

Discarded notes, no magic realism

Locals in a Bogura upazila wake to money floating in a waterbody

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

On Sunday, locals in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila woke to what seemed to be an absurd sight: bank notes floating in a waterbody near the Khaowra bridge area.

In some South Asian countries, there is a common belief that water brings money. This belief comes from the Chinese pseudoscience called "Feng Shui" and in Cantonese, the word water is often used to refer to "money".

However, no magic or Feng Shui was involved in Shajahanpur.

What was revealed later was that the discarded notes were from Bangladesh Bank, which gave them to the Bogura municipality to dump.

People began noticing notes of Tk 100, 500 and 1,000 floating in the beel and washed up on the banks in the morning, said Sumon Mia, a local of the upazila.

On information, police visited

the spot at 11:00am yesterday and recovered five sacks of discarded notes.

Azim Uddin, officer-in-charge of the Shajahanpur police station, said, "After we were informed about the matter, we contacted the authorities of Bangladesh Bank's Bogura branch. They told us that the discarded notes were from the bank and they gave those to the Bogura municipality to dump those."

According to the bank guidelines, rejected bank notes are burned in incinerators in 800-1,000 degrees Centigrade. But the bank claims it did not opt for that due to "environmental concerns".

Asked, Jagannath Chandra Ghosh, acting executive director of the bank's branch, said, "We have a huge number of rejected notes, especially the big notes. Burning them would cause a lot of air pollution."

Therefore, we gave it to the Bogura municipality to throw them in their

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Locals fill a sack with discarded bank notes dumped in a beel near the Khaowra bridge in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila. Police took some filled sacks to Shajahanpur Police Station. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Stunning blow for Johnson

FROM PAGE 1

a routine move to allow his new government to set out a new legislative programme.

But critics accused him of trying to silence MPs.

Delivering the unanimous verdict of 11 judges, Supreme Court president Brenda Hale said "the decision to advise Her Majesty (Queen Elizabeth II) to prorogue was unlawful".

She said this was "because it had the effect of frustrating or preventing the ability of parliament to carry out its constitutional functions".

As a result, the suspension was "void and of no effect", Hale said, adding: "Parliament has not been prorogued."

Bercow subsequently announced that he would reconvene the Commons at 11:30 am today, while the upper House of Lords said it would return the same day.

The judges "have vindicated the right and duty of parliament to meet at this

crucial time to scrutinise the executive", Bercow said.

European lawmakers hailed the court's decision to overturn the suspension of the parliament in London as a victory for democracy.

"At least one big relief in the Brexit saga: the rule of law in the UK is alive and kicking," said Guy Verhofstadt, former Belgian premier and head of the EU parliament Brexit steering group.

A small group of protesters outside the court hailed the decision, with one, Gareth Daniels, telling AFP: "This is a great day for democracy."

'JOHNSON SHOULD RESIGN'

Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the main opposition Labour party, led calls for the prime minister to step down.

"I invite Boris Johnson, in the historic words, to consider his position, and become the shortest serving prime minister there has ever been," he told his party's annual conference.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

champions of a multi-nation tournament in Mirpur, having lost all the three previous finals, but it was a sheer disappointment for the fans who attended in numbers to watch the final.

Rightfully so, questions were raised all around as to whether there was no reserve day even though the organisers were well aware that rain could play spoilsport at any time during this season.

The players of both teams were eager to take to the field as the crowd patiently waited in the pouring rain until the official announcement was made.

It was still raining when the players of the Bangladesh team, including skipper Shakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Saifuddin, Mosaddek Hossain and Nazmul Hossain, came out to the ground and played football while being greeted by huge cheers from the spectators.

Claims tweeted

FROM PAGE 1

Mishuk Khan Mizan -- from the capital's Jatrabari and Narayanganj.

They were shown arrested yesterday in the case over the Gulistan IED blast that left two traffic police constables and a community policeman injured on April 29.

Two persons, including a female police officer, were injured after an IED went off near a police pickup near Malibagh intersection on May 26.

In another IED blast on August 31, two more policemen were injured at Science Lab intersection.

Besides, IEDs were recovered from the capital's Paltan and Khamarbari areas on July 24.

Monirul said all these IEDs were controlled by remotes, and the "Neo-JMB" cell used low-quality explosives for making those. After carrying out the attacks, they relayed the information to the cell's "ameer" (head of the cell), who then tweeted about the incidents from Bangladesh, said the CTTC unit chief.

He further said the attackers didn't receive any hands-on training on making bombs.

