Arabia. Other members of the family, who were present during the incident, could not realise what was happening at the time," he said.

Mariam, daughter of the deceased, filed a murder case with the police station yesterday afternoon, the OC said, adding that they detained one of their neighbours for questioning.

Shamsunnahar, superintendent of police in Chandpur, visited the spot after the incident.

Talking to The Daily Star correspondent, she said, "We are questioning the deceased's daughter-in-law [the rape victim] and some other suspects."

## BNP plans

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demonstrations in all district towns and metropolitan cities, except Dhaka, on Tuesday.

On February 8, Khaleda was convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case by a special court in Dhaka. She was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the case.

Soon after her conviction, the BNP announced countrywide demonstrations on February 9 and 10. Later, it staged protests from Monday to Wednesday.

## First list handed

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agreement, but a pre-condition set at the eleventh hour held up the process.

The deal inked on November 23 had called for the repatriation to begin in 60 days. But, during a meeting on January 16, Naypyidaw demanded a family-wise list and Dhaka agreed to provide it.

Bangladesh's passport department has been conducting biometric registration of the refugees as individuals since the early days of the influx in late August, but that was not done family-wise.

After the January 16 meeting, the office of Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner began preparing the list of families based on the UN Refugee Agency's data and the biometric registration of the Rohingyas.

"We are expecting to complete the list of refugee families in a month," Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Abul Kalam told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

After Myanmar verifies the list and sends it back with feedbacks, Bangladesh will arrange the repatriation, he added.

Yesterday, Lt Gen Kyaw Swe did not make any comment to the newsmen after the meeting that ended around 6:15pm. He left the ministry waving and smiling.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman said the Myanmar delegation came here with a positive mood and the meeting was very fruitful.

He said Bangladesh requested Myanmar to create a congenial atmosphere in trouble-torn Rakhine State. Otherwise, the Rohingyas would enter Bangladesh again.

The minister noted that a meeting would be held in Myanmar on February 20 to decide on the return of

around 6,500 Rohingyas now staying along the zero line.

At yesterday's meeting, both sides discussed the issue of security of the Myanmar nationals after their repatriation in light of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's five-point proposal and Kofi Annan Commission report.

The Bangladesh side requested the Myanmar minister to take measures to stop killing along the border and implement the agreement on border patrolling.

Responding to a query that Rohingyas are still entering to Bangladesh, Asaduzzaman said, "We have informed them [Myanmar] about the matter and they said that they will stop this influx."

Nearly 700,000 Rohingyas have crossed over into Bangladesh since a military offensive began in response to an insurgent attack on August 25 last year. More than 300,000 others, who crossed over from Myanmar in the previous years, are also staying in Bangladesh.

With horrific accounts of rape, extrajudicial killing and arson, Rohingyas took shelters at makeshift camps in Ukha and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, creating a never-seen-before humanitarian crisis.

Also at the meeting, Bangladesh identified 49 Yaba factories inside Myanmar and requested the country to shut them down.

"Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed to shut down Yaba factories in Myanmar. We've identified 49 Yaba factories and the list was handed over to them. They're trying to close down the factories and sought support from Bangladesh," he said.

They also discussed the combined operations on both sides of the border to check the rapid spread of Yaba, a highly addictive narcotic.

## Marma girls

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The post mentioned that a good number of male and female police were deployed at the house to ensure security.

The Facebook post was removed hours later.

Citizens of Rangamati yesterday, meanwhile, expressed deep concern over an alleged attack on female volunteers and queen of Chakma circle Yan Yan by members of law enforcement agencies and security forces on Thursday at Rangamati Sadar Hospital.

In a press conference at Rangamati Press Club, they demanded that a probe committee with the power to conduct an independent and neutral investigation into the alleged assault be formed.

They also demanded that the persons who were involved in the incident be identified and brought to book.

Before taking the sisters forcibly from the hospital on Thursday evening, six masked men and 10 women with their faces covered in scarves came to the Rangamati hospital. They bit up volunteers including Yan Yan. One of the volunteers was sexually harassed by them, according to the statement handed out at the press conference.

The press conference was organised by Parbatya Chattagram Nagarik committee, Himawanti, Women's Resource Network, Parbatya Chattagram Headman Network, Parbatya Chattagram Karbari Network and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad.

## Military ops

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Myanmar is not a party to the International Criminal Court, and China's status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council meant it was unlikely that the body would declare the Myanmar military's actions against the Rohingya as genocide.

