

SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTION

ACC quizzes ex-MD of Farmers Bank, 5 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday quizzed six people, including former managing director of Farmers Bank SK M Shamim, for around six hours in connection with an ongoing enquiry into "suspicious transaction of Tk 4 crore in a bank".

The ACC also quizzed Farmer Bank's former head of business Gazi Salauddin, First Vice President Swapan Kumar Roy, former manager (operations) Lutful Haque, Credit In-Charge Shafiuddin Ahmed and Executive Officer Umme Salma at its Segunbagicha headquarters.

The commission has also asked the Special Branch of police to take steps to prevent them from leaving the country, said Pranab Kumar

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivers her statement at the High-Level Event for Action for Peacekeeping at the Trusteeship Council Chamber of the UN Headquarters in New York. She stressed the need for adequate authorisation and equipment for the UN peacekeepers so they could carry out their mandate.

Actions against Rohingya meets genocide standard

Says US congressman

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Chairman of the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Ed Royce yesterday said he believed that a realistic accounting of the deliberate campaign of murder, intimidation and displacement against the Rohingya clearly met the legal standard for genocide.

"Making a formal determination of genocide must be the next step for the US. Defining these atrocities for what they are is critical to building international public awareness -- and support -- to stop them.

"The protection of human rights has long been our nation's top priority in Burma -- dating back to freeing Aung San Suu Kyi -- and today, that must include the Rohingya," he said.

Royce made the remarks at the full

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Two killed as truck falls into waterbody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

At least two people were killed, and four others injured, as a truck laden with iron parts went out of control and fell into a water body under Fatki bridge in Shahjahanpur upazila last night.

Quoting witnesses, Sub-Inspector of Kunderhat Highway Police outpost Kazal Kumar Nandi, said the truck carrying iron rod angles, on its way to Thakurgaon from Savar, fell from Fatki bridge on the Bogura-Rangpur highway near Sajapur village and into the water body around 11:30am, leaving two dead on the spot and injuring four others.

The dead, Zayeda Begum, 45, and her daughter Sabina Islam, 20, were travelling on the vehicle, he said.

The injured, Md Qaiyum Islam, 60, Zayeda's husband and Sabina's father; Arman, 4, Zayeda's son; and Md Jany, 25, her son-in-law, also travelling in the truck; and Shohag Shah, 28, the truck driver, were rushed to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogura, said Abdul Aziz, sub-inspector of Bogura Shilimpur Medical outpost,

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13.4cr people to be hit hard

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country's average temperatures are predicted to increase by 1.0°C to 2.5°C, said the report.

The warning comes when concerns over sea level rise and the risk of submergence of low-lying regions and effect on the Sundarbans remain high.

The WB said increasing average temperatures and changes in seasonal rain patterns have already altered farming seasons in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and have resulted in serious health and productivity damage.

"The current analysis points to additional non-coastal areas that will be adversely affected by climate change," said the WB, which found that living standards of nearly half of South Asia's population was at the risk of decline.

Mani, the WB lead economist, said these weather changes would result in lower per capita consumption levels that could further increase poverty and inequality in South Asia, one of the poorest regions in the world.

In Bangladesh, hill tracts will be most affected regions by 2050 for deforestation, hill cutting which has resulted in major landslides, destruction of property and damage to water resources.

"In Bangladesh, Chittagong division emerges as the most vulnerable to changes in average temperature and precipitation followed by Barishal and Dhaka divisions," said the report.

Khulna is the fourth most vulnerable division followed by Rajshahi and Rangpur.

However, Sylhet division is unlikely to suffer decline in living standards, according to the report.

Seven of the top 10 districts where changes in average temperature and rain will have negative effect on living standards, are in the Chittagong division, officially named Chattogram recently.

And Cox's Bazar, the country's biggest tourism destination and now the largest shelter for Rohingya people, is predicted to face the largest negative impact.

"Cox's Bazar is one of the hotspots for Bangladesh. Living standard of people of Cox's Bazar will decline by 20 percent," said WB Vice President for South Asia Region Hartwig Schafer at the launch of the report.

Chittagong, a major economic hub, emerges as the third most vulnerable cities in Bangladesh. The second largest city after Dhaka attracts foreign investments in apparels, ship breaking and oil refinery.

"Going forward, climate vulnerability therefore has huge economic implications for this growing city," said the report suggesting increasing opportunities in non-agricultural sector to reduce the impact.

The WB said climate change is an acute threat to development and efforts to end poverty. It will even reverse the gains in poverty reduction that have been achieved unless actions are taken.

"We cannot address poverty without addressing climate change," said Hartwig.