"They learnt to make bombs through manuals and trial and error method as all of them [the arrestees] are engineers by profession."

"We have identified the 'ameer' of the cell and two other members by interrogating the arrestees. We hope to get more information about them from the arrestees during their remand," said Monirul.

The cell members did a recce of different areas in the capital to see where they can plant IEDs. They also observed at what time policemen go inside the police box at a certain location.

They carried out attacks between 8:00pm and 10:00pm when policemen went inside police boxes, he said.

"They even made three powerful IEDs for carrying out attacks on police this month," Monirul added.

Earlier on August 9, the CTTC unit had arrested five followers of "Neo-JMB" from the city's Bashundhara area, and said they might have been involved in planting IEDs at Paltan and

Khamarbari.

Asked whether those five have any links with the "Neo-JMB" cell, Monirul said they may have connections with the cell's "ameer".

"We are investigating it," he added.

"Neo-JMB" does not believe in the law of the land, and this is the reason why it "ideologically" considers police as its enemy, said Monirul.

"They [militants] are also targeting police as many of their fellow members were killed in police drives," he mentioned.

Meanwhile, Joyanal Uddin, the father of Rumi who was arrested in an anti-militancy operation on Monday, said that only a week ago, he had visited his tin-shed house that police termed a "Neo-JMB" lab in Narayanganj's Shiarchar area and saw nothing suspicious there.

Joyanal and his family members live in his two-storey building near the tin-shed house, which was rented out.

"I visited the tin-shed house on September 15 but didn't see anything that looked like explosives. My younger son Jalauddin Rafiq used to take care of the house."

"There were only furniture and a few other items of daily use there," Joyanal, a retired Bangladesh Bank official, told our Narayanganj correspondent.

Joyanal and his wife Farida Begum were in their village home in Rajbari during the police drive on Monday. He came to Narayanganj yesterday morning after learning about his son's arrest.

He demanded fair investigation into the incident.

Counterterrorism officials said Rumi had set up a "bomb-making lab" in three of the six rooms at the tin-shed house.

A case was filed with Fatullah police station last night against 13 people, including Rumi and his brother Rafiq, for keeping bomb-making materials, making bombs and involvement in militant activities.

Sub-inspector of the CTTC unit Mokhesur Rahman filed the case, Aslam Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station, told this newspaper.



Participants at a roundtable at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The North South University and The Daily Star jointly organised the programme titled "A roadmap for sustainable solutions to the Rohingya crisis". PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Dhaka now saddled with \$1.2b a year

FROM PAGE 1

"Even if repatriation starts, it will take many years to complete. Thus, the Rohingya presence is likely to create serious fiscal burden on Bangladesh," said Prof Abdur Rob Khan of the department of political science and sociology at North South University.

The roundtable titled "A roadmap for sustainable solutions to the Rohingya crisis" was jointly organised by NSU and The Daily Star at the latter's conference hall.

Based on some 100 papers presented at an international conference it organised in July, NSU yesterday presented six policy briefs on peacebuilding, diplomacy, health, environment, economy, and gender.

The repatriation will take 12 years, assuming 300 Rohingyas are sent back a day, and population growth and inflation rates stay on the existing trend, a study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue presented at the roundtable said.

In that case, almost \$9.2 billion will be required to support the refugees, it said.

It said hosting the Rohingya for the first five years with no repatriation would require over \$7 billion.

Analysts said foreign funding already seems to be going down as only 38 percent of the \$920 million budget for the Rohingyas this year has been committed.

"Bangladesh has a small economy. Yet, we have sheltered the Rohingyas. The question is how long can we continue with the burden," said M Jashim Uddin, associate professor of political science and sociology at NSU.

It is a security threat for Bangladesh and the region, he said, adding that all countries of the world want a solution, including Myanmar's close allies.

The problems are Myanmar's constant denial of international human rights tools and UN Security Council's failure to take concrete actions against

the atrocities in Myanmar. There are allegations of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, he said.

"Without a strong UN role and China's active mediation, there is little chance of repatriation of the Rohingyas," Jashim said.

Security analyst Brig Gen (ret) Shahedul Anam Khan said locals were angered by Rohingyas getting involved in crimes like drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and taking away job opportunities. Regional militant groups were also showing interest in the Rohingyas, he said.

Extremists would have massive recruitment opportunities if the crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine state was prolonged, he said.

Shahedul, also associate editor of The Daily Star, suggested dialogue between members of the civil societies, the media, and retired military officials of Bangladesh and Myanmar with continued diplomatic moves.

