

## 'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A suspected robber was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Pabna's Bera upazila early yesterday.

Md Waliullah, 31, who allegedly used to be a drug peddler too, was accused in eight cases filed with different police stations, said Shahed Mahamud, officer-in-charge of Bera Police Station.

Acting on a tip-off, police arrested Waliullah from Bera municipality area on Wednesday night, the OC said.

Later, they conducted a raid in Jorda area to recover a batch of hidden drugs and firearms taking the arrestee along with them, he added.

When they reached the spot, Waliullah's accomplices opened fire on the law enforcers, forcing them to fire back that triggered a "gunfight".

Waliullah was hit by a bullet during the incident and was taken to Bera Upazila Health Complex where he succumbed to his injury around 5:00am, said OC Shahed, adding that three policemen were also injured.

Police recovered two firearms, six bullets and 17 bottles of Phensedyl from the spot, the OC also said.

## New EU chief makes first trip to Brussels

AFP, Brussels

The EU's new president-elect Ursula von der Leyen yesterday made her first trip to Brussels since being nominated, as senior officials sought to shore up support for her appointment in the European Parliament.

Current German defence minister von der Leyen met Jean-Claude Juncker, the man she is to replace as European Commission president, for talks a day after pledging to present her "vision for the next five years for Europe" within a fortnight.

She must win the approval of the highly fragmented European Parliament, where there have been grumblings about the deal to appoint her, which was cooked up by EU national leaders over three days of tortuous summit wrangling.

Juncker and von der Leyen -- the first woman to be named to the head of the EU's executive arm -- embraced warmly for the cameras as they met at commission headquarters in Brussels, but neither made any comment.

## Caretaker

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stabbed to death. The body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsy, he added.

A case was filed against four men with Lalbagh Police Station in this connection.

Three of the accused -- Bahar Uddin, 55, Farid Ahmed, 50, and Abul Kalam, 45 -- were arrested yesterday, said police.

Another accused in the case -- Saiful Islam -- has been missing since Tuesday.

Jakir Sheikh, Hanif's father-in-law, told The Daily Star that Saiful had been threatening the victim with death.

"He [Hanif] wanted to quit his job and get back to his Gopalganj home after receiving last month's salary. But he was killed before that," Jakir said.

Hanif, father of a three-month old baby girl, joined the mosque ahead of last Ramadan.

## Principal

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official.

Hearing this, the mother asked her what did the principal do? Then she said the principal sexually harassed many girls at the madrasa, the official added.

Later, the mother informed Rab of the matter and Rab investigated the allegation and found that the principal raped 10 to 12 girls since 2018 and tried to violate many others.

Pornography was found in his mobile and laptop, the official said.

The principal with his family lives in quarters inside the madrasa.

When his wife was not at home or the madrasa was closed, he used to intimidate the girls with threats of beating, giving poor marks in exams, and outright failing them to make them go to his house, the Rab official said.

During primary interrogation, Principal Al Amin confessed that he had raped and sexually harassed girls, the official added.

The process of filing case was underway, said the official.

