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## The deadly route to Malaysia

### Tigers look to take down T20 giants

Abid Azad back from Cox's Bazar

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
IN OUR TIMES - I**

A certain Ruhul Amin, who came from Myanmar to Teknaf in the late 1980s, was the one who first discovered the route to bring people from Bangladesh to Malaysia through the Bay of Bengal by boat, say local inhabitants.

In 1995, the first voyage was made by a boat from the No 1 sluice gate under Jaliyapara of Teknaf.

The place was very close to my house and I heard the news from my family when I returned from Saudi Arabia, recalls Mozammel Hoque, a long-time local resident.

Initially, it was only Rohingyas who ventured to Malaysia by sea, but as the route became more popular, locals from Teknaf also started to go, and by 2011 people from all over the country started coming to Teknaf to make



the journey to Malaysia.

It did not take long for the brokers to realize that they were sitting on a gold-mine, and that taking undocumented workers to Malaysia could be a good business, as it was cheap

and it did not require any passport or visa.

The brokers only thought of making as much profit as possible. They did not even care when the sea was dangerous.

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1**

Minhaz Uddin Khan

Bangladesh are braced for a stiff challenge as they enter the second half of 2015 with South Africa arriving for a 34-day long tour. The bilateral series will kick off today with the first Twenty20 international from 1pm at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

The series carries a different dimension for the home side, who have shown drastic improvement in all departments of the game in past months, as their versatility will be tested by the 2015 World Cup semifinalists South Africa.

Will the Tigers be able to live up to the expectation in the busy year is also a question mark that hangs over the series. Bangladesh spent February and March in Australia-New Zealand for the World Cup before hosting Asian powerhouses Pakistan and India for

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 2**



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## AL leader succumbs to injury

UNB

An Awami League leader, who was allegedly hacked by a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists in Monohorganj upazila on June 29 last, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital in Tongi of Gazipur district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Yakub Ali, former general secretary of Keri village unit of AL in Monohorganj upazila and son of late Bazlur Rahman of the village.

Police, quoting locals, said an altercation took place between BCL activists Harunur Rashid Babu and Selim Mian at Keri village of Baishgaon union parishad in the upazila in the afternoon on June 29 over buying cucumber.

Following the incident, about 8-10 BCL activists led by its Keri village unit leader Faruque, launched an attack on the houses of Babu's father Selim Mian and his relatives in the village.

As Selim Mian's brother Yakub Ali, and his uncle Fazlur Rahman, tried to resist the attackers, they hacked them indiscriminately with sharp weapons, leaving them seriously injured. ●

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Tigers look to take down T20 giants

one-day international and Test series' in the last three months. Pakistan lost 3-0 and India 2-1 in their ODI series, but it is Bangladesh's T20 record that hasn't been over the rope and it needs to be taken care of from now with the 2016 World T20 in sight. They have won just 12 matches out of 42 played in this format.

The home series against India, which ended 10 days ago, saw a new face of the Tigers attack. The plan of attack was based on the faster bowlers, but with the reputation South Africa batsmen has against the quickies, it can be predicted that Bangladesh will go back to the spinners for completing the job.

However, the Proteas are a very exciting team when it comes to the shortest format. Players like AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis are popular names in the T20 leagues across the world and all eyes will be on them.

This is South Africa's first bilateral tour to Bangladesh after 2008 although they have played here in global events - 2011 World Cup and 2014 World Twenty20. Lot has changed

since the sides last met in the 2011 World Cup group game where Bangladesh suffered a humiliating defeat after being bowled out for 78.

South Africa's second string bowling attack have already demonstrated their intention in the only warm-up T20 against BCB XI and the battle in the middle today can heat up if the home side batsmen, who have shown that positive aggression and fearless determination against world class bowlers, stand up to the visitors.

The world No 2 T20 side, South Africa are no doubt the favourites in the game but not knowing the young force of the Tigers can cause damage to their tour. The side's T20 skipper Faf du Plessis said, "Sometimes the unknown is also very dangerous," pointing to the players like Soumya Sarkar, Sabbir Rahman, Mustafizur Rahaman and Sohag Gazi who they haven't seen a lot of.

**Players to watch:**

**Shakib al Hasan**

**Playing role: All-rounder**

The Bangladesh one-day international and Twenty20 vice-captain is the most experienced Twenty20 campaigner in the Bangladesh dressing room. Rated as the top all-rounder in all three formats of cricket, Shakib's expertise in the format will be asked for when they locks horn with South Africa. Shakib's accomplished left-arm spin is ranked sixth in the ICC Twenty20 bowlers rankings - 11 places higher than any other Bangladeshi bowler's, and he is tied as the team's top batsman.

**Ab de Villiers**

**Playing role: Right handed top order batsman**

Bangladesh head Chandika Hathurusingha said his bowlers would like to bowl to De Villiers and pray for his dismissal. The fact is the home side will enjoy sending back ABD as early as possible as the right-handed batsman is perhaps the most terrifying in the world cricket with an unmatched range of strokes and a lightning-fast reaction. He's the top-rated batsman in the one-dayers and, freed from wicket-keeping, he will be a predatory force in the field. ●

## The deadly route to Malaysia

They used to send people in Malaysia during the rainy season regardless of safety.

Often the wooden boats were broken due to heavy storm and due to collision with rocks which killed hundreds of people over the years, according to locals.

It became a usual scenario in the country that each rainy season one or more such incidents would occur.

The pioneering brokers became legends in the locality, and locals still recall their names: Baitta Saleh and his sons, Kamal and Hossain, Tojor Mulluk, a Myanmar fisherman. Hefja Majhi, a Rohingya, is another.

A local union parishad member recalls: "Hefja first used to go fishing in the sea, sometimes in more deep sea area. He then used a compass to identify his location. Around 7-8 years ago, when he also came to learn the route, he went to Malaysia in a fishing boat with 5-6 people with him. At that time, there was no such restriction in any of these countries like now."

The brokers also started influencing Bangladeshi people to go to Malaysia and they got a good response as they targeted the poor who were keen to trade their suffering life for a better one.

Gradually, the brokers' network grew, and turned into a syndicate.

They also started to manage a large ship from Chittagong port so they could transport many more people, paying the ship's captain handsomely for his services, elderly boatmen in the Cox's Bazar and Teknaf area recall.

The tempting of Teknaf

The locals heard of voyagers to Malaysia who were sending good money back to their families and had prospered, building houses and setting up businesses. The tales were a temptation.

Most of the people in Teknaf earlier earned from fishing or betel leaf, palm, and salt cultivation.

The Teknaf upazila agriculture officer Abdul Latif said: "Often the agriculture business is not good enough due to political unrest in the country, while irrigation is the remaining main problem for cultivation here."



"Day by day the agricultural land has been decreasing rapidly due to lack of sufficient irrigation system while due to climate change and high temperature most of the lands are affected by severe salinity," he told the Dhaka Tribune.

During rainy season and hilly water flow, Aman rice has been cultivated in 11,000 hectares while it goes down to only 1,200 hectares during Boro season because of irrigation crisis, he added.

As the agriculture business has become less profitable, people lose their hope for a better business from it, thus drugs, manpower export, and human trafficking has become the big business in the area, according to many locals and government officials.

In this way, the number of Malaysia migrant seekers had been increasing while at the same time the demand of people has also increased the number of brokers in this area.

Human trafficking is big business in huge swathes of Teknaf and Cox's Bazar. Some of the areas in which it is a mainstay of the local economy are: Mitha Panir Chhora, North Lomburi, South Lomburi, Khurer Mukh, Katabunia, Kochubunia, Hariakhali, and Shah Porir Dwip in Teknaf, and Reju Khal, Nazirar Tek, Uttaranunia Chhora BIWTA Ghat, Boro Chhora point, Majhir Haat, Moheshkhali, and Kutubdia in the Cox's Bazar area.

At the same time, most of the families in these localities have their one or more mem-

bers who are living in Malaysia now, while some have even gone on to Australia after reaching Malaysia.

This lucrative business has now spread all over the country, especially in North Bengal, due to economic hardship, so brokers have outposts far and wide to lure unsuspecting migrants.

According to an intelligence report, people from 30 districts in the country are coming here in order to go to Malaysia.

**The deadly route**

The brokers first collect the Malaysia-bound people and then they bring them by a small fishing boat to a nearby ship, which is kept waiting at a safe area in the Bay of Bengal off the coast of Shittwe area of Myanmar, known among the traffickers and migrants as Shita Pahar.

Elderly boatmen and fishermen in Teknaf area, told the Dhaka Tribune that ships are mostly anchored near Shita Pahar and the traffickers usually do not bring the ship inside the Bangladesh territory as the Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard always remain alert here.

Many Malaysia-bound people also told the Dhaka Tribune that it require only 15 minutes to reach a big cargo boat, which can carry 200-300 people, by a small fishing boat, that carries 10-15 persons, from Katabunia and Kochubunia under Teknaf upazila as these places are situated near the sea. It is also a safe point to start without any hassle.

The people in the cargo boat are later brought to ships near Shita Pahar, which can carry 500-600 people.

However, sometimes ships are also anchored inside the Bangladesh sea area at a suitable and safe time.

When the ship gets 500 people, it starts its journey to reach Thai waters which are near the Thailand- Malaysia border through Myanmar sea area, which is quite safe.