Former ambassador Humayun Kabir said Bangladesh has been reasonably successful in highlighting the Rohingya crisis globally after the 2017 influx but has yet to make a breakthrough in terms of repatriation.

He said Bangladesh's highlighting of the crisis before the global community has to be translated into influence on Myanmar to address the crisis. Economic sanctions by the US, EU, Canada, and other powerful countries and unions could have some impact, he added.

Kabir said radicalisation was observed among Myanmar's general and military people and nationalism outside Myanmar was quite strong too. Muslims across the globe were under pressure, he said, adding, "So, how they will deal with the Rohingyas is a question."

Noting the growing nationalism in some countries, NSU Vice-Chancellor

Prof Atiqul Islam asked if it was a sign of the "cycle of civilization going backwards".

Former foreign secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury suggested stronger role of the UN, China, and Asean countries in influencing Myanmar to take back its nationals.

The Rohingyas are demanding citizenship, which is legitimate, but that is not Bangladesh's job to ensure, he added.

Brig Gen (ret) M Sakhawat Hussain said Bangladesh has kindly sheltered the Rohingyas when they were facing genocide but it cannot throw them out of the country now.

A strong and steady diplomatic approach, involving the international community, is the best way, he added.

Analysts said as long as the Rohingyas stay in Bangladesh, their health, education, and social protection need to be guaranteed.

Maheen Sultana of Naripakkha said even though Bangladesh was not a party to a UN refugee convention, it could use its domestic laws to curb crimes in Rohingya camps, including child marriage, which is widespread.

She said the Rohingyas, including the women, should have a voice in the negotiations regarding repatriation.

NSU Prof Biswas Karabi Farhana suggested taking care of the damaged forests by planting indigenous trees and checking high rates of surface and ground water pollution in and around the refugee camps.

NSU Prof Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman moderated the discussion addressed also by former ambassador Shamim Ahmed, Dhaka University Prof ASM Ali Ashraf, NSU teachers SK Tafique M Haque, Mahbubur Rahman, Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Bulbul Ashraf Siddiqi, NSU Director of External Affairs Katherine Li, and UNHCR Senior Protection Officer Haruno Nakashiba.

PM receives 'Vaccine Hero' award

FROM PAGE 1

success in vaccination programme is acknowledged globally now. She expressed optimism that the target of "vaccines for all" in the country would be reached well ahead of 2030.

The PM said the sudden influx of 1.1 million Rohingyas into Cox's Bazar from Myanmar's Rakhine was a formidable challenge to Bangladesh's health sector as they didn't have access to any proper health services in Myanmar.

"We have taken extraordinary measures to raise immunity of the Rohingyas through vaccination campaign and routine immunisation. We have successfully conducted cholera vaccination, dealt with diphtheria and measles outbreak at the camps."

The PM mentioned that Bangladesh was honoured with GAVI Alliance Award in 2009 and 2012 for its outstanding performance in improving the child immunisation status.

She said immunisation has been the greatest public health success story in Bangladesh. She thanked the Vaccine Alliance and other partners for their continued support and contributions.

GAVI Chair Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and CEO Seth Berkley also spoke at the programme.

Before handing over the award, a citation was read out by the GAVI chair.

The citation said the Vaccine Hero award has been introduced by the GAVI to recognise global figures whose dedication to the Vaccine Alliance's Mission has played a key role in helping GAVI and its partners protect hundreds of millions of children across the globe.

"This is an award for those who have set out a clear ambition and displayed urgency in providing lifesaving vaccines to children and ensuring that no child is left out."

Sheikh Hasina is a true champion of immunisation as well as rights of the children and the women empowerment, the citation reads.

CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

Earlier on Monday, Hasina joined the Climate Action Summit at the UN

Headquarters. She launched the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) to make one billion people around the world safer from disasters by 2025.

She announced that over 50 countries and more than 20 organisations were joining the partnership at its launch.

The REAP is a new initiative created by the United Kingdom, Finland and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

'FULFIL CLIMATE PLEDGES'

Speaking at another event at the UN Headquarters, the prime minister yesterday called upon all countries to fulfil their commitments on reduction of carbon emissions and financing the initiatives of the climate vulnerable countries.

The programme was hosted by Global Commission on Adaptation.

Hasina said despite being severely constrained in terms of resources and choices, Bangladesh was doing its best to bring a difference to the life of its people.

"I believe that our commitment of partnership will set a platform for innovating and sharing different adaptation measures addressing climate change."