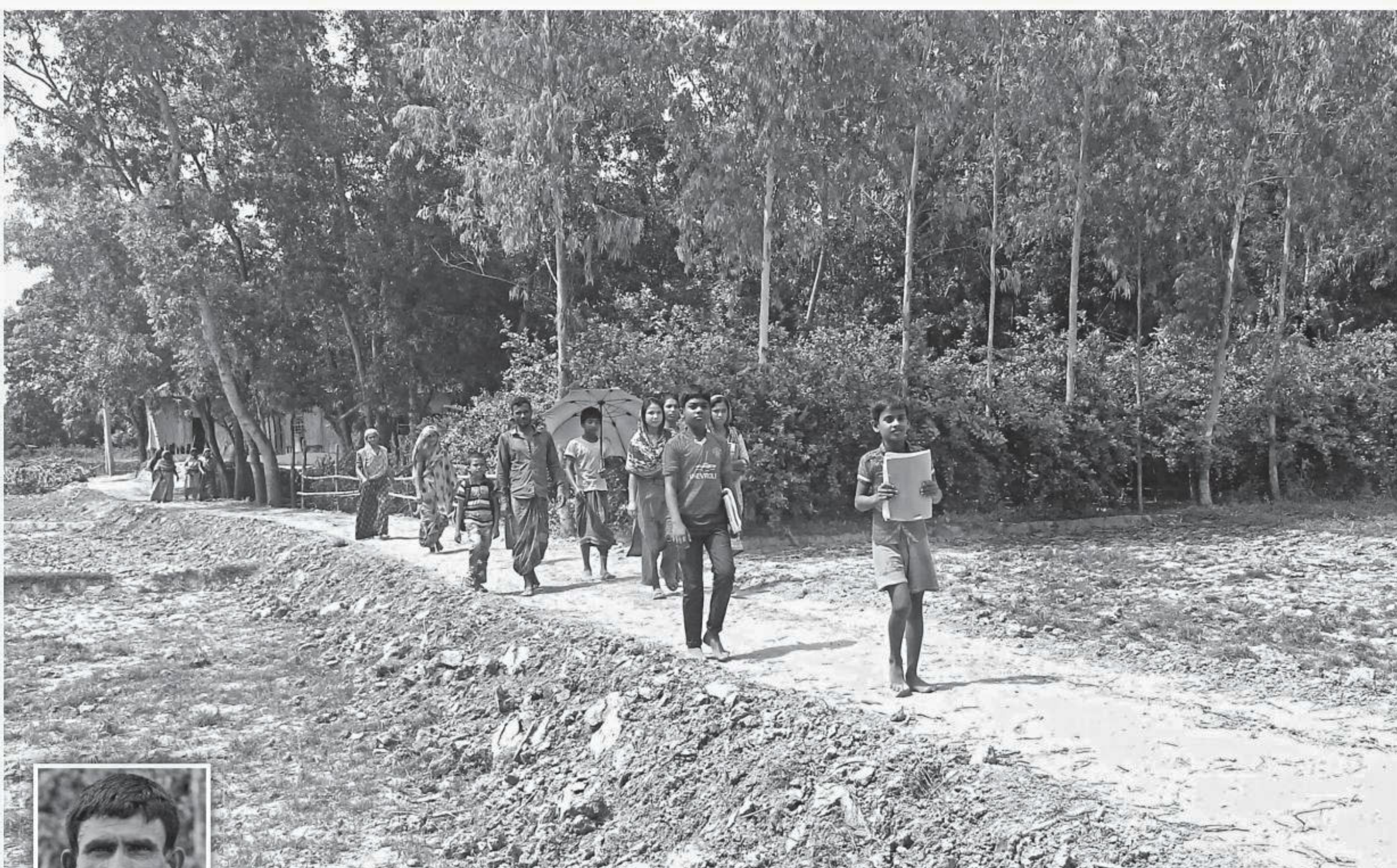
## RMG worker

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Chattoogram Medical College and Hospital.

Dulal Mahmud, officer-in-charge of Anwara Police Station, said a case was filed with his police station at noon in this connection.

Police are trying to identify and arrest the culprits, he added.



Villagers use a dirt road constructed by Mohammad Chhainuddin, inset, that connect the remote Chakgagadhar village in Tangail's Nagarpur to a market. It took the farmer nearly four years to build the road almost single-handedly.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

## Farmer lays a road for his village

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to get her to school," Chhainuddin recalled.

The village had been overlooked for years in the absence of educated and powerful people who could influence the local administration, he said. It would take only a few months for Dhuburi Union Parishad to build the road, he added.

"Seeing no ray of hope from anywhere, I had been thinking for the last seven-eight years to construct the road by myself and finally started the work four years ago, taking earth from my own land," said the 45-year-old farmer.

