



Migrants attempt to board a smuggler's boat in a bid to cross the English Channel from the beach at Gravelines, northern France, yesterday. More than 50,000 people have made the perilous Channel crossing to the UK in small boats since Keir Starmer became prime minister last July, official figures showed.

PHOTO: AFP



POST-COUP MYANMAR Security forces involved in systematic torture

Says UN report; victims were subject to strangulation and electric shocks

REUTERS, Geneva

United Nations investigators said yesterday they have found evidence of systematic torture by Myanmar security forces and identified some of the most senior perpetrators.

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), formed in 2018 to analyse evidence of serious violations of international law, said victims were subject to beatings, electric shocks, gang rape, strangulation and other forms of torture like the removal of fingernails with pliers.

"We have uncovered significant evidence, including eyewitness testimony, showing systematic torture in Myanmar detention facilities," Nicholas Koumjian, head of the IIMM, said in a statement accompanying the 16-page report.

The torture sometimes resulted in death, the report said. Children, who are often unlawfully detained as proxies for their missing parents, were among those tortured, it said.

Perpetrators identified so far include high-level commanders, the report said, although names were withheld due to ongoing investigations and concerns about alerting the individuals.

A spokesperson for Myanmar's military-

backed government did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The military backed government has not responded to over two dozen requests by the UN team for information about the alleged crimes and requests to access the country, the UN report said.

The military has said it has a duty to ensure peace and security. It has denied atrocities have taken place and has blamed "terrorists" for causing unrest.

The findings in the report covering a one-year period through to June 30 were based on information from more than 1,300 sources, including hundreds of eyewitness testimonies as well as forensic evidence and documents.

Investigators focused on torture partly because many victims were able to identify perpetrators individually which Koumjian, a former prosecutor, said could help with future convictions. "People often know the names or they certainly know the faces of those who torture them or who torture their friends," Koumjian told reporters in Geneva.

Myanmar has been in chaos since a 2021 military coup against an elected civilian government plunged the country into civil war. Tens of thousands of people have been detained since then, the United Nations says.

Report says high-level commanders among perpetrators

Tens of thousands of people detained since 2021 coup

LANDMINE BLAST Thailand says another soldier hurt

AFP, Bangkok

A landmine blast on Thailand's border wounded a soldier yesterday, the military said, accusing Cambodia of planting new explosives in breach of a truce between the countries.

Five days of clashes erupted last month as ground troops, artillery and jets waged cross-border combat that killed at least 43 and saw over 300,000 civilians flee.

The Southeast Asian neighbours have a dispute over parts of their border dating back more than a century.

Russia, Ukraine need to cede land to end war Says Trump ahead of meeting with Putin

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump said on Monday that Kyiv and Moscow will both have to cede land to end the war in Ukraine and talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin this week will instantly show whether the Kremlin leader is willing to make a deal.

European leaders and Ukraine's President Zelensky plan to speak with Trump ahead of his summit with Putin in Alaska on Friday, amid fears Washington may dictate unfavorable peace terms to Ukraine.

Ukrainians must have the freedom to decide their own future, EU member states said yesterday. "Meaningful negotiations can only take place in the context of a ceasefire or reduction of hostilities," the leaders of all EU countries except Hungary said in a joint statement.

Father tells tribunal how son was killed

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and senior police officials responsible.

Eight police personnel - former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman, then DMP joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty, former additional deputy commissioner Shah Alam Mohammad Akhtarul Islam, ex-assistant commissioner (Ramna zone) Mohammad Imrul, then inspector (operations) of Shahbagh Police Station Arshad Hossain, and former constables Sujon Hossain, Imaz Hossain, and Nasirul Islam - are accused in the case.

Arshad, Sujon, Imaz, and Nasirul, who are in custody, were present during the hearing, while the rest, including Habibur, are absconding. Junaid's father Jamal recounted that on the morning of August 5, Mostakim, a seventh grader, left home with his friend Siam. At 1:45pm, a relative told him his son had been shot. When the body reached home, he found that a bullet had pierced his son's left eye and exited through the back of his head.

Witnesses said Junaid was in front of a procession

near Hanif flyover when police opened fire. Doctors at Mitford Hospital declared him dead and urged immediate removal of the body, citing "orders from the prime minister". They also warned that if his son's body was not taken immediately, they would list it as unidentified and send it to Anjuman Mufidul Islam for burial, said the father, quoting witnesses.

His son's namaz-e-janaza was held at Dhupkhola field in Gandaria. "When my son's body was brought there, we saw the body of Anas, another victim of the same shooting."

They were later buried at the Jurain Graveyard.