In December, the government of Myanmar informed Lee that she had been barred from returning to the country and that cooperation would be withdrawn for the duration of her tenure.

The Myanmar authorities had complained that Lee's reporting on the situation in Myanmar had been biased for about six months leading up to the ban.

Talking to the Channel 4, Lee said she'd received many death threats and was even warned of a planned assassination attempt.

In another development, Myanmar's army chief received a royal decoration from Thailand yesterday, despite accusations his security forces have carried out ethnic cleansing against Rohingyas.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing controls the army and oversaw the "clearance operations" on Rohingya villages.

The military man was nominated for the award by Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn on August 21, 2017 -- days before the crackdown -- "for support and service to Thailand's army", according to palace mouthpiece the Royal Gazette.

Min Aung Hlaing posted a photo to his official Facebook page of him smiling alongside his Thai counterpart as he received the "Knight Grand Cross First Class of the Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant" in Bangkok.

It was awarded "to show the long and close relations" between the two countries, the Royal Thai Armed Forces said in a statement.

But Matt Smith, of campaign group Fortify Rights, said Thailand should support calls for accountability and justice in neighbouring Myanmar rather than honouring its top military official.

"This is a man responsible for a military committing mass atrocities with complete impunity," he said, in reference to widespread allegations his forces raped and murdered Rohingyas during the crackdown.

Junta-run Thailand defended the decision to decorate the powerful general.

"It's tradition to give a royal decoration to supreme commanders of foreign countries," Defence Ministry spokesman Lieutenant General Kongcheep Tantravanich said.

This week the US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley urged the Security Council to ensure Myanmar's military answers for its campaign against the Rohingyas.

The army has said it did not target civilians and has only admitted to killing "terrorists".

Since winning elections in 2015, Suu Kyi's civilian government has been in a delicate power-sharing arrangement with Min Aung Hlaing.

The US embassy in Bangkok did not immediately comment on whether Min Aung Hlaing would visit military exercises held in Thailand this week, where Myanmar's participation as an observer has sparked criticism.

Thailand has remained close to Myanmar despite friction over the Rohingya crisis within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which follows a policy of not interfering in the affairs of other bloc members.

[From Channel 4, The Irrawaddy and AFP]

## Selfless friend

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Shahidul started to work alongside his mother. "We used to recycle wastepaper, iron rods; we sorted rubbish. It took many years but in 2001 we were finally able to buy a piece of land for Tk 40,000 with our hard-earned savings."

Shahidul married orphan Beauty Begum in 2008, the same year he began to actively help primary and secondary students across Jessore.

Now he pulls a rickshaw van, earning around Tk 350 per day. Milk from two cows brings in a further Tk 150 per day. With such a meagre income he manages the daily expenses of his mother, wife and children, and still

finds a little left over for what he calls his hobby.

"To have exercise books and a ball-point pen I am overjoyed," says orphan and class-two student Asma Khatun, just one to benefit from Shahidul's efforts.

"There are many rich people in our country," notes Krishnabati government primary school assistant teacher Nurjahan Aktar. "They don't have as generous a heart."

"He should be appreciated and respected," says villager Dr Feroz Hossain. "Despite the hardship of being a van puller, Shahidul is undertaking this noble endeavour. We honour him."

## Russians indicted

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"This indictment serves as a reminder that people are not always who they appear to be on the Internet," Rod Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general, told reporters. "The indictment alleges that the Russian conspirators want to promote discord in the United States and undermine public confidence in democracy. We must not allow them to succeed."

A Russian lawmaker called the US charges "another anti-Russian push", RIA reported.

President Trump has been briefed on the indictment announced yesterday, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said.

Trump has never unequivocally accepted the intelligence agencies' report, and has denounced Mueller's

probe into whether his campaign colluded with the Kremlin as a "witch hunt".

Facebook and Twitter both declined to comment on the indictment.

"Defendants posted derogatory information about a number of candidates, and by early to mid-2016, Defendants' operations included supporting the presidential campaign of then-candidate Donald J Trump ... and disparaging Hillary Clinton," the court document said.

The indictment appeared likely to provide ammunition to Democrats and others arguing for a continued aggressive probe of the matter.

The 2017 intelligence agency finding has spawned investigations into any ties between Republican Trump's campaign and Moscow. Russia denies