"After a few weeks, I got the support of my younger brothers who joined me in the effort. I also hired day labourers for some time."

However, it was not easy to build a road single-handedly. It took Chhainuddin sheer willpower, hard labour, and four years of perseverance.

With no financial muscle, he relied on a pair of hands to turn the

low-laying narrow ridge (ail) into a five feet wide and three feet high road.

Chhainuddin's younger brother Abdul Ghani, who studies at Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (Duet) in Gazipur, was one of those who gave a hand in the extraordinary effort whenever he was at home during vacation.

But a modest Chhainuddin credited the villagers, too, for helping him all the way. "It could not have been possible for me to build the road alone, had the villagers not agreed to give their land and earth for it," said a smiling Chhainuddin.

He even refused to consider that he had done something heroic.

"I have not constructed the road only for the villagers, my family members are also enjoying the benefits," he told The Daily Star.

But the villagers publicly acknowledged that it was his determination and hard work that made it possible.

"Chhainuddin Bhai has got a big heart. He has not only given hard labour for a few years but also sacrificed his land. Besides, he lifted a huge amount of earth from his pond for earth-filling," said villager Abu Sayeed.

Now, besides the villagers, light vehicles like rickshaw-vans with goods can easily move on the road, he added.

The road opened in early May and facilitates movement of 1,500 villagers.

Chhainuddin's wife Lucky Begum said her husband did the earth-filling till midnight many a days after completing work at his farm. He never complained, she said. "He did it with complete devotion and also in a joyous mood."

Chhainuddin's daughter Sonia Akter, 19, is proud of what his father has done. "My father has not received any institutional education. But he is more advanced in thinking than many educated people. I'm proud of him."

Sonia is the eldest of Chhainuddin's

three children. She studies in class XI at a local college.

The gargantuan effort of the farmer has understandably served as a wake-up call for the local authority, and Motiar Rahman, chairman of the union, admitted that they were embarrassed for not doing what Chhainuddin did.

Motiar said they supported the earth-filling work of the road by providing labourers under the government's 40-day work programme.

Chhainuddin, however, sought urgent government support to make the road another four-foot higher at several places before monsoon hits. "Otherwise, the newly-built clay road may get washed away at different points if submerged by water," he feared.

Contacted, Nagarpur upazila nirbahi officer Syed Fayezul Islam said he would take necessary measures in this regard if he receives an application from the farmer or other villagers.

## 'Be careful with the threats, Iran'

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Ali Khamenei, gave his approval, state news agency IRNA reported yesterday.

"Holding talks with America can be reviewed by Iran only if (US President Donald) Trump lifts the sanctions and our supreme leader gives permission to hold such talks," Mahmoud Alavi said late on Wednesday.

"Americans were scared of Iran's military power, that is the reason behind their decision to abort the decision to attack Iran."

Experts said Iran has no legitimate use for uranium enriched beyond the level permitted by the deal.

"There is no justification," said Kelsey Davenport of the Arms Control Association, a Washington advocacy organization.

The move, she said, was aimed at increasing pressure on European powers, China and Russia to

compensate Iran for the impact of US sanctions re-imposed by Trump after he renounced the deal.

Tehran has denied any intent to develop nuclear weapons.

Rouhani added that the Islamic Republic's actions were reversible. "All of our actions can be returned to the previous condition within one hour, why are you worried?" he said.

**TOUGH TONE**

His tone was unusually tough. Rouhani was the Iranian architect of the nuclear pact and is seen as a pragmatist, unlike senior clerics in the ruling elite who opposed his opening to the West and have kept up their denunciations of the United States.

Rouhani further urged the Trump administration to "adopt a rational approach again" and return to the negotiating table.

Weeks of tensions with Washington

crested last month when Tehran shot down a US military surveillance drone and Trump responded with a decision to launch air strikes only to call them off at the last minute. Washington also accused Iran of being behind attacks on several oil tankers in the Gulf, which Tehran denies.