Holding back tears, Junaid's father Jamal accused Hasina, Kamal, and Mamun of his son's death under the principle of command responsibility. He also held then DMP commissioner Habibur, joint commissioner Sudip, ADC Aktarul, and AC Imrul responsible for the killing.

Police constables Sujon and Nasirul shot his son and other protesters, he said, quoting witnesses.

The defence counsel cross-examined the prosecution witnesses after their statements were

recorded.

Meanwhile, the tribunal extended by a month the deadline for the MIST student Shaikh Ashabul Yamin murder probe report submission and granted three more months to probe the 2013 Hefajat "mass killings" at Motijheel.

Ex-deputy speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku, ex-IGP AKM Shahidul Hoque, Maj Gen (forced retired) Ziaul Ahsan, and former DIG Molla Nazrul Islam, who are accused in the "mass killings", were produced before the tribunal.

Spending spiked before last three elections

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2022, when Bangladesh recorded its largest single-year expenditure on surveillance and spyware, totalling nearly \$88.3 million.

The National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC) accounted for \$78.3 million of this spending. That was the year when Major General Ziaul Ahsan assumed leadership of the NTMC, overseeing its rapid evolution from a small intelligence processing unit within the Ministry of Home Affairs into a sophisticated spy agency embedded across regulatory, political, and intelligence networks.

The report found that between 2015 and 2025, at least 160 surveillance and spyware systems were imported or deployed in Bangladesh at an estimated

total cost of \$184.5 million. Among these, at least 30 percent are believed to be of Israeli origin, sold through intermediaries in third countries to circumvent diplomatic and trade restrictions.

These technologies include Pegasus, developed by Israel's NSO Group; Cellebrite UFED and its Physical Analyzer, used for extracting and analysing mobile phone data; Predator; WiSpear; and tools from Israeli-linked firms such as Prelysis, Cognyte, and Passitora.

While these companies are registered in countries such as Cyprus, Singapore, and Hungary, they maintain ties to Israeli-owned commercial spyware networks like Intellexa and Verint Systems.

According to the report, in 2022, Passitora sold a Wi-Fi interception system to

the NTMC for \$5.7 million via its Cyprus operations, effectively avoiding diplomatic scrutiny and import restrictions.

Other imported technologies included AI-powered facial recognition systems, IMSI catchers, geolocation trackers, deep packet inspection systems, and jamming devices used to disrupt wireless communications.

The report said surveillance operations remained largely unchecked, and such activities accelerated democratic backsliding by enabling the monitoring, harassment, and, in some cases, the detention of opposition leaders, activists, and dissidents.

B a n g l a d e s h Telecommunication Regulation Act, 2001 provides broad powers to law enforcement,

intelligence, and regulatory agencies to intercept, monitor, and collect telecommunications data.

"Entities ranging from submarine and international terrestrial cable operators to mobile network providers and internet service providers are compelled to facilitate targeted and untargeted surveillance, without judicial warrants or any obligation to notify affected users," said the report.

They have to provide real-time access to user information, allow bulk data interception, and facilitate live database monitoring by designated agencies. If service providers do not cooperate, they risk facing potential fines, imprisonment, or non-renewal of operating licences for non-compliance, it added.

The report noted that

both the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and the National Security Intelligence (NSI) operate without statutory mandates or publicly available operational guidelines, evading independent oversight and due process.

It noted that oversight is further weakened by legal carve-outs. Many agencies are exempt from disclosure requirements under the Right to Information Act, 2009, while the proposed Personal Data Protection Ordinance includes broad exemptions for law enforcement and intelligence activities.

As a result, Bangladesh's surveillance apparatus functions with minimal transparency and limited accountability.

Pakistan wins water arbitration against India

REUTERS, Islamabad

An international court ruling that said India must adhere to the Indus Waters Treaty in the design of new hydroelectric power stations on rivers that flow west to Pakistan endorses Islamabad's position, a senior Pakistani official said yesterday.

Under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, three rivers that flow westwards were awarded to Pakistan, with India getting three eastern flowing rivers.

In 2023, Pakistan brought a case to The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration over the design of Indian hydro-power projects on rivers that were awarded to Pakistan under the treaty.

The court, in a ruling on Friday that was posted on its website on Monday, said it had jurisdiction over the dispute and ruled the treaty "does not permit India to generate hydroelectric power on the Western Rivers based on what might be the ideal or best practices approach for engineering" of these projects.

Instead, the design of these projects must adhere "strictly" to the specifications laid down in the treaty, the court said.

We're now ready

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"I hope this time you will have a new experience - you'll all be voters, and you'll vote. We've discussed this with the Election Commission, and they're preparing for it."

Highlighting the role of expatriates in reviving the economy from a devastated state, the chief adviser said, "The country's situation has now returned to a much more stable position. You've played a major role in the economy's recovery."