The PM said Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to climate change and water-related threats and challenges.

She said the impacts of climate change are increasingly harming the civilisation and it is an existential threat to climate vulnerable countries like Bangladesh.

Referring to the recent fire at Amazon forest and cyclone Dorian in Bahamas, Hasina said these reminded the world how devastating climate change has already become.

The PM expressed happiness at the decision of establishing an office of Global Centre on Adaptation in Dhaka.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin and State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam were present, among others.

Vaults of vile

FROM PAGE 1

Shafullah Bulbul told journalists after the raid.

Enamul's family claimed the firearms are licensed.

The commanding officer said Enamul had been bringing the profit from his casino to the Baniyanagar house for the last one and a half years. But because such amount of money requires a lot of space, he started buying gold ornaments.

Together, the two brothers own 15 houses, and they used their firearms to terrorise people in the area, said the Rab-3 chief.

Plainclothes Rab members surrounded their six-storey building at Baniyanagar in Sutrapur around 11:30am yesterday.

Later they raided two apartments on the first and the fourth floors and found three vaults there.

The vaults were stashed with 1.05 crore in cash, 730 tolas of gold ornaments (about 8.5kgs) and five firearms -- two pistols, one shotgun and two air guns.

Rupon's brother-in-law Mohammad Apu lives with his family on the first floor. Enamul often lives in the fourth-floor apartment of the building with his family.

Enamul's wife Sathi, who goes by only one name, said Rab found nothing in their apartment. Whatever they found was in the first-floor apartment, she claimed.

Around 3:00pm, Rab members went to the house of Enamul's employee Abul Kalam at Narinda in Dholaiakhal, around half a kilometre off Enamul's house.

The Rab members found a vault there stashed with Tk 2 crore and a pistol inside.

Kalam's daughter, aged around 25, said her father worked as an employee at a construction materials supply shop of Enamul for the last one year.

She said that on September 21, Enamul brought the vault to their house and asked her father to keep it in their home. Enamul just said the vault contained Tk 2 crore. He did not say anything about the pistol.

"We requested Enamul not to keep the vault in our home. But finally, we had to give in as he is my father's employer and an influential man," she told The Daily Star after the raid.

Asked about her father's whereabouts, she said he went out of home for Fazz prayers and did not return.

Later, the Rab members raided the house of a man named Harun, Enamul's friend, on Sarath Gupta Road in Narinda and recovered around Tk 2 crore from a vault.

Locals said the two brothers had been hanging their posters all around the neighbourhood for the last six to seven months, boasting about their link with the Awami League.

When the two brothers would move around the area, six to seven Jubo League men would accompany them. They also carried arms sometimes, according to locals.

Only 15 years ago, Enamul and Rupon had a small lathe machine workshop on Nawabpur Road in the old town.

The Rab-3 CO said their drive on any form of illegal gambling will continue.

The elite force started the drive against illegal casinos, bars and spa centres on September 19 and already arrested Dhaka city South Jubo League Organising Secretary Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan, construction mogul SM Golam Kibria Shamim and AL leader and Kalabagan Kirachakra president Shafiqul Alam Firoz.

During the drive, around 200 others were arrested while some of the casinos were sealed off.

Meanwhile, police sources yesterday said they traced two of the three people who went to an apartment in the capital's Segunbagicha where 15 Nepalis involved in casinos lived.

Scrutinising the video footage, the law enforcers came to know that the one seen with a walkie-talkie is an assistant programmer of an intelligence agency while another one is a constable of the same agency.

The footage showed that three plainclothes men entered the building -- Summit Hasan Lodge, where the Nepalis were living -- at 10:48pm last Wednesday, introducing themselves as policemen.

A while later, the three came out of the building with a bag. Soon, the 15 Nepalis also came out and then went into hiding.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Monirul Islam told reporters yesterday they had no evidence that policemen helped the Nepali nationals to flee.

US, Turkey stage joint patrols in northeast Syria

AFP, Ankara

The US and Turkey launched a second round of joint patrols in northeastern Syria yesterday as part of plans to create a "safe" buffer zone, the Turkish defence ministry said.

Four Turkish armoured vehicles crossed the border to join US forces in Syria, state news agency Anadolu said, for patrols around the town of Tal Abyad.

The ministry said drones were also deployed.

Washington and Ankara reached a deal last month to establish a safe zone between the Turkish border and Syrian areas east of the Euphrates river controlled by the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

The first joint patrols were conducted on September 8.

The United States views the YPG as a close ally in the fight against the Islamic State (IS) group.