Iran on Monday said it has amassed more low-enriched uranium than the 300 kg (661 lbs) permitted under the nuclear pact, prompting Trump to warn it was "playing with fire".

European nations who are part of the nuclear deal said on Tuesday they were "extremely concerned" by Tehran's stockpiling announcement while Israel said it was preparing for possible involvement in any military confrontation between Iran and the United States.

Rouhani said that if the nations in

the pact did not protect trade with Iran promised under the deal but blocked by Trump's re-imposition of tough sanctions, Tehran would also start to revive its Arak heavy-water reactor after July 7.

He kept the door open to negotiations, saying Iran would again reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium below the 300-kg limit set by the pact if Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China honoured their deal pledges.

Iran will gain nothing by departing from the terms of the deal, the French foreign ministry cautioned on Wednesday.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have escalated since Trump pulled Washington out of the pact in May 2018 and acted to bar all international sales of Iranian oil, the Islamic Republic's economic lifeblood.

## Ancient Philistines came from Europe

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have had no proof that they hailed from elsewhere.

Biblical and ancient Egyptian texts indicated their origin to be from "the sea", while their building styles and pottery suggested Aegean influences.

"The idea that the Philistines were immigrants was something we could never demonstrate before," said Daniel Master, director of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, one of the five Philistine cities, and head of the archaeological team there.

Using cutting-edge technology, experts analysed Ashkelon bones from

the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, said researcher Michal Feldman from the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Jena, Germany.

"When we compared the ancestry of the two (periods) by using genome data, we saw that the Philistines, already Iron Age people, have an ancestral component that was not there in the Bronze Age people, who lived there before," she said.

"And this ancestral component seems to be European derived."

The discovery, said Master, was "extraordinary."

"Archaeologists in this world have been working for 150 years on this

issue," he said.

"Now with the DNA results that we have that show an influx of a European strain of DNA into Ashkelon in the 12th century (BC) we can finally say -- directly, physically -- that these people were immigrants to this region in the 12th century."

Master's expedition uncovered an Ashkelon Philistine cemetery in 2013 that provided a wealth of samples, but only thanks to recent scientific developments could the precious information be gleaned from the bones.

"We could do this now because of technological advancements in

the field of genetics, so sequencing methods and DNA enrichment methods that were not available before are available to us now," said Feldman.

While their origin could be traced to "Europe and probably Southern Europe," researchers "still don't have enough data to narrow it down further to the exact population," he added.

The reason behind the Philistines' odyssey to the sunny Middle Eastern shores of what today is Israel and the Gaza Strip remains unclear, but the DNA testing provides backing to the literary narrative of late Bronze Age relocations.

## Taiwan bars top ex-officials from Chinese political events

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's parliament has voted to tighten a law governing links with China, effectively barring many of its former top ministers and retired generals from attending Chinese government ceremonies.

Ties between China and Taiwan are frosty, with the mainland cutting off communications with the island's government after the election of Beijing-sceptic President Tsai Ing-wen three years ago.

"We should sternly forbid any actions (from our retired military generals) such as saluting the Chinese flag, singing the Chinese anthem or any actions which could damage Taiwan's national interest and dignity," the island's premier Su Tseng-chang said in a statement on social media.

The amended law -- passed on Wednesday -- prohibits former generals, the heads and their deputies of certain ministries like defence and foreign affairs from attending events hosted by or affiliated with the Chinese government.

Violators risk losing their monthly pension or a maximum fine of TW\$10 million (US\$320,000).

Taiwan has been a self-ruled, de facto nation in charge of its own affairs and borders for the last 70 years.

But China maintains that it is a part of its territory to be retaken -- by force if necessary.

Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party refuses to acknowledge that the island is part of "One China", unlike the opposition Koumintang party which favours warmer ties with Beijing.

Taiwan goes to the polls in January, and the contest is likely to be dominated by relations with China. Critics and analysts say Beijing has stepped up its efforts to spread pro-China messages in Taiwanese media and also through opaque online sources in a bid to influence the outcome.