WB Country Director for Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan Qimiao Fan said addressing climate change was a top development policy.

Finance Minister Muhith did not comment on the impact of climate change but said Bangladesh was on course to become a developing country formally in 2024.

And the country faces some new strains as it becomes a lower-middle income country, he said.

"Cheap money is not so easily available now. We have started the process even before we were asked by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to go into arena of borrowing on hard terms," he said.

Muhith said poverty had been reduced drastically but the country had not been that successful in reducing inequality.

The real big bird

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London (ZSL).

The flightless birds became extinct around 1,000 years ago and may have been hunted to extinction by humans on the island.

A specimen of the bird described in 1894 was thought to be an unusually large example of a smaller species, *Aepyornis maximus*, but researchers now believe that V titan was a separate genus.

Experts have spent decades poring over conflicting evidence and arguing about what was the largest bird that ever lived.

Now a new study of Madagascar's elephant birds has ended the debate and handed the crown to V titan.

Lead scientist Dr James Hansford said: "They would have towered over people. They definitely couldn't fly as they couldn't have supported anywhere near their weight.

"Elephant birds were the biggest of Madagascar's megafauna and arguably one of the most important in the island's evolutionary history - even more so than lemurs.

"This is because large-bodied animals have an enormous impact on the wider ecosystem they live in via controlling vegetation through eating plants, spreading biomass and dispersing seeds through defecation.

"Madagascar is still suffering the effects of the extinction of these birds today."

V titan is the 16th recognised species of elephant bird, now known to occupy three genera.

The elephant bird was described in 1894 by the British scientist CW Andrews as *Aepyornis titan* - a larger species of *Aepyornis maximus*.

But a French rival of Andrews dismissed the discovery of titan as just an outsized *maximus* specimen, and for decades the debate remained deadlocked.

ZSL researchers said the shape and size of V titan's bones are so different from all other elephant birds that it deserved its own classification.

Elephant birds became extinct around 1,000 years ago after a long period co-existing with early human inhabitants of Madagascar.

Its petrified eggs still fetch large sums at auction and it stars in HG Wells' 1895 work *Aepyornis Island*.



A bus almost runs over a group of pedestrians who jaywalk in the face of oncoming traffic on a road in Bangla Motor area in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.

Myanmar delaying Rohingya return

FROM PAGE 1

Rohingya fled to refugee camps in Bangladesh after a bloody military campaign against the Muslim minority in Myanmar's Rakhine State. The two countries reached a deal in November to begin repatriation within two months, but it has not started, with stateless Rohingya still crossing the border into Bangladesh and the refugee camps at Cox's Bazar.

"They agree everything, but unfortunately they don't act, that is the problem," Hasina said of Myanmar. "Everything is set but ... every time they try to find some new excuse," she told Reuters.

Myanmar has said it is ready to take back the refugees and has built transit centres to house them initially on their return.

But it has complained that Bangladesh has not provided its officials with the correct forms. Bangladesh has rejected those claims and UN aid agencies say it is not yet safe for the refugees to return.

Given the delays, Bangladesh has been preparing new homes on a remote island called Bhasan Char, which rights groups have said could be subject to flooding. Cox's Bazar is also vulnerable to flooding but this year's monsoon season was light.

Hasina said building permanent structures for refugees on the mainland "is not at all a possibility (and) not acceptable" since they are Myanmar citizens and must return.

Rohingya regard themselves as native to Myanmar's Rakhine state, but are widely considered interlopers by the country's Buddhist majority and are denied citizenship.

Human rights groups and Rohingya activists have estimated thousands died in last year's security crackdown, which was sparked by attacks by Rohingya insurgents on security forces in Rakhine in August 2017.

This week, a US government investigation reported that Myanmar's military waged a planned, coordinated campaign of mass killings, gang rapes and other atrocities against the Rohingya.

Myanmar has rejected similar findings as "one-sided" and said it had conducted a legitimate counter-insurgency operation.

Ahead of December's election, Hasina and her ruling Awami League have been on the defensive following student protests over an unregulated transport industry. The protest was triggered after a speeding bus killed two students in Dhaka.

However, the main opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, has been in disarray after its leader and former prime minister, Khaleda Zia, was jailed for corruption in February - charges she says were part of a plot to keep her and her family out of politics.

TIB terms

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Iftekharuzzaman said the new law, recently passed by parliament, would rob the people of their basic human rights and be an obstacle in the way of flourishing democracy in the country.

Passing a law contradictory to the constitution and the spirit of Liberation War is not acceptable from a party which had led the war, he added.

