

## Myanmar guards kill Bangladeshi fisherman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Bangladeshi fisherman was shot dead and another was injured allegedly by Myanmar's Border Guard Police on the Naf river in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila yesterday.

The incident happened when the two men went fishing in the morning, locals claimed.

The dead was identified as Noor Mohammad, 38, while the injured was Abul Kalam, 32, both of East Moheshkhali Para in Teknaf.

Lieutenant Colonel Md Foisal Hasan, commanding officer of BGB-2, said a team of Border Guard

Bangladesh (BGB) found Noor Mohammad's body and a bullet-hit Abul Kalam near sluice gate No 5.

Abul Kalam was first taken to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to Cox's Bazar General Hospital.

Noor's body was sent for an autopsy. He left behind his wife, four daughters and a son.

Local Union Parishad member Jahed Hossain claimed the incident took place when the two were setting up nets in the Naf river.

No further details were available, said BGB officials, adding the incident was being investigated.

## Saudi Arabia deports 153 more workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 153 Bangladeshi workers were deported on Wednesday night by the Saudi Arabian authorities, as part of their ongoing crackdown on undocumented workers in the Kingdom.

With them, at least 974 Bangladeshi migrant workers have been sent back from the country in October alone, says Brac Migration Programme, which maintains a database of deported migrant workers.

The workers landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on a Saudia flight around 11:20pm, said Shariful Hasan, head of the programme.

Brac, in coordination with

Bangladesh government's Wage Earners' Welfare Board, provided the deportees with immediate assistance, including food and drinking water.

He said many of the workers, who had gone to the largest middle eastern country nearly a month ago, were sent back "completely empty-handed".

Shariful said the Bangladesh mission in Saudi Arabia should take prompt action to address the problems the migrants are facing in the country.

He also urged the government to identify and take action against the unscrupulous recruiting agencies and brokers involved in trafficking workers abroad.

## Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 1  
he said quoting from the letter.

Those who were arrested confessed to smuggling huge amounts of money to Singapore and playing in the casinos there.

Since the launch of the raids in Dhaka's casinos on September 18, politicians, businessmen and government officials, among others, got arrested.

Some of them are Dhaka South Jubo League president Ismail Hossain Samrat, organising secretary Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan, Krishak League central executive committee member Shafiqul Alam Feroz, Mohammedan Sporting Club director in-charge M Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan, contractor Golam Kibria Shamim, and three councilors of Dhaka city -- Habibur Rahman Mizan, Tarequzzaman Rajib, and Mainul Haque Manju.

According to police, six "casinos" in "Motijheel Club Para" area were run and controlled by some top leaders of Jubo League and other associated bodies of Awami League.

Of them, councillor AKM Mominul Haque Sayeed, who is also general secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation, ran Arambagh Sporting Club, Dilkusha Sporting Club, and Mohammedan Sporting Club. He now lives in Singapore, the official said.

In the letter, ACC asked for the full list of Bangladeshis who played in casinos in Marina Bay and elsewhere

in Singapore. According to the commission, every foreigner needs to submit his or her passport before entering a casino in Singapore.

ACC has sought information under Article 48 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), of which both Bangladesh and Singapore are parties.

"We've requested Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau to take necessary measures for collecting the passport numbers of the Bangladesh citizens who played in casinos in Singapore for the last five years," the official said, citing from the letter.

Usually it takes a week to get information from partner countries, he added.

On Wednesday, ACC also sought bank statements and transaction history of the accounts that were recently seized by Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) against the backdrop of the ongoing anti-corruption drive.

The commission has so far filed nine cases against former ruling party leaders, businessmen and their relatives. In the cases, it used BFIU's information.

There is speculation that BFIU has seized bank accounts of politicians whose names have come to the fore for their controversial role. Besides, the accounts of some businessmen and government officials were also confiscated.

## 29 cases still pending

FROM PAGE 1  
But the hope died down when legal experts, including the then law minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed, made it clear that the provision for disposing of the appeals in 60 days was merely a directive; it was not mandatory.