Thailand is the drop-off point where another party of brokers and godfathers demand their payment and ransom. When they get their payment or ransom in Bangladesh, they send the migrants on to Malaysia. ●

A JOURNEY THROUGH  
DHAKA TRAFFIC **PAGE 3**GREEKS VOTE IN 'DESTINY'  
REFERENDUM **PAGE 9**AUTHORITIES CLAIM  
BRAZIL WHEAT OKAY **PAGE 32**

# Why risk your life on the open seas?

Abid Azad back from Cox's Bazar and Adil Sakhawat in Dhaka

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR TIMES - II

Abdul Khaleque, an inhabitant of Enayetpur upazila of Sirajganj is now back in Bangladesh after failing to go to Malaysia, and is saddled with Tk4 lakh debt into the bargain.

Once a weaver who could earn only Tk5,000 a month, he now has to pay interest of Tk1,000 a week against his debt.

Khaleque said: "I took the loan from the money-lenders as I thought I could easily refund the money after earning a handsome amount in Malaysia. But as I failed to go to Malaysia now I wonder how can I refund the money or how I can bear the interest weekly."

Not only Khaleque, most of the victims managed their payment by taking loan against high interest while some needed to sell their land, domestic animals, or other assets to fund the voyage.

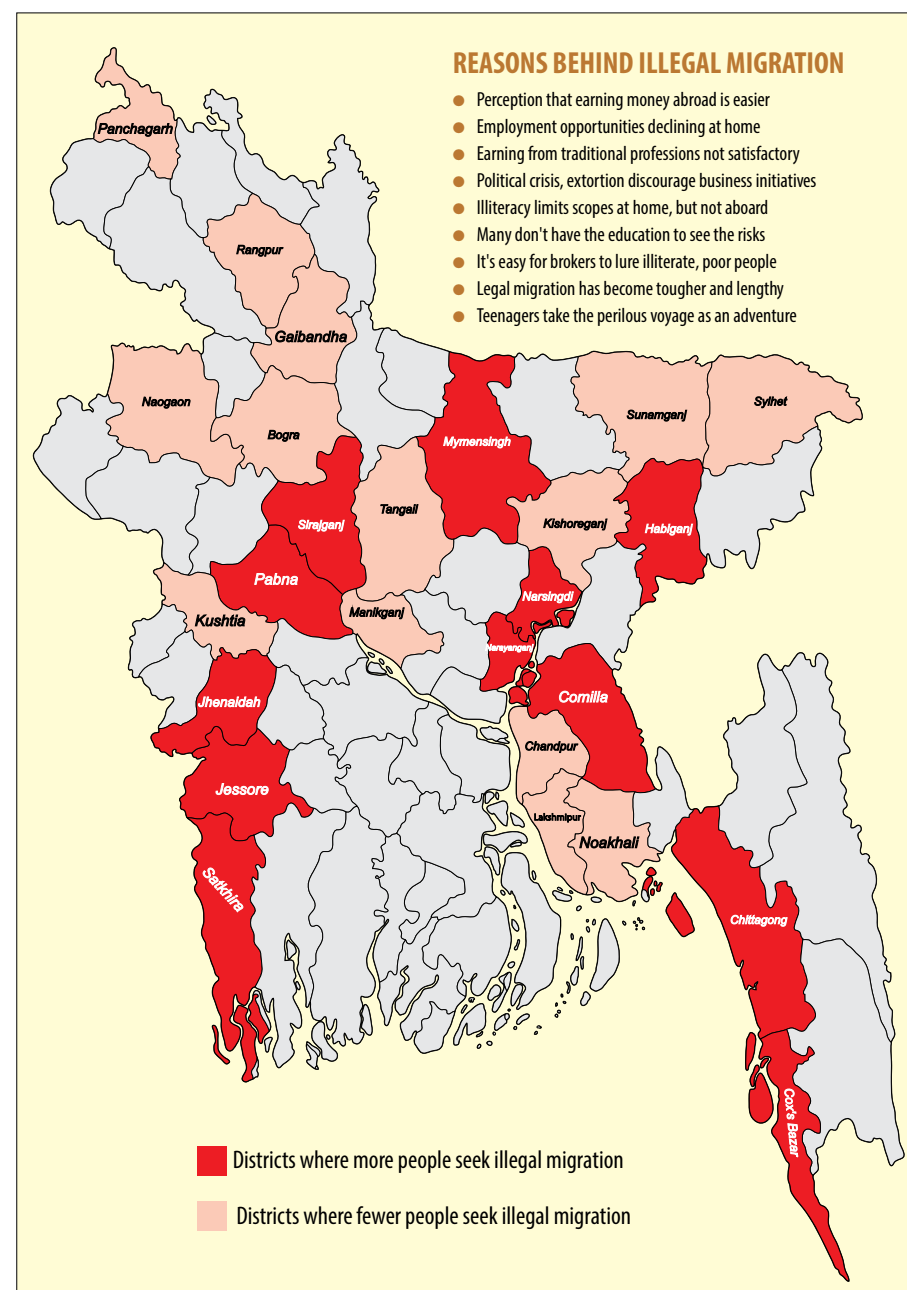
"I am an illiterate person. Being illiterate what can I do here in my country? Working scope for the illiterate is zero. Once I went to a technical training centre in Tangail, which is a government organisation, but the instructor there told me that I have to complete at least class eight to take training there," Khaleque replied when asked why he chose to go to abroad illegally instead of trying to do something in the country.

Sariful from the same upazila, who recently came back from Indonesia after attempting to go to Malaysia, told the Dhaka Tribune: "Weaving as a profession is popular here in Sirajganj. But the weavers get very low wage. Monthly we can earn only Tk5,000-6,000 which is very low. So young people like me choose to go abroad in illegal way to Malaysia to earn more."

These people do not dare to do any business in the country by getting loan or selling their land. They believe if they can go to Malaysia and start working there they can recover their debt within a few years. But it will be impossible to recover the debt doing the same work or even business here in Bangladesh with the same amount of money.

Poverty, non-stop political crisis, and extortion by political muscle-men are their main enemies to do anything in the country, they added.

A human rights activist Nur Khan said: "We might be becoming a middle-income country,



but still the required employment opportunities are not there.

"People are becoming desperate because of political crisis in the country. At the same time, it is harder to go abroad legally. Day by day, employment opportunities are decreasing overseas for Bangladeshi people while at the same time people do not find sufficient opportunities in the country," he added.

In his assessment, this is what forces peo-

ple to try their luck on the illegal voyage to Malaysia.

## Supply and demand

According to a report by the UN High Commission for Refugees, from June 2013 to June 2014 more than 53,000 people have fled by sea from the Bangladesh-Myanmar border region, an increase of 60% from the previous year.

»» PAGE 2 COLUMN 3

## Proteas too good for Tigers



Mazhar Uddin

South Africa proved to be too strong for Bangladesh as the visitors romped to a convincing 52-run win over the Tigers in the first of the two Twenty20 internationals at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

The Bangladesh bowlers did manage to restrict the formidable South African batting line-up to 148/4 with Proteas captain Francois du Plessis smashing an unbeaten 79. However, a lack of a distinct game-plan from the Tigers batsmen saw the home side skittled out for just 96 in 18.5 overs.

In pursuit of 149, the Bangladesh batsmen looked in quite a hurry right from the onset. The Tigers were reeling at 13/2 in only the second over of their chase as openers Tamim Iqbal (five) and Soumya Sarkar (seven) returned to the dressing room after attempting expansive strokes.

The experienced duo - Shakib al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim - tried to repair the early damage by adding 37 runs for the third wicket before the latter was dismissed for 17. Mushfiq tried to smash Jean Paul Duminy out of the park only to find the fielder stationed at the deep midwicket boundary.

Shakib hung in at the other end and top-scored with 26 off 30 balls before departing off the bowling of paceman Davie Wiese. The damage had been done through Shakib's dismissal and from there on in, the Tigers lost wickets at regular intervals.

Youngster Liton Kumar Das, making his international bow in T20s, scored 22 off 26 deliveries.

Duminy was the pick of the South African bowlers, scalping 2/11 from his quota of four overs, while Wiese and young paceman Kagiso Rabada bagged two wickets apiece.

Earlier, the Proteas, deciding to bat first, were in immediate trouble following the loss of their openers - AB de Villiers (two) and Quinton de Kock (12). Left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny, who initiated the proceedings for Bangladesh, picked up the huge wicket of De Villiers in the very first over of South Africa's inning while right-arm spinner Nasir Hossain dismissed De Kock at the other end.

»» PAGE 2 COLUMN 2



# Chief justice: Faulty police probe hampers prosecution

**Adil Sakhawat**

Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha has blamed faulty investigation by the police for allowing the accused human traffickers to go free.

He made the remark at a national dialogue over human trafficking situation, in response to claims by the IGP and RAB DG that most human trafficking cases remained pending at the courts.

“When I joined as the chief justice, I proposed to the inspector general of police to train the police to effectively carry out investigations. But I have still not received any response from their side,” the chief justice told the event, organised by the All-Party Parliamentary Group at a city hotel.

“I will provide judges for the training programme to train police,” he added.

“The second fault is prosecution. Most of the public prosecutors come from political parties who do not know a word of the CrPC [Code of Criminal Procedure], they do not know law.”

Justice Sinha also assured that if the police effectively carried out probe against human traffickers, then he would cancel any stay orders previously given by the Supreme Court in those cases.

Also speaking there, Foreign Minister AH Mahmud Ali said human traffickers have been taking advantage of the Rohingya issue, adding that the government are planning to set up three liaison offices near the border to control

the issue.

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman said human trafficking to Malaysia was increasing as the government-to-government agreement with Malaysia had failed.