The much-debated Digital Security Bill 2018 was passed by Jatiya Sangsad on September 19 with harsh provisions allowing police to frisk or arrest anyone without warrants.

Journalists and rights activists have expressed concerns about the new law, saying it was passed without addressing their concerns.

Iftekharuzzaman said giving recognition to the Official Secrecy Act of the British colonial era under section 32 of the Digital Security Act was a backward-looking move.

"The law will pose a big threat and create a sense of insecurity among journalists, particularly among investigative journalists."

The TIB executive director said the law would be an obstacle to media persons and NGO staff members who have been conducting researches on various works of the government and holding it accountable.

He said they were hopeful that the president would use his constitutional power to send the bill to parliament for review.

Poised pilot saves the day

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As the cockpit crew, Captain Mohammad Zakaria and First Officer Abdur Rouf, was preparing to land in Cox's Bazar, they realised the nose landing gear did not extend and lock in place. There are indicator lights in the cockpit that tell pilots that the gears are down and locked.

Kamrul Islam, general manager (marketing support and PR) of US-Bangla Airlines, said the pilots decided to head towards Chattogram's Shah Amanat International Airport as that was better equipped to deal with an emergency.

Hasan Jahir, station air traffic officer of Shah Amanat International Airport, told The Daily Star, "The pilot had a 30-minute conversation over the radio with the control tower.

"He told us that the nose gear of the aircraft was not extending and wanted us to prepare for an emergency landing.

"The pilot, Captain Mohammad Zakaria, was calm and focused when he was talking to the control tower. He was describing the problem very patiently.

"He seemed confident and not frightened or panicked even for a moment," he said.

The pilot then put the Boeing 737-800 on a holding pattern over Chattogram to burn off fuel so that it was lighter while landing and fire risks were reduced.

The plane eventually touched down at 1:18pm, said Sarwar E Jahan, manager of the airport.

People on the ground took photos and video clips of the landing and posted them on social media. The footages show that after the plane's main landing gears touched down, the pilot held the nose of the plane up for a long time.

He eventually had to gently put down the nose, with no landing gear, a few hundred metres before the aircraft stopped.

Emergency vehicles that had been following the plane since touch down reached the spot in moments.

"Some passengers received minor injuries as they tried to come out from the craft hurriedly," said Hasan Jahir.

Chattogram Civil Surgeon Azizur Rahman Siddique, who rushed to the airport soon after the incident, said Alia Hossain, 45, who had a leg injury, was hospitalised and 40 passengers were given first aid.

The rest were counselled for psychological trauma, he said.

Pilot Captain Mohammad Zakaria told Jagone24.com that like any other pilot, he received training on managing emergency situations.

"Apart from training, a pilot has his own technique to apply in an emergency situation and I tried my best to be as safe as possible and I landed the aircraft thinking about the safety of all passengers and crew," the news portal

Uncertainty

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But AL Presidium Member Mohammed Nasim yesterday urged party activists to join Saturday's rally.

On Tuesday, he announced that party leaders and activists would take control of the city streets on September 29.

However, he yesterday said they want peace, not confrontation.

Meanwhile, at a programme in Rajbari yesterday, Quader, also minister for road, transport and bridges, said the AL would not go for any action until it comes under attack.

He said party leaders would be on the streets on Saturday but they will not be allowed to hold meetings.

At another programme at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, Nasim, also health minister, said, "We want election, not violence."

If anyone incites or resorts to violence, he would face dire consequences, he warned.

About Saturday's rally, Nasim, also coordinator of the 14-party alliance, said it was prescheduled while the BNP changed the date of its programme only to create conflict.

Anisur Rahman Mollick, politburo member of the Workers Party, a component of the AL-led alliance, said they were preparing for Saturday's rally.

leg," he said.

A passenger said, "I am still in panic and I do not know whether I will be able to fly again."

However, all the passengers that The Daily Star correspondent spoke to praised the pilot.

"For the pilot, we, the 164 passengers, have gotten out safely from the aircraft," said Qaiyum, adding, "He did not make us realise the actual danger even minutes before the emergency landing."

Passenger Mamtaj said, "I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the pilot as he efficiently managed the situation."

"I cannot even imagine what would have happened if there was a minor fault in decision-making in that situation," she said.

Chattogram airport was closed for five hours following the incident. Two Chattogram-bound flights from Kolkata were diverted to Dhaka while another to Chattogram did not take off from Dhaka during that time.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh yesterday formed a four-member committee to investigate the incident.

At least 51 people, including 28 Bangladeshis, were killed when a US-Bangla Airlines plane crashed in Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport on March 12.

Mohammed Suman and Arun Bikash Dey contributed to this report.