The Appellate Division is taking time for holding hearing and disposing of the appeals related to war crimes as this court has to deal with a large number of other important cases, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star.

"The Supreme Court and the International Crimes Tribunals in Bangladesh are performing better and faster than those in Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Cambodia in disposing of the cases related to war crimes"

The war crimes tribunals in those countries were established with the support of the United Nation, whereas the International Crimes Tribunals in our country have been formed with our own capacity," he said.

The attorney general said it cannot be said exactly how much time would be needed for the apex court to complete hearings and disposal of the pending war crimes appeals.

Replying to a question, Mahbubey Alam said the number of disposal of such appeals will not be increased even if new judges are appointed to the Appellate Division, as experienced judges are required to hear such appeals properly.

Advocate Shishir Manir, a defence lawyer, told this correspondent that the rate of disposal of war crimes appeals is poor due to shortage of judges in the Appellate Division and huge backlog of pending cases with this court.

Advocate Shishir Manir said two

International Crimes Tribunals have so far delivered verdicts in 40 war crimes related cases, and among the convicts, 38 have filed appeals with the SC against the ICT verdicts.

The eight war criminals whose appeals have already been settled by the top court are Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, its Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed, and its leaders Delwar Hossain Sayeede, Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, Abdul Quader Mollah, Mir Quasem Ali and ATM Azharul Islam and BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

Among them, Nizami, Mojaheed, Kamaruzzaman, Quader Mollah, Mir Quasem Ali and Salauddin Quader Chowdhury have been executed after the apex court has dismissed their review petitions against its verdicts confirming their death sentences.

Delwar Hossain Sayeede, whose imprisonment until his death was affirmed by the SC, is now in jail.

The list of convicted war criminals whose appeals are now in the pipeline includes former state minister of HM Ershad's government Syed Mohammad Qaisar, expelled Awami League leader of Brahmanbaria Mobarak Hossain, Jamaat leader Maulana Abdus Sobhan, Azizur Rahman from Gaiandha and Saifuddin Ahmed former Noakhali.

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 in July, 2013 sentenced Ghulam Azam a total of 90 years in jail on five different charges.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 in October 2013 sentenced former BNP minister Abdul Alim to imprisonment till death for committing genocide and crimes against humanity during the country's 1971 War of Independence.



The scent from freshly caught hilsa fills a fish market in Barishal's Port Road area. The 22-day ban on catching brood hilsa was lifted yesterday. Inset, a man unloading a boat loaded with the delicious fish.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Wait now gets even longer

FROM PAGE 1  
conditions.

"We will now place the proposal before the Ecnc [Executive Committee of National Economic Council] meeting for approval soon," a planning ministry official told this newspaper, seeking anonymity.

"The delay in handing over the pile design [to the contractor] is the main reason for the change in the schedule," Project Director Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

He declined to give further details. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said on August 29 that the movement of vehicles on the Padma bridge would begin by June 2021.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, replying to a query at a press conference, said it was not possible to give a specific timeframe for completion of the construction which is a highly technical work.

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, chairman of the government's panel of experts on the Padma bridge, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We hope that the work of the project will be completed within the new timeframe if no major problem arises."

However, the contractor would have to considerably speed up the work and deploy additional manpower and equipment, he said.

Currently, the national professor observed, only two spans are installed in a month and it would be difficult to complete the work within the timeframe at this speed.

Asked whether the project cost may escalate further, he said "It would depend on the price of the key materials including fuel, stone, steel, rods, cements and skilled labourers. "If prices of the ingredients go up, the cost of the project will increase further. If the prices go down, the project cost will decrease."

Two major components of the project are the main bridge and river training.