Urging for better skills development and awareness building, Home Ministry Senior Secretary Dr Mozammel Hossain said alternative dispute resolution (ADR) or other processes could help reduce human trafficking.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque said human trafficking would stay in check if legal ways to send manpower abroad remained open. RAB Director General Benazir Ahmed, on the other hand, said the Rohingya issue should be solved to stop human trafficking. ●

# Over Tk8 lakh allegedly snatched by miscreants

**Kamrul Hasan**

Miscreants yesterday afternoon shot and stole more than Tk3 lakh from a bKash agent in the capital’s Badda area.

bKash agent, Mohammad Faisal, 30, was shot in his left leg and later admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

An employee of Fox Block Distribution, he had collected Tk3,26,000 from the company’s client and was headed to Badda’s Notun Bazar.

On reaching Sahabuddin crossing at Maddhyabadda, two masked youth tried to snatch his bag. When he protested, one of them shot his leg.

In another incident, two men alleged that some five to six people, claiming to be DB police, forced them into a white microbus at around 12pm yesterday.

The victims were Idris ur Rahman alias Opu, and his friend Kabir Uddin.

Opu said he withdrew Tk 5,00,000 from the Panthapath branch of Al Arafah Islami Bank. When he and Kabir left the bank, some five to six people forced them into the microbus parked in front.

They covered the victims’ faces and looted the money, and later, left them at Taltola in Agargaon.

On informing the Kalabagan police, the police took them to the spot. SI Shamim Hasan said he asked many people but none had seen something strange or a microbus there.

“We then sent them to Sher e Bangla police station as the crime scene falls under their jurisdiction,” he added.

When contacted, the Sher- E- Bangla police station duty officer said he had not received any report till 7:30pm. ●

# Khaleda predicts crisis if national polls not held soon, Nasim says no polls before 2019

**Tribune Report**

Terming the present Awami League-led coalition government illegal, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said an immediate re-election under a non-party government was necessary, otherwise the country would fall into crisis.

Addressing an iftar party arranged by the Association of Engineers, Bangladesh (AEB) at Bashundhara International Convention Centre in the capital yesterday, the former prime minister said: “The Awami League government is only busy in looting the state’s assets, but they have no focus on the countrymen and their livelihoods. This is called the Awami League, and this is their ideal.”

Khaleda Zia sought the help of the people of the country to support BNP’s movement to recover the country’s democracy.

“People want a peaceful life, security, development, transparency. But the present illegal government has failed to meet the public needs. If the Awami League wants peace for the people, they will arrange polls immediately with the participation of all parties,” she said.

However, Awami League Presidium Member and spokesperson of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance Mohammad Nasim denied any chances of national polls before 2019.

“We do not want to keep any political party away from polls, so Khaleda should resolve her legal problems and prepare for the upcoming 2019 elections,” said Nasim, also the health and family welfare minister, at a religious function in Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy yesterday.

Referring to a recent comment by the BNP chairperson that petrol bombs were thrown by police members at people during the 92-day blockade and hartal programme, Nasim said: “One can imagine how politically bankrupt a person can be to say so. But it also indicates how frustrated she is.” ●



**Pahari Chhatra Parishad holds a procession and a rally in front of the National Press Club in the capital yesterday to protest encroachment of land by Bangali settlers, with the help of the armed forces, in Manikchhari upazila of Khagrachhari**

**MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU**

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

# Proteas too good for Tigers

Proteas skipper Du Plessis however, held the ship together and went on to blast his sixth T20I fifty. He remained undefeated on 79 from just 61 balls with the help of eight boundaries. Later, Rilee Rossouw added a quick-fire 21-ball 31 to guide the South Africans to a challenging total.

Sunny scalped 2/19 from his three overs while Shakib dismissed David Miller to become the highest wicket-taker for the Tigers in the shortest format. Shakib now has 45 wickets to his name, one more than left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, although the latter took three fewer matches to reach the milestone.

The Bangladesh batsmen need to bat with more responsibility and a proper game-plan if they want to put their opponent in any sort of trouble in the second and final T20I tomorrow at the same venue.

In contrast, the Proteas will be relieved with yesterday’s facile victory as it was only their second win in their last six T20Is. Having failed to win their last three T20I series, the visitors will be desperate to clinch the series tomorrow. ●

# Why risk your life on the open seas?

According to the Bureau of Manpower, Export, and Training (BMET), roughly 200,000 migrants have gone abroad legally in 2015 so far. The number was 425,000 in 2014.

After five years of closed doors, the Bangladesh government signed a deal with the Malaysian government on October 22, 2012 to send Bangladeshi migrants under G2G process. The registration database shows that over 1.4 million had registered their names as aspirants.

Since then, 3,853 aspirants went to Malaysia in 2013, 5,134 in 2014 and 1,047 in the current year under G2G process.

The database maintained by BMET also shows so far 1.45 million aspirants have already registered to go to another preferred destination, Saudi Arabia, which market has resumed after seven years.

But so far in the last five months only 9,726 aspirants have been able to go to KSA through government initiative.

## Following the money

In 2013, remittances were \$13.8 billion, which rose to \$15bn in 2014. But up to May this year, remittances were \$5bn compared to over \$6bn at the same time last year. ●

BMET Director General Begum Shamsun Nahar told the Dhaka Tribune over phone: “I do not think the supply of our manpower is low. According to the countries’ demand, we meet their demand.”

However, a joint secretary from the expatriates welfare ministry, requesting anonymity, told the Dhaka Tribune: “Maximum aspirants I meet working here as an expatriates ministry official, come from lower income family background who depend on agriculture as their profession. Most of them feel they need to earn more money to live and decided to go abroad as their present profession does not provide required income. Then they start trying to go abroad at any cost. This is when they fall victim of brokers or traffickers.

“Due to their lower education level they think the illegal way is a perfectly fine way to become a migrant,” he added.

When asked what are the government’s initiatives to keep people from choosing the hazardous and illegal sea route to go Malaysia, the expatriates welfare minister responded: “You journalists act like you know better than a minister.”

He then refused to talk further with this correspondent. ●

POLICE DISOWN BOISHAKH  
ARREST CLAIMS **PAGE 5**

PLAYING NATURAL GAME  
IS THE MANTRA **PAGE 25**

'DON'T CRY. YOU HAVE  
A HOME HERE' **PAGE 32**

## Sold into slavery for a few thousand taka

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR TIMES - III

Abid Azad, back from Cox's Bazar

Teknaf, which has the Bay of Bengal on its south and west, and Arakan state of Myanmar on the east beyond the beautiful Naf River, could have become a beautiful tourist zone in the country.

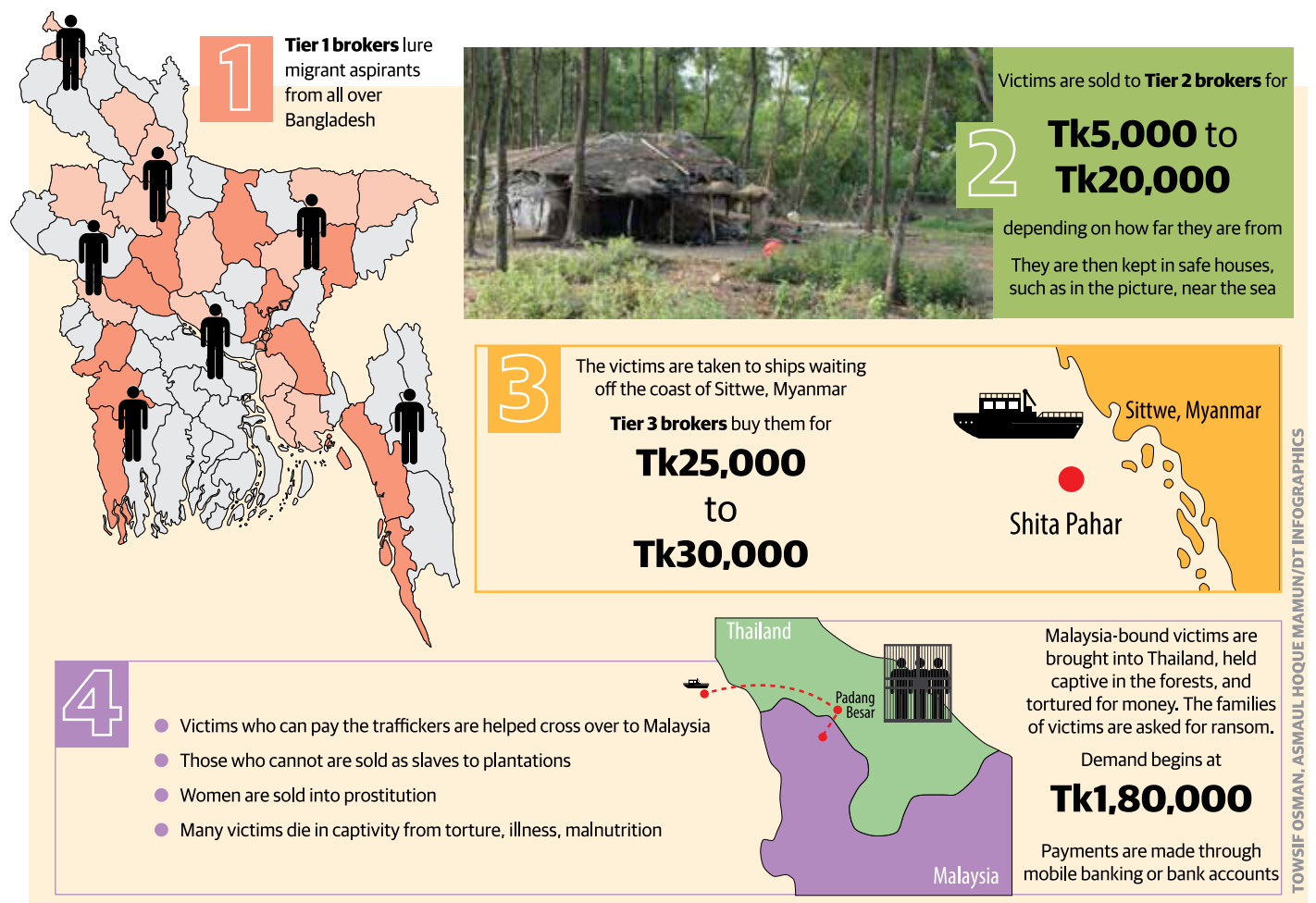
Instead it has now become a hub for human traffickers and human smugglers, and has gradually become a threatening place for tourists and local inhabitants.