Prof Yunus expressed gratitude to Bangladeshi expatriates in Malaysia for their contribution to the country's economy.

"You're making an enormous contribution to the economy, and we must recognise it. We must ensure your voting rights in the upcoming election."

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain and Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul were also present at the event.

The chief adviser said the government has made efforts since assuming office to engage with expatriates and listen to their concerns.

"You have many grievances, and many of them are justified. We've been working

continuously to address these problems and reduce complexities."

On passport related complications, Yunus said the government has acted swiftly to resolve them.

He also announced the launch of a new initiative called "Citizen Services Bangladesh" to deliver all government services to expatriates.

In addition, a special mobile application is being developed to connect Bangladeshi expatriates worldwide on a single platform, he said.

During the meeting, various issues concerning Bangladeshi expatriates in Malaysia were discussed.

These included increasing staffing at the embassy, securing "Graduate Plus" visas for Bangladeshi students, regularising those who have become undocumented, and engaging Malaysian authorities to enhance cooperation in trade and industry, according to Asif Nazrul.

The meeting was attended by representatives from various professions, organisations, associations, and business communities of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Malaysia.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Environment
Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh Project
9th Floor, Room: 903, Poribesh Bhaban New Building
E/16, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.doe.gov.bd

Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) for Selection of Consultant Firm/Organization (National)

1. Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
2. Agency	: Department of Environment (DoE)
3. Procuring entity name	: Project Director
4. Procuring entity district	: Dhaka
5. Expression of interest for	: Consultant Firm (National)
6. Title of service	: Assessment of economic valuation of ecosystem goods, services and development of sustainable financing strategy for Halda River and Morjat Baor
7. EoI Ref No.	: 22.02.0000.045.14.010.25-181
8. Date	: 12 August 2025
KEY INFORMATION	
9. Procuring method	: Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)
FUNDING INFORMATION	
10. Budget and source of funds	: Global Environment Facility (GEF)
11. Development partners	: GEF-UNDP
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
12. Project code	: 223053500
13. Project name	: Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh Project
14. EoI closing date and time	: 14 September 2025, 02:00pm
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS	
15. Eligibility of the consulting firm/organization:	
a. The consulting firm/organization must have minimum 10 years' experience in Natural Resource Management (NRM) sector, environment, climate change, institutional assessment, ecosystem valuation, management plan development, policy formulation and financial strategy development.	
b. Proficiency in statistical analysis, economic modeling, and data standardization.	
c. Experience in conducting stakeholder engagement and participatory research in wetland ecosystems.	
d. Submission of latest (2023-24 and 2024-25) annual audit reports of the firm that should be at least BDT 02 crore net turnover from competent authority or firm.	
e. Successfully completion of at least two (2) similar assignments in the last 10 years with the evidence of Job completion certificate/Work Order/ Purchase order/Any Professional contract from competent authority.	
f. Submission of bank solvency certificate along with last three months bank statement (Income statement and balance sheet to indicate its financial stability, liquidity, credit standing, and market reputation, etc.)	
g. Submission of VAT and Tax Registration Certificate and evidence of payment issued by competent authority evidencing that the Bidder is updated with its tax payment obligations, or Certificate of Tax exemption, if any such privilege is enjoyed by the Bidder.	
h. Certificate of Registration of the business, including Articles of Incorporation, or equivalent document if Bidder is not a corporation or valid trade license or registered as Joint Stock Company.	
16. Other Details (if applicable): The Terms of References (ToR) for the services including the scope of works, deliverables, team composition with educational qualifications, and experiences are available on the DoE's official website (www.doe.gov.bd). Applicants are advised to provide all the necessary information and proven documents with a cover letter. One original and two copies of the EoI must be submitted in a sealed envelope and be clearly marked the title of service for the EoI.	
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
17. Name of official inviting EoI	: Farhana Mustari
18. Designation of official inviting EoI	: Project Director, Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh Project
19. Address of official inviting EoI	: Department of Environment, 8th Floor, Room: 903, Poribesh Bhaban New Building, E/16, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
20. Contact details of official inviting EoI	: Phone: +880-2222218305, Email: fmumunni@yahoo.com
21. Place of submission of EoI	: Office of the Project Director, Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh, 8th Floor, Room: 903, Poribesh Bhaban, E/16, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
22. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all EoIs.	

The Department of Environment (DoE) is implementing a project titled "Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh". The project aims to apply an ecosystem-based framework for managing Morjat Baor Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs) in Jhenaidah and proposed Biodiversity Heritage Halda River in Chittagong in Bangladesh to enhance the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and support local livelihoods. The Project period is July 2024 to June 2029.

F. Mustari
12.8.25
Farhana Mustari
Project Director
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