Eighty-four percent work of the main

Feasibility study 2003 to 2005
Cost estimated in 2007 Tk 10,161 crore
Work for detailed design starts in 2009
After preparing detailed design, cost rises to Tk 20,507 crore as rail lines included in plan; deadline fixed at 2015
Cost reviewed in 2015 rises to Tk 28,793 crore; deadline fixed at 2018
Deadline extended last year to December 2019; cost goes up to Tk 30,193 crore

bridge is done while 63 percent work of river training have been completed till September, according to the project documents.

The first span was installed on September 30, 2017. The Padma bridge will have total 41 spans.

Around 2,250-metre stretch of the bridge is now visible as the 15th span (superstructure) was installed on October 22.

Once constructed, the bridge will directly connect the capital to 21 southern districts, through road and railways.

**REASONS BEHIND DELAYS**  
IMED, in its report, mentioned four reasons behind the delay -- two reasons each relating to the main bridge and river training.

The authorities have to redesign piles of 22 piers, out of 40, as differences emerged between the information obtained through geotechnical investigation in the design phase and construction phase.

The authorities failed to place the design of the piles of piers on right time and this contributed to the delay.

The report also pointed to the delay in pile re-designing that also deferred

the construction of span (steel truss), the report said.

Strong currents in the Padma in 2015 created two huge scours (erosion hole) in the river, forcing the authorities to change work for slope protection, causing six months' delay.

The contractor could not complete the river training on time due to strong current, it also mentioned.

However, the complications over the piers have been addressed.

The IMED in the report gave several conditions, including preparing a new work plan for the fresh deadline and ensuring timely disbursement of money.

**BACKGROUND**  
A feasibility study on the project was conducted with assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) from 2003 to 2005. The original cost was estimated in 2007 on the basis of the study.

Then cost was Tk 10,161 crore. However, it did not include the cost of railway lines on the bridge.

With financing from the Asian Development Bank, the work on a detailed design of the bridge had started in 2009.

The cost almost doubled to Tk 20,507 crore when the first revision was done in 2011, including the cost of the railway lines.

According to the first revision, the project was scheduled to be completed in 2015.

The authorities in 2015 revised the project cost by 40 percent, raising the estimated cost to Tk 28,793 crore. The deadline for completion of the project was extended to 2018.

Later, the deadline was extended to December 2019 and the cost shot up to 30,193 crore to acquire additional land last year.

The World Bank withdrew its \$1.2 billion loan in 2012 over the allegations of corruption conspiracies, which the government always strongly rejected.

The country then moved to build the bridge with its own funds.



Visiting Developing-8 Secretary General Dato Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

## Councillor Manju held for extortion

FROM PAGE 1  
Control Act, Shafee said.

With Manju, law enforcers have so far arrested three ward councillors in Dhaka since the beginning of the ongoing crackdown on corruption and illegal casinos.

Locals said Manju was elected councillor of the ward twice before.

Traders in the neighbourhood heaved a sigh of relief following the arrest and distributed sweets as part of their celebration.

"It is a relief for us. We have suffered a lot due to his extortion," Ashraf Uddin, a trader of the market, told The Daily Star.

In 2015, shop owners of the market filed a complaint against Manju with the home ministry, but no action was taken.

Asked about the delay in arresting him despite numerous allegations against him, the Rab official said they could not arrest him due to "lack of evidence".

Rab also raided his house "Globe Nibas" nearby and recovered some liquor.

Manju used to live in a duplex flat on the four-storey building.

Some neighbours alleged that Mainul initially bought the flat, but gradually grabbed the whole building using his influence.

**TRADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST EXTORTION**

The traders at the Rajdhani Super Market that houses around 900 shops spoke of rampant extortion by the ward councillor.

Md Azad, a fast-food shop owner at the market, alleged that Manju had demanded Tk 1.20 lakh from him eight months ago. But as he was unable to pay the money, Manju's men closed his shop.

He was allowed to reopen the shop seven days later after paying the amount, the shop owner said.

While talking to The Daily Star, Azad

said he wanted run his business in an extortion-free environment.

Another businessman of the market, Aktar Hosen said Manju declared himself the president of the market.