"I cannot remember when I last walked on the beach. Except for the main Teknaf beach, we are scared to visit any place in Teknaf for fear of kidnapping," said local inhabitant Mozammel Hoq while walking with this reporter from Teknaf beach to Khurer Mukh and Katabunia area.

"We are passing such risky places like Khurer Mukh, Katabunia, and Kachubunia. All these are among the major points for traffickers to start voyage towards Thailand-Malaysia. No one dares to walk here alone," he added.

Both smugglers and traffickers have worked hard to expand their networks to get

>>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1



## Bonya identifies blogger Avijit's killers

Mohammad Jamil Khan

Seven members of Ansarullah Bangla Team were involved in the murder of Avijit Roy, investigators said, adding that two of them had been positively identified by the blogger's wife.

Two of the culprits directly carried out the attack on Avijit and his wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya, while the other five reportedly tracked the blogger's movement and helped the killers flee the scene. All the perpetrators have now been identified.

"We have not only identified the seven killers but also collected photos suspected to be of them," a senior official of the Detective Branch of police told the Dhaka Tribune yesterday.

Requesting anonymity, the official added that they had sent the photos to the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for verification, and Avijit's wife - who was also injured in the attack - has already identified two of the suspects as being at the scene of the murder.

On February 27, Avijit Roy was murdered

near the TSC intersection while he was visiting the ongoing Ekushey Book Fair. His wife, Bonya, lost a finger in the attack.

The following day, Avijit's father Ajay Roy filed a case with Shahbag police station. Along with the DB police, the FBI also assisted in the investigation as Avijit was a US citizen.

### Investigators say seven Ansarullah men were involved in the murder

"We have got all possible details of Avijit's killing and we are certain that all the killers belong to banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team," said Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of DB police.

Monirul, however, said the location of the suspects are yet to be figured out. He also refused to disclose the identities of the killers as the investigation was still going on.

Another senior DB official, also wishing

not to be named, told the Dhaka Tribune that the killers - posing as fans of Avijit - collected information about the science writer from a friend of Bonya, before the blogger couple arrived in the country from the US on February 16.

"Actually, Bonya's friend had no idea about the killers' identities and she helped them unknowingly," the DB official added.

He added that detectives have also extracted some sensational information from nine militants including three Ansarullah members who were arrested last month.

The seven killers were identified after verifying information provided by the arrestees, analysing phone call data, and going through video footage collected from 70 CCTV cameras installed at book fair premises, the official added.

Following Avijit's death, a Facebook page named Ansar Bangla Seven claimed responsibility for the murder. Law enforcers have so far arrested only one youth named Shafiqur Rahman Farabi on charges of instigating the murder of Avijit. ●

## Tigers looking to bounce back

Mazhar Uddin



Following a comprehensive defeat in the first Twenty20 international, Mashrafe bin Mortaza and his troop need to fire from all cylinders if they are to salvage something against South Africa in the second and final match today at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Last Sunday, the Tigers restricted the mighty Proteas to 148/4 but an awful batting display from the home side enabled the visitors to register a convincing 52-run win. Including openers Tamim Iqbal and Soumya Sarkar, each and every single Bangladesh batsman came out with the intention of crushing their opponent without having a set plan in the back of their minds. As a result, the Tigers were skittled out for just 96 with seven deliveries of their inning still remaining.

T20 skipper Mashrafe would have been disappointed with the performance of their

>>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1



# Enclaves survey kicks off

**BSS**

A joint team of Bangladeshi and Indian officials started a joint survey of the 162 exchanged enclaves at 10:45am yesterday by conducting a headcount and gathering the citizenship options of the inhabitants.

The program was inaugurated by local Deputy Commissioner (DC) Khan Moham-mad Nurul Amin at Kalir Hat Bazar of Dashiar Chara -- the biggest Bangladeshi enclave.

The census started with the enrollment of Abdur Razzak and Shahida Begum of the enclave.

The deputy commissioner assured the enclave residents that there was no reason for uncertainty and that the government had allocated two hundred crore taka for the 111 Bangladeshi enclaves.

Meanwhile a 15-member Indian delegation arrived here for the census of the 12 Indian enclaves in Fulbari and Bhurungamari, two

upazilas of the district. Similarly a team from Bangladesh is already in India to do similar work in the 51 Bangladeshi enclaves there.

Earlier on Sunday, a three-hour workshop was held with the Indian delegation at the hall room of Kurigram Sadar upazila. Besides, a control room has been established at the DC office for coordination of land survey, security and other activities.

Mokhlesur Rahman, 27, of Dashiar Chara said that he would opt for Bangladesh as most of his relations stay here. But his father Ehsan Ali, 65, works in Delhi for the last ten years so Ehsan does not know what his father's choice would be.

Magistrate Sohel Maruf, who is in charge of the control room, said that 75 people from the two countries were working in the 162 enclaves for the census.

The headcount would be based on the Census of 2011 and only those who were born in the enclaves after that or were married to peo-

ple settled there would be enumerated.

People living in the enclaves would have the choice of choosing their nationality even after the current survey, if they complete all formalities between August 1, 2015 and November 30, 2015.

The enclaves will be physically transferred to the respective countries on the midnight of July 31, 2015. The current survey starting from today will continue till July 16, 2015.

The current survey will take into account population, households, possessed land, finances and socioeconomic status of the enclave dwellers.

Besides, the administration through a special announcement has imposed a temporary ban on the sale and purchase of all land in the enclaves from June 22, 2015 to July 31, 2015. However, the enclave inhabitants may sell property from August 1, 2015 to November 30, 2015 with consent from the respective local authorities. ●

## 16 BNP men face arrest warrants in arson case

**Md Sanaul Islam Tipu**

A Dhaka court yesterday issued warrants for the arrest of 16 BNP members, including the party's Standing Committee member barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah, in a case filed over fire-bombing a bus in the capital's Pallabi area on January 26.

Judge of Dhaka Metropolitan Special Court 1 Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah issued the warrants after accepting the charges levelled against the accused.

Among the accused in the case are BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Sohel, her Special Assistant advocate Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, former parliamentarian Syeda Asifa Ashrafi Papiya, former Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal president Azizul Bari Helal and Swechch-hasebak Dal president Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel. ●

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Tigers looking to bounce back

batsmen, given that the bowlers had maintained a tight line and length earlier. The dangerous AB de Villiers was dismissed cheaply while the talented Quinton de Kock was unable to get going and were it not for captain Francois du Plessis' unbeaten 79-run knock, the Proteas would have ended up with a below-par total.

The Bangladesh spinners were brilliant, especially left-arm spinners Arafat Sunny and

Shakib al Hasan, who were both economical. However, Sohag Gazi, who returned to the national side after doing remedial work on his bowling action, remained wicket-less and might make way for young leg-spinner Jubair Hossain today.

Mashrafe will be hoping for a repeat of the bowling showing today and just like the first T20I, the Tigers will be looking to restrict the

Proteas batsmen to a gettable target but it will be a tough task if the hosts do not pick up early wickets, especially that of the menacing AB.

In order to do that, the Tigers will be praying for a suitable deck for their bowlers, especially the spinners. The pitch for the first T20I did indicate that there will be purchase for the slower bowlers so the Tigers will be looking to exploit that.

The Tigers however, will need to be wary of the Proteas pace-bowling attack which was outstanding in the first T20I. The likes of Kyle Abbott, Kagiso Rabada, David Wiese and Wayne Parnell troubled the opponent with their line and length while Jean Paul Duminy and Aaron Phangiso did a decent job.

The match will begin at 1pm and BTV, GTV and Star Sports 1 will telecast the game live. ●

## Sold into slavery for a few thousand taka

people to Malaysia in any way they can over the last few years.

Brokers term the Malaysia-bound people "buffaloes," according to the victims.

To identify them, brokers use different types of identification marks on the bodies of those being trafficked, like buffaloes have during selling and purchase.

Some have alphabets or signs to identify the different brokers, while others have hand belts of different colours.

Raihan's story

Md Raihan is an 18-year-old who was captured in Moheshkhali area of Cox's Bazar when he wanted to go to Malaysia for employment in April last year.

Raihan was the only kidnapped boy who returned alive after he experienced the horror of life as a slave in both Thailand and Malaysia.

He revealed to the Dhaka Tribune how brokers play their roles.

After two days and a night, the boat he was in reached Shita Pahar from Moheshkhali and he was shifted to another cargo boat where around 300 people were kept forcefully at gunpoint, he said.

"When we reached Thailand all of us were divided into two big groups - those who could pay money and those who could not.

"Of the 300 persons, the women were sold separately. Different buyers bought them. Those buyers never buy any men but only women.

"Another group bought several people to send them for work on a rubber plantation in

Thailand for about three-five years," Raihan told the Dhaka Tribune.

"Another broker named Hazi bought 25 of us including me for Malaysian Ringgit 6,000 each. He later sold us to another Malaysian buyer."

**The brokers**

Brokers maintain a strong network to operate their business from both inside and outside the country.

In Bangladesh, the first tier of brokers collect people who are interested to go to Malaysia.

These brokers influence people in any way they can, as their main target is collecting people by any means.

The first tier brokers have a good number of associates around the country who are also working to collect people.