## Unesco

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"Heritage in Danger".

From the ongoing session, the government was also requested to invite a joint WHC and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Reactive Monitoring Mission who would assess the state of the conservation of the Sundarbans by the end of this year.

The committee regretted that the government was yet to finalise the National Oil Spill Chemical and Contingency Plan and providing further information and data on the monitoring of long-term impacts from shipping incidents involving spills of hazardous materials.

The WHC requested the government to implement the relevant recommendations of Structural Environment Assessment (SEA) and submit its necessary documents to the WHC Centre.

It also requested the government to implement Tiger Action Plan and National Tiger Recovery Plan, expansion of the wildlife sanctuaries and the adoption of the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 to protect and expand the Sundarbans.

However, the WHC also expressed concerns about the likely impacts of a large-scale industrial projects around the Sundarbans and requested the government to take all necessary mitigation measures as per the recommendations made earlier by the members of WHC Reactive Monitoring Mission.

A government delegation, led by Prime Minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, has joined the WHC meeting.

He defended the Bangladesh government's position on the Sundarbans.

He said the power plant Bangladesh is building is far away from the core site of the Sundarbans. This plant is very important for nearly five million people of Bangladesh.

In 1997, the Sundarbans, home to the Bengal tiger, was enlisted as the natural heritage of the world for its exceptional biodiversity in both terrestrial and marine environments.

According to the IUCN recommendation for Sundarbans, the forest is in danger due to severe threats from the coal-fired power plants and numerous industrial activities in close proximity.

The Rampal power plant is being built without making any assessment of its impact on Sundarbans' world heritage values, the WHC added.

Sultana Kamal, convener of National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans, said, "It is unfortunate for us, the people of Bangladesh, that the Sundarbans World Heritage Site has been endangered by a consortium of nations who are building coal plants at Rampal (Maitree), Taltali (Barishal) and Kalapara (Payra and Patuakhali)— plants that do not have state of the art pollution control technologies or waste disposal systems."

"If not stopped, these plants will put the Sundarbans at significant risk of severe air and water pollution," she said in a press statement immediately after the Unesco decision.

## ICC seeks

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serious injury has been inflicted on the Rohingya through violating their right to return to their state of origin.

She said although the coercive acts forcing the Rohingya population to flee took place on the territory of Myanmar, the victims crossed the border -- an essential element for the crime of deportation -- by entering into Bangladesh.

Fatou said as Myanmar is not a State Party to the Rome Statute, but Bangladesh is, it is important to bear in mind that the authorisation to investigate, if granted by the judges,

would not extend to all crimes potentially committed in Myanmar, but will focus on crimes allegedly committed in part on the territory of Bangladesh.

Investigating deportation will, however, mean taking a close look at the alleged violence that left the Rohingyas with no choice but to flee Myanmar.

Fatou has determined that there are no substantial reasons to believe that the opening of an investigation would not serve the interests of justice, taking into account the gravity of the crimes and the interests of victims.

## Remove

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his lawyer, saying that his office could not abide by its directive for different reasons, including pressure from some quarters.

The CPA chairman's compliance report was vague and contemptuous, Manzill added.

Md Salahuddin appeared for the CPA chairman.

During yesterday's hearing, Manzill told the court that some of the illegal structures were demolished following a 2016 HC directive. But there are other structures along the river that need to be knocked down in line with its earlier directive.

On August 16, 2016, in response to a writ petition filed by HRPB, the HC directed the authorities to remove 2,181 illegal structures from the river banks.

The HC asked the Chattogram deputy commissioner to issue a circular in two local newspapers within seven days after receiving the full judgement, asking owners of the structures to relocate those.

If the structures are not relocated within 90 days, the authorities will dismantle those, the HC had ruled.

Earlier, the DC submitted a report to the HC, saying that 2,181 structures had been illegally built there.