"Anybody who wanted to buy, sell or rent shops in the market, had to pay Manju Tk 2 to 3 lakhs first," Aktar alleged.

In 2017, Manju received around Tk 5 crore from the traders of the market to install air conditioners, but he embezzled the money, Aktar alleged.

"Manju has been running the extortion ring through his men for nine years, now we want a change," Aktar also said.

Md Shentu, another trader and a former member of the committee of a nearby mosque, said Manju had been taking Tk 10,000 to Tk 12,000 every week. "But he never worked for the development of the mosque," Shentu added.

RIFAT MURDER

## Farazi files plea to withdraw confession

UNB, Barguna

Rakibul Hasan Rifat Farazi, the key accused in the Rifat Sharif murder case, filed a petition with a court local court yesterday seeking withdrawal of his confessional statement.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Sirajul Islam Gazi fixed November 6 for hearing the appeal.

Rifat Sharif, 22, was attacked with sharp weapons near the main gate of Barguna Government College on June 26. He died of his injuries after being taken to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal.

On September 1, police pressed charges against 24 people, including the victim's wife Aysha Siddika Minni and Rifat Farazi, in the murder case.

## Two students hammered for protesting catcalling

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A man was sent to jail yesterday on charges of bludgeoning two college students with a hammer in Natore's Naldanga on Wednesday night.

Hasin Hossain, 22, of Surzubari village was arrested hours after the alleged incident in Nawpara area.

Sohag Hossain, 19, and Ataur Rahman, 20, students of Naldanga Business Management and Technical College, were allegedly beaten up by Hasin and several others at a waz-mehfil (religious gathering).

Sohag told The Daily Star that he and Ataur protested when they saw some locals catcalling girls at the gathering. The alleged stalkers then beat them up and left the place, he added.

Sohag lodged a case with Naldanga Police Station accusing two named and three unnamed people.

A Natore court sent Hasin to jail after he was produced before it by police yesterday.

## Police rescue child shackled in launch terminal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police yesterday rescued a two-year-old shackled to an iron pillar from the town's launch terminal area.

The child, identified as Alifa, is the daughter of Sreedevi, 30.

Police said the child's mother used to beg for money and might have intellectual disabilities.

On information, police rushed to the spot and rescued her and traced the mother, said Md Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Narayanganj Sadar Model police station.

Mosharraf, a shop owner in the area, said he had been noticing the mother coming to the launch terminal in the morning for the past couple of days. She would shackle the child to an iron pillar in the terminal and then leave.

"The child would sit there, sometimes falling asleep, for hours. The mother would return in the afternoon, untie the child and leave with her," he said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sreedevi said she used to live in Brahmanbaria and came to Narayanganj around five days ago. As she did not have

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

## Falu's properties

FROM PAGE 1

Tk 343 crore amassed "illegally" by Falu, said the commission's Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya.

As a managing director, Falu has 93 lakh shares of Roza Properties worth Tk 93 crore and 2.69 crore shares of Rakeen Development worth about Tk 200 crore. He also has investments worth Tk 20 lakh at Roza Entertainment FZE and Tk 29.4 lakh at Roza Investment LLC.

Falu also has a 22.53 decimal commercial plot worth Tk 50 crore in the capital's Kakrail area.

"We've found that Falu was trying to transfer the ownership of the wealth," ACC source said.

The investigation officer pleaded the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Court last week to freeze the property before those were transferred.

The court then ordered to freeze the property.

According to the case statement, Falu, along with three businessmen -- SAK Ekramuzzaman, managing director of RAK Ceramics and Rakhen Development Company Ltd; Syed AK Anwaruzzaman, director of Star Ceramics Private Ltd; and Md Amir Hossain, former director of RAK Consumer Products Ltd and Star Ceramics Private Ltd. -- opened offshore companies named Al Madina International Ltd, Tri Star Ltd and Development EUE in Dubai in 2010.

Through the companies, they siphoned off Tk 183.92 crore amassed through illegal means from the country, read the statement.