According to the Cox's Bazar police, so far they have found people from as many as 30 districts in the country who came to Cox's Bazar and Teknaf area to go to Malaysia through sea route.

The BGB commanding officer in Teknaf told the Dhaka Tribune: "Mostly people come from Sirajganj, Narsingdi, Satkhira, Jessore, and Jhenaidah."

The Malaysia-bound people are later sold for Tk5,000-20,000 to the second tier brokers.

The price of people varies according to the distance. People from Teknaf area are sold at Tk3,000-5,000, while the going rate is Tk10,000 for Cox's Bazar and Chittagong area and as much as Tk20,000 for people from Dhaka or other districts.

**The safe houses**

Once they have brought them from the first tier brokers, the second tier brokers transport their unfortunate victims to safe houses where they are kept.

The safe houses are unremarkable from the outside and all are situated close to the sea. They are little more than shacks, mostly made of bamboo and polythene or tin sheets.

When they have collected a good number, the brokers then send them to a ship, anchored near Shita Pahar in Myanmar, first through small fishing boats, locally known as tangkhoano, that can carry 15-20 people, then on a bigger fishing boat, carrying 150-250 voyagers, and then taken to the anchored ship.

Shita Pahar is about 15-20km south-west from Shah Porir Dwip and 30-40km from Teknaf. The journey from Teknaf takes five-six hours.

Shita Pahar is not a port for ships but a safe zone for trafficking. Different kinds of ships including large boats remain anchored there.

This is safe for the traffickers, because if the Myanmar navy moves forward to catch them they enter into the Bangladesh sea territory and if the Bangladesh navy makes a move, they enter into the Myanmar sea territory.

The second tier brokers sell their purchased people to the third tier brokers on the ships for Tk25,000-30,000.

**The voyage begins**

The third tier brokers bring the Malaysia-bound people to Thailand initially.

People who can pay are helped to cross the Thailand-Malaysia border, and people who cannot pay are sold to another gang who purchase people to work as modern day slaves in plantations.

However, often even those who say they are willing to pay are forced into working as plantation slaves while the women are sold into prostitution.

It depends on the whim of the third tier brokers, said sources. If a man is handed over to a kidnapping gang, only God knows what will happen to him, they told the Dhaka Tribune.

If the third tier broker works only to bring people to Malaysia, he will send them to Malaysia after receiving payment, but if he is a slave businessman, then he will sell everyone of his purchased people.

The minute the people are brought to the Thailand jungle, the third tier brokers start all kinds of torture. They then make phone calls to their relatives to get the money.

The transaction is processed through mobile banking accounts or actual bank accounts between the victims' families and the brokers.

This is how the third tier brokers make back their investment. They charge anywhere from Tk1,80,000 per person, depending on how much they have had to lay out.

The traffickers torture their victims in order to expedite payment and many die from this torture or from illness or malnutrition during this time, waiting for the ransom payments to arrive.

Those who fail to pay are sold as slaves. ●

**DB: AVIJIT KILLERS INSPIRED  
OYASIQUR'S MURDERERS** **PAGE 3****ACC READY TO SUE  
EX-BASIC CHAIR** **PAGE 15****WB: BANGLADESH SPENDS  
1% OF GDP IN SSN** **PAGE 32**

# Bangladesh's crime coast

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR TIMES - IV

**Abid Azad back from Teknaf  
and Cox's Bazar**

For fortune-seekers, Teknaf is the place to be. Money is everywhere, and there are dozens of ways to get involved in the illegal trafficking trade, the mainstay of the local economy.

In the words of one government official: "There is no other place like Teknaf in the country. There are endless opportunities for earning money illegally. You cannot count the number of people who are involved in drug business and human trafficking here."

Here one can change their life from rickshaw-puller or day labourer to an owner of a luxury building and huge lands within a very short time, the official added.

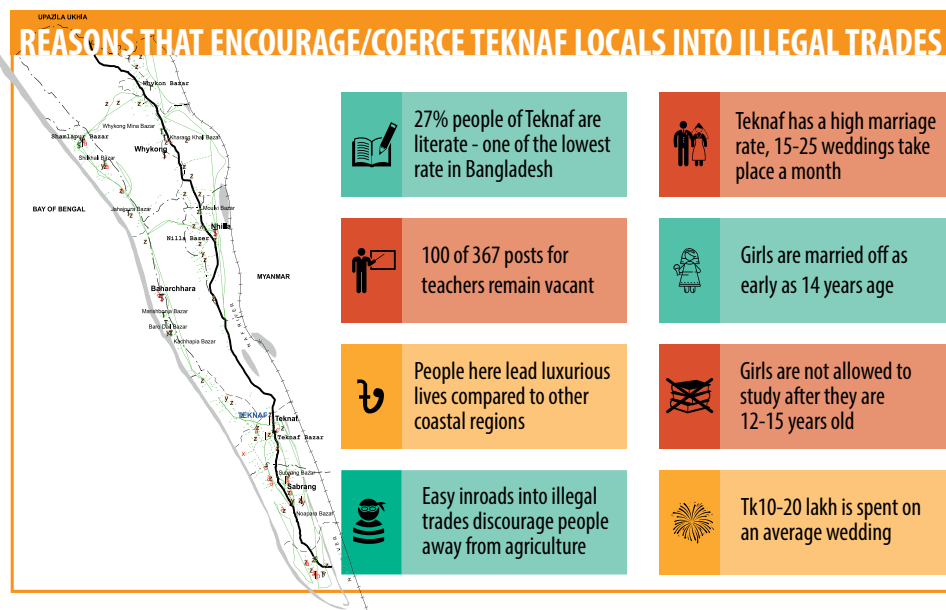
Even some who once went abroad as migrant labourers, have come back as it has become much easier to earn a huge amount of money in Teknaf than from abroad.

Young people in Teknaf call this land the second Singapore because of the luxurious lifestyle that can be had here.

**No interest in school**

The literacy rate in Teknaf upazila is only 27%

In the wake of the Asian boatpeople crisis, the Dhaka Tribune's Abid Azad travels down the migration routes along Bangladesh's jagged coast in search of answers. On the quayside alongside migrant smuggling boats he finds desperation and ambition in equal measure, and finds menacing eddies that portend far more trouble for the migrants than they bargained for. Beyond the horizon, in foreign waters, a vast network of human traffickers lies in wait. For Bangladeshis looking for a back door to a better life, a vast tide of greed and cruelty threatens to sweep away naïve hopes and whole communities with it. This is the fourth part of the Dhaka Tribune multi-part investigative report on human trafficking in Bangladesh



which is one of the lowest in the country, said the Teknaf upazila primary education officer Subrata Kumar Dhar.

"There is plenty of opportunity for earning money illegally while people here have also

greed for money and luxurious lifestyle. Thus they have low interest in education," he suggested.

"Take a boy from a fishing family. He can

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1**

## The old ways no longer pay

**Abid Azad back from Teknaf  
and Cox's Bazar**

Most of the land which were once used for salt cultivation in Teknaf, some 80km south of Cox's Bazar, are now to be found vacant.

"Almost seven years ago, the price for 40kg salt was Tk250-300 which is now Tk100. The salt cultivators are left counting huge losses," said Mizanur Rahman.

Teknaf was once also famous for betel leaf cultivation, but now for many years the farmers have had a hard time making a living from it.

"About eight years ago, we spent around Tk3.5 lakh for 10,000 betel plants from which we earned Tk6-7 lakh. Today, the cost remains the same as before but now we barely earn Tk1-1.5 lakh," Md Zubair told the Dhaka Tribune at the Noapara Bazar one Sunday, a weekly haat day for betel leaf.

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 4**

## Clinical Proteas get the better of Tigers again

**Minhaz Uddin Khan**

Heading into the two-Twenty20 international series against Bangladesh, South Africa were the sure favourites. And, the inevitable happened as the Proteas, aided by their determined batsmen and disciplined spinners, claimed the second and final T20I by 31 runs at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday to clinch the series 2-0.

It was expected that the Tigers would come hard in the deciding T20I and make a

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 2**

## Salauddin's appeal verdict July 29

**Ashif Islam Shaon**

After the end of arguments, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has fixed July 29 for delivering verdict on an appeal filed by BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, challenging his death penalty awarded for committing genocide and systematic killings during the Liberation War in 1971.

A four-member bench headed by Chief Justice SK Sinha set the date yesterday. Other members of the bench are Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

The same bench on June 16 dismissed the appeal petition of the Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid and upheld his death penalty. His lawyers will file a review petition.

Supreme Court lawyer Khandaker Mahbub Hossain, also an adviser to the BNP chief, placed arguments for the convict while Attorney General Mahbubey Alam opposed the arguments.

Mahbub prayed to the apex court to acquit his client claiming that Salahuddin had not been in Bangladesh during the war. The convict made the same claim during the trial.

On the other hand, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam prayed to the court to uphold the death penalty as the charges brought against Salauddin had been proven beyond reasonable doubt.

After the hearing, the attorney general said: "We hope that the Supreme Court will uphold the death penalty."

Mahbub claimed that most of the prosecution witnesses had not been eye witnesses

and gave hearsay statements. "We hope the Apex court will acquit him from all the charges as no one can be given death penalty considering faulty witness accounts," he claimed.

On Monday, another defence lawyer SM Shahjahan placed arguments on the seven charges.

The defence started placing arguments on July 5. Earlier the state concluded their argument part on July 1. The court started holding the hearing on June 16.

The former BNP lawmaker from Raozan, Chittagong ad appealed against the verdict on October 29, 2013. The tribunal on October 1 found him guilty of nine of the 23 charges brought against him.

The tribunal sentenced him to death on four charges - for his involvement in two acts

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1**

## Salauddin's appeal

of genocide, the killing of Nutan Chandra Singha, and Awami League leader Mozaffar Ahmed and his son in Raozan of Chittagong.

While pronouncing the verdict, tribunal Chairman Justice ATM Fazle Kabir said: “We are of the unanimous view that the accused deserves the highest punishment as provided under law for committing such gravest crimes that tremble the collective conscience of mankind.”

It also awarded him 20 years in jail for three charges and five years in jail for two other charges. The tribunal’s judgement said that Salahuddin sought to wipe out the Hindus by launching large-scale systematic attacks and killed unarmed civilians, unleashing a reign of terror in the locality. “As a result, millions of people were compelled to leave the country and took refuge in India,” it said.

During his detention at Kashimpur High Security Jail, Salauddin was sued on sodomy charges in March 2013. After the judgement, his family members, lawyer and manager were sued for their alleged involvement in leaking the draft verdict from the tribunal’s computer. ●

## Bangladesh’s crime coast

earn money from that. However, if he gets involved in drug peddling, he can earn huge amounts of money. So, normally he is much more interested in earning money than in being educated,” he told the Dhaka Tribune.

However, here no one is raised as a teacher. On the other hand, teachers from other parts of the country do not want to stay here. Typically, it takes only three months for their transfer once they have been appointed here, the officer added.

According to the education office, there are almost 100 posts that are vacant for teachers out of a total of 367 posts in the area.

The local marriage market

In the rural areas of the district, parents keep their daughters at home with severe restrictions and get them married sometimes as early as 14.

Girls are not allowed to study after they become physically matured, which locals reckon to be between 12-15 years of age.

“We usually send our girls to school up to the age of 10 or 12. There is no need to be educated, what will they do? Rather, we keep them home to avoid any unwanted troubles and get them married when we find a suitable husband for them,” said Md Islam, an inhabitant at the Alir Deil area.

A programme decorator in Sabrang union Md Selim said: “Monthly we get anywhere from 15-25 decoration orders only for wedding ceremony. It goes even higher during the winter season.

“People here spend huge money on the wedding programme. The expenses become even higher if the wedding party includes a human trafficker or drug businessman. Average expense is between Tk10-20 lakh for a wedding ceremony. Sometimes it goes more.

“People used to spend big money only for the wedding gate and decoration purposes. It costs somewhere around Tk1-3 lakh, sometimes more. Several cows are always slaughtered during the ceremony.”

### Signs of wealth

Although the lifestyle in other coastal areas of the country is very difficult, in Teknaf a luxurious lifestyle is very common.

Even it is seen that every battery-run auto-rickshaw has a music system inside the vehicle with smartphones or tabs.

## Clinical Proteas get the better of Tigers

valiant effort to avoid a series defeat against a formidable South African side. But, the exact opposite happened as it was not only the batsmen who looked out of sorts but the body language of the Bangladesh cricketers also raised eyebrows and left a lot to be desired. Yesterday’s defeat also indicated how far the Tigers are from perfecting their game in the shortest format.

Opting to bat first for the second time in a row, the intention of the visitors to score big was clearly evident right from the start as opener AB de Villiers (40 off 34 balls) hammered Bangladesh spinner Arafat Sunny for two boundaries in the very first over.

The wicket in Mirpur was totally different from the first T20I. It offered spin and bounce but became harder as the match progressed. As a result, the ball was coming nicely on to the bat. The Proteas batsmen duly took advantage, charged the Bangladesh bowlers at will and never allowed them to settle down.

In addition to the travails of the bowlers, sloppy fielding by the Bangladesh fielders

hardly helped matters. The frustration was doubled as even the side’s best fielders - Sabir Rahman and Nasir Hossain - were looking profligate on the field.

### The way Shakib, Mushfiq and Nasir made their way to the dressing room was deplorable

De Villiers and his opening partner Quinton de Kock (44 off 31 balls) maintained a healthy run rate, over eight runs per over. Sunny removed De Kock in the 11th over but by then the damage had already been done as the Proteas posted 95 runs on the board.

Nasir then sent back Jean Paul Duminy (six) and De Villiers to the hut in quick succession but the Proteas never took their foot off the pedal and added a further 74 runs from their remaining 57 deliveries.

In pursuit of 170, Bangladesh openers Tamim Iqbal (13 off 18 balls) and Soumya

Another interesting fact is that there are dozens of houses in Sabrang union which have transformed from tin huts to luxury brick and concrete structures in the past few years.

As the trafficking business has now dried up due to both national and worldwide concern, it is seen that construction work on several incomplete houses has been stopped and the owners now are in hiding.

### Cost of living

The cost of daily food products, clothes and necessities is very high in Teknaf. The price of beef is higher than the price in Dhaka. The price of chickens is also high.

Although, people get fish from both the nearby Naf River and the sea, the price of fish is also high.

According to the Teknaf upazila agriculture officer Abdul Latif: “This has happened because of large flow of illegal money. People who have illegal money, they do not care about the market price. We the general people cannot even think to buy a sea fish from this market. If you go to the fish market, you will find illegal businessmen will buy that fish at a high price.”

### The gold market

There is a large gold market in this little Teknaf pourasabha area. Hundreds of goldsmith shops can be found in this area, with each shop having multiple smiths working there.

The shops are crowded with buyers, mostly women, every evening.

Interestingly, not a single shop-owner would agree to talk to this reporter about their business.

### How is such luxury possible?

Betel leaf cultivator Md Zubair, who continued this cultivation from his father, told the Dhaka Tribune: “It is not possible in any way to build a luxurious house or to lead a luxurious lifestyle only from betel leaf or supari (areca nut) or salt cultivation in this area without having any illegal business.”

This observation was echoed by several such farmers during a weekly betel leaf haat day at the Noapara Bazar under Sabrang union.

Sarkar (37 off 21 balls) started their chase briskly.

Soumya slashed one through point for a boundary off the inning’s fourth delivery but as the chase progressed, both the openers were watchful. The pressure of the required run rate, however, saw the Tigers lose their way. Tamim and Soumya did give the Proteas a close run for their money, putting on 46 runs for the opening wicket, but the former’s departure opened the floodgates for the Proteas.

Soon, the Tigers were tottering at 82/6 as they lost four wickets for the addition of only 13 runs.

The way Shakib al Hasan (eight), Mushfiqur Rahim (19 off 16 balls) and Nasir (nought) made their way to the dressing room was deplorable.

The tail-enders, led by skipper Mashrafe bin Mortaza, took Bangladesh past the 100-run mark for the first time in the series but it was too little as two fine Kyle Abbott block-hole deliveries brought the curtains down on the T20I series. ●

A bricklayer told the Dhaka Tribune: “I got chance for construction work in some of the luxurious building in both Teknaf Sadar area and village area. There is no shortage of luxury construction work. Owners are willing to spend a huge amount of money.”

Local people said it was in the last three to five years by which human trafficking boomed in this area.

During this time, those involved have gained a lucrative opportunity to become rich within a short time, they added.

Drug smuggling is another lucrative source of income for the criminals.

Teknaf upazila primary education officer Subrata Kumar Dhar said: “Many school and college going young boys are now involved in drug peddling. They can earn thousands every day. Not only they but also other poor people or daily labourers also can earn a lot of money in drug dealing. So they do not need to think at all about earning money legally.” ●

## The old ways

The situation of supari (areca nut) cultivation is also the same.

In addition, during the last few years, labour cost has gone through the roof, said several farmers.

The Teknaf upazila agriculture officer Abdul Latif told the Dhaka Tribune: “For many years now, the agriculture business has not been good enough due to political unrest in the country, while irrigation is the remaining main problem for cultivation here.”

Day by day the agricultural land has been decreasing rapidly due to a lack of sufficient irrigation system, while due to climate change and high temperature most of the land is affected by severe salinity, he said.

During the rainy season, Aman rice is cultivated on 11,000 hectares of land in the area, but this goes down to only 1,200 hectares during the Boro season because of irrigation crisis, he added.

As the agriculture business has become less profitable, people lose hope of earning a living from it.

During our investigation, several farmers told the Dhaka Tribune that they are afraid to continue cultivation as they see no hope for the future. ●



**RAMPAL BID DEADLINE  
EXTENDED AGAIN** PAGE 3**DB TO TEST MORE  
COCAINE SAMPLES** PAGE 5**RECKLESS DRIVING CLAIMS  
TWO YOUNG LIVES** PAGE 32

## How modern slavers prey on Bangladeshis

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR TIMES - V

**Abid Azad back from Cox's Bazar**

Bangladesh and Myanmar supply the manpower to meet the huge demand for forced labour, prostitution, fishing business, and other dangerous work in both Thailand and Malaysia.

All this became a global talking point when Thailand police in May found secret human trafficking camps on their side of the border and dozens of shallow graves of both Bangladeshi and Rohingya migrant workers.

According to The Guardian, on May 25, Malaysian police uncovered 28 suspected human trafficking camps located about 500 metres from the country's northern border, a day after authorities reported the discovery of multiple mass graves.

"We discovered 139 of what we believe are graves," national police chief Gen Khalid Abu Bakar then told reporters.

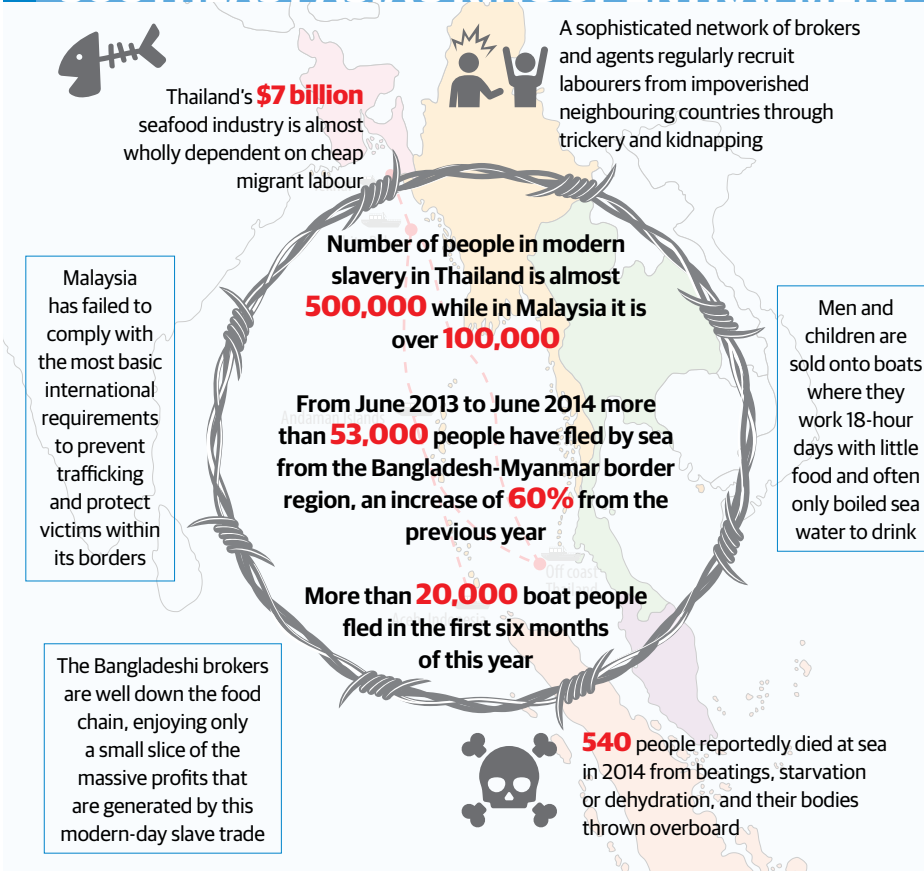
A senior Thai army officer has turned himself in over his alleged involvement in human trafficking.

Lt General Manas Kongpaen, a senior adviser to the Royal Thai Army, is facing multiple charges, including human trafficking, unlawful detention, and extortion.

More than 50 people, including several politicians and officials, were arrested after the discovery of dozens of bodies believed to be those of Myanmar's Rohingya migrants at the abandoned trafficking camps

In the wake of the Asian boatpeople crisis, the Dhaka Tribune's Abid Azad travels down the migration routes along Bangladesh's jagged coast in search of answers. On the quayside alongside migrant smuggling boats he finds desperation and ambition in equal measure, and finds menacing eddies that portend far more trouble for the migrants than they bargained for. Beyond the horizon, in foreign waters, a vast network of human traffickers lies in wait. For Bangladeshis looking for a back door to a better life, a vast tide of greed and cruelty threatens to sweep away naïve hopes and whole communities with it. This is the fifth part of the Dhaka Tribune multi-part investigative report on human trafficking in Bangladesh

### SOUTHEAST ASIA'S RING OF ENTRAPMENT



near the Thai-Malaysian border.

However, in Bangladesh the scenario of police arrest is very different from in Thailand.

Though several accused persons have been arrested as of now, despite credible allegations in the media and elsewhere against local representatives and law enforcement, no official or influential person has yet been arrested in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, several accused traffickers have been killed in what the police call "gunfight" with the police soon after the mass graves were found in Thailand.

On May 8, three listed criminals - Dholu Hossain, Jahangir Alam, and Jafar Alam - were killed in a "gunfight" that occurred between the police and the traffickers at midnight in Teknaf area.

Teknaf police station's Officer-in-Charge Ataur Rahman claimed they were listed human traffickers who had several police cases against them.

On June 8, Amanullah Anu was killed. Police claim he was killed during a clash among the trafficking gangs over money distribution.

OC Ataur said that Anu was a member of a transnational human trafficking gang who had six police cases against him.

Human rights activist Khan, however, said: "Such 'gunfight' or 'crossfire' actually hide the real scenario of trafficking in this area. The real bosses are not touched.

» PAGE 2 COLUMN 2

## Hasina: Khaleda to face trial

**Mohammad Al-Masum Molla**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government was mulling over a plan to constitute tribunals under the section 27 of the Anti-terrorism Act-2009 for speedy trial of those involved in fire-bombing.

She told parliament that trials of Khaleda Zia along with her associates will also be held for aiding and abetting fire-bombers.

Responding to a query of a lawmaker in the parliament the premier said: "The anti-

» PAGE 2 COLUMN 2

## HC: Don't force consumption of Brazil wheat

**Ashif Islam Shaon**

The High Court yesterday said that the government should not force anyone to consume the wheat imported from Brazil, and take it back if anyone wants to return though the food department report says it is safe for human consumption.

The bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman observed there is no report before the court that the wheat, which has already been distributed, caused illness or harm to anybody's health.

"Based on the food department's report, the court said that the wheat is perhaps okay

and suitable for human consumption," Deputy Attorney General Tapash Kimar Biswas said.

However, the court also mentioned about some of the local laboratories that claimed that they had found insects in the wheat, he said.

According to government officials, who have been insisting that the wheat is safe for consumption, they have supplied wheat to the forces that receive government rations and also to various dealers and mills, test relief and Food-for-Work programme.

According to Food Ministry, out of 205,128 tonnes of the Brazilian wheat, 174,926 tonnes were distributed over the last four months.

A debate emerged following media reports

that the imported wheat was not safe for human consumption. Many demanded the resignation of Food Minister Kamrul Islam for insisting that the wheat was fine.

Along with the copies of the media reports, a lawyer named Pavel Mian filed a writ petition on June 29 with the High Court seeking probe on the matter.

He also demanded the wheat be tested by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) and Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute and also pleaded for a probe by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on the import process.

» PAGE 2 COLUMN 1

## Syed Ashraf: BNP would not exist if they boycott polls again

Our Correspondent, Kishoreganj

The BNP would cease to exist if it chooses to boycott elections in the future, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraful Islam has said, adding that the next national polls would be held under the existing constitution.

Addressing an Awami League programme at the Kishoreganj Circuit House yesterday, he said everyone should be aware about participating in the next elections, which he hoped would be enthusiastically contested by all the political parties.

Speaking as the chief guest, he added that those who would boycott the elections would end up being hurt.

Stressing on the need for long-term plans, Syed Ashraf said it was difficult for a government to achieve development in just one or two terms in power.

Mentioning the example of China, the Awami League general secretary said the Chinese administration was able to make great leaps of development by unifying its people under a one-party rule; while the Awami League government was working on sustaining its development activities under a democratic system. ●



Detective Branch officials present five members of a dope mugging gang, arrested from the capital's Motijheel area, at the media cell of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday

MEHEDI HASAN

## Injured Samakal journalist dies

Our Correspondent, Chuadanga

Police yesterday arrested a person for his alleged involvement in the fatal attack on journalist Abu Sayem in Jibonnagar of Chuadanga.

Rajib Rahman, 26, was arrested from Jibonnagar bus stand area in the morning, while he is now being interrogated under custody.

Sayem, 35, the daily Samakal correspondent in Jibonnagar, was attacked on Tuesday at his house in Peyaratola. His father Abul Khayer Bachchu Molla was also injured, Jibonnagar police OC Humayun Kabir said.

The injured journalist was brought to Dhaka where he died later on Tuesday afternoon while undergoing treatment. ●

## 2 arrested for forging driving license

Kamrul Hasan

Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested two persons for forging driving licenses from the capital's Khilgaon area yesterday.

The two arrested - Masum Parvez and his associate Al Amin - used to make identity cards for school goers in Nilkhet area, however, later, they got involved with a gang who supply fake driving licenses to drivers of light vehicles like CNG autorickshaw and human hauliers.

The arrested duo received the orders through brokers from different parts of the city and earned Tk1,000-4,000 per card, said DB Joint Commissioner Md Monirul Islam at a press briefing yesterday.

DB officials arrested them around 8pm and also recovered 30 fake driving licenses and materials used for making those including printers and ink from their den.

During interrogation, they confessed that they had been involved with the illegal act for several years.

Police would look deeply into the case to find out if any official from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority was involved with the ring, said Monirul Islam. ●

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## HC: Don't force consumption

The next day the court ordered the government to clarify in 72 hours whether the wheat was suitable for human consumption or not.

Later the Directorate General of Food Department filed a report and cited test results of the Agriculture Research Institute, the Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) and Dhaka University laboratories saying the wheat was fine.

It also said that the ministry ran a test in the food department's laboratory on 57 samples collected from warehouses all over the country and found that the wheat as "okay."

The wheat samples collected from Magura, Patuakhali, Sherpur, Bogra, Sirajganj and Joypurhat districts were partly rotten. "There are living insects in the samples and this [the wheat] could be distributed after controlling the insects in a proper way," the study concluded.

The BCSIR test report, dated June 28, says: "All the supplied samples contained higher amount of shrunken and broken kernels than the supplied specification."

The 10 specific parameters against which the wheat was tested by the BCSIR were: test weight, heat damage kernels, damage kernels, presence of foreign materials, shrunken and broken kernels, contrasting classes, wheat of other classes, protein, moisture and dock age.

Citing the study reports at a briefing on Sunday, the food minister claimed that there is nothing wrong with the imported grains. On Tuesday, he told parliament that the media reports on the imported wheat were fabricated and baseless.

Earlier, the minister had said that the government had cancelled the order of wheat from Brazil due to its poor quality. ●

## Hasina: Khaleda to face trial

terrorism Act-2009 has the provision of forming special tribunals for trials of cases related to terrorist acts. In future, the government may constitute such tribunals under the section-27."

Hasina also said until the formation of the special tribunals, the sessions judges will be given the power for quick disposal of the cases.

"We have given instructions to all officials concerned for proper investigation into the

cases and ensuring quick disposal of those cases," she said.

The premier further said a total of 134 people were burnt to death in petrol bomb attacks while 1,395 transports were put on fire.

Saboteurs launched attacks on the Bangladesh Railway 13 times and on launches six times.

Mentioning her government's assistance to the victims, the prime minister said Tk20.37

crore was distributed among 220 relatives of the deceased and injured persons.

Moreover, a Tk1.36 crore cheque is ready for distribution among relatives of 13 more deceased and injured persons.

About the damaged vehicles Hasina said Tk9.57 crore was distributed among the owners of 860 damaged transports and cheques of Tk7.21 crore are ready to be distributed among 285 more owners of damaged transports. ●

## How modern slavers prey on Bangladeshis

"This business could not flourish in this way without the support of corrupt local representatives and law enforcement."

**What is happening in Thailand and Malaysia**

A June 25 AP report explains how Thailand's \$7 billion seafood industry is almost wholly dependent on cheap migrant labour.

Since few Thais are willing to take the dangerous, low-paying jobs that can take them far from home, a sophisticated network of brokers and agents has emerged, regularly recruiting labourers from impoverished neighbouring countries, often through trickery and kidnapping.

Men - and sometimes children as young as 13 - are sold onto boats where they typically work 18-hour days with little food and often only boiled sea water to drink, enduring beatings and sometimes even death at the hands of their captains. Most are paid little or nothing. They can be trapped at sea for months or years at a time; transshipment vessels are routinely used to pick up catches and deliver supplies, the AP report said.

According to the 2014 Global Slavery Index (GSI), prepared by the Australian-based Walk Free Foundation, it was estimated that the number of people in modern slavery in Thailand is almost 500,000 while in Malaysia there are over 100,000 people in modern slavery.

According to the GSI, the \$7 billion Thai fishing industry has been under intense scrutiny with credible reports of young men and boys enduring brutal treatment that includes severe and frequent physical abuse and threats, excessive work hours, and long periods at sea.

Victims have reported witnessing captains physically abuse and murder workers or abandon those who fall overboard.

According to the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons (TiP) report 2014, Malaysia has failed to comply with the most basic international requirements to prevent trafficking and protect victims within its borders.

According to a UNHCR report, from June 2013 to June 2014 more than 53,000 people have fled by sea from the Bangladesh-Myan-

mar border region, an increase of 60% from the previous year.

"More than 20,000 boat people fled in the first six months of this year, headed towards the Malaysia-Thailand border or on to Indonesia and Australia."

An estimated 540 people reportedly died at sea in 2014 from beatings, starvation or dehydration, and their bodies thrown overboard.

Since the Malaysia-bound migrant seekers are struggling with poverty and unemployment opportunities in this country, they fall prey to the multi-million dollar fishing and plantation businesses in Thailand and Malaysia.

Earlier, Myanmar's Rohingya people were the primary victims, but now Bangladeshis are also falling into the trap of forced labour in Thailand and Malaysia.

According to a well-informed source, the Bangladeshi brokers are well down the food chain, enjoying only a small slice of the massive profits that are generated by this modern-day slave trade: "The masterminds actually make fools of our Bangladeshi brokers." ●



**'ASHRAF'S REMOVAL NOT PUNISHMENT'** PAGE 3**BIWTA SPECIAL SERVICE FROM JULY 14** PAGE 6**LAWRENCE OF ARABIA STAR OMAR SHARIF DIES** PAGE 32

## 25 killed in Zakat stampede

**Tribune Report**

At least 25 poor people, mostly elderly women and children, were killed and over 50 others injured in a stampede in Mymensingh town when they gathered before a factory to collect Zakat clothes.

The death toll may rise since condition of several injured people, undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, was stated to be critical.

Witnesses say the incident took place due to huge rush at the entrance of Nurani Jorda Factory after sehri around 5am. Twelve women died on the spot while the others succumbed to their injuries at the hospital, police say.

No police were deployed in the area centring the religious event, when the rich people distribute saris and other clothes among the poor.

Many Muslims also contribute money as Zakat - one of the five pillars of Islam - to the government's Zakat Fund. The Islamic Foundation collects Zakat money from across the country with the help of its staff and other government officials. It has a 13-member



**Relatives gather around the bodies of some of those who were killed in a stampede during the distribution of Zakat clothes in Mymensingh town yesterday** **AFP**

committee that oversees the collection and expenditure of the Zakat money.

Police filed a case over yesterday's incident and detained eight persons including the owner of the factory, Md Shamim Talukder,

65, his son Hedayet Talukder, 30, and factory Manager Iqbal Hossain, 35.

Law enforcers were deployed at the factory to control agitations by the relatives of the

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 2**

## Debutant Rabada shatters Tigers

**Mazhar Uddin**

Debutant paceman Kagiso Rabada bagged six wickets, including a hat-trick, to become the second bowler

in history to achieve the feat on debut as South Africa skilled out Bangladesh for 160 in 36.3 overs in the first of three one-day internationals at Sher-e-Bangla National stadium yesterday.

Tigers skipper Mashrafe bin Mortaza surprisingly opted to bat after heavy rain delayed the game for around two hours and forty minutes where the game was reduced to 40-overs per side. The visitors took full advantage of the conditions, courtesy of some brilliant bowling by pacer Rabada early on.

Middle-order batsman Mahmudullah and young leg-spinner Jubair Hossain returned to the playing XI as the Tigers think-tank decided to leave out Arafat Sunny, Anamul Haque and Rubel Hossain from the side.

And it was the worst possible start for the Bangladeshi batsmen as Tamim Iqbal became

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1**



## The traffickers of Teknaf

In the wake of the Asian boatpeople crisis, the Dhaka Tribune's Abid Azad travels down the migration routes along Bangladesh's jagged coast in search of answers. On the quayside alongside migrant smuggling boats he finds desperation and ambition in equal measure, and finds menacing eddies that portend far more trouble for the migrants than they bargained for. Beyond the horizon, in foreign waters, a vast network of human traffickers lies in wait. For Bangladeshis looking for a back door to a better life, a vast tide of greed and cruelty threatens to sweep away naïve hopes and whole communities with it. This is the sixth part of the Dhaka Tribune multi-part investigative report on human trafficking in Bangladesh



**The house of human trafficker and yaba smuggler Abul Kalam. In comparison to the locality, this under-construction house is considered a luxury home - one that can only be had with illegal money** **ABID AZAD**

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR TIMES - VI

**Abid Azad back from Cox's Bazar**

The Dhaka Tribune investigation has found that at least three tiers of local and international brokers are involved in the human trafficking business operating different legs of the journey from beginning to end.

The Dhaka Tribune has obtained a list of human traffickers prepared by the police, which identifies 230 top brokers around the country.

Of the local traffickers on the list, 210 are based in Cox's Bazar-Teknaf area: 133 are from Teknaf alone while 51 are from Cox's Bazar and 26 from Shah Porir Dwip. The rest are from other districts across the country.

The list names one Dil Mohammad, now

living in Myanmar, as one of the 11 international brokers on the list.

Another three - Anar Ali, Salim Ullah, and Md Suman - are in Malaysia.

The list also names a Malaysian woman, Manaking, who provides economic support to the traffickers from Thailand.

It has the names of 26 more persons who are identified as involved in illegal money transactions that facilitate the trafficking.

However, local inhabitants suggest that the list is incomplete as it does not include several persons who are beneficiaries as well as investors in human trafficking.

**The listed brokers**

When this reporter visited the houses of a few of these listed brokers most of them were not present.

Listed human trafficker Yunus from Koyainchhari para of Sabrang union was not home when this reporter dropped by.

**>> PAGE 2 COLUMN 1**



## Debutant Rabada

the first victim of Rabada when the left hander was totally outplayed and was bowled for a duck in the fourth ball of the fourth over.

The 20-year old then dismissed Liton Das (nought) and Mahmudullah (nought) off his next two deliveries to become the second bowler in history, after Bangladesh left arm spinner Taijul Islam, to pick up a hat-trick on debut.

The home side were reeling at 17/3 but opener Soumya Sarkar remained fluent at the other end as the left hander smashed some gorgeous strokes before he too perished after scoring a-run-a-ball 27.

However, the experienced duo of Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim held the ship for the Tigers, adding 53 runs for the fifth wicket before the latter was caught after scoring 24. And after the dismissal of Shakib, it was too little too late for the home side.

Nasir Hossain smashed some lusty blows at the end and scored 31 off 44 balls to help the Tigers past the 150-run mark. ●

## The traffickers of Teknaf

His brother Idris said that he did not know where his brother was. When asked what Yunus does for a living, Idris said: “I live in Chittagong. So, I do not know what he is doing.”

Later, this reporter visited the house of another listed trafficker named Amanullah nearby. He was also not at home and his parents also did not know anything.

A third listed trafficker, Javed Hossain’s home near the sea is luxurious although incomplete.

Javed was not at home during the visit, but his brother Imam Hossain said: “My brother is innocent. He has never been a human trafficker. Abul Kalam of Katabunia blames him due to enmity.”

All of the family members of the listed traffickers visited by the Dhaka Tribune denied the allegations against them and claimed innocence.

But they could not give any convincing answer as to how they had built such luxurious homes.

### Two brokers’ fight to prove innocence

As Imam Hossain, brother of listed trafficker Javed, said Abul Kalam accused his brother of trafficking due to previous enmity, this reporter also went to Kalam’s house at Katabunia.

But none of Kalam, his father Adul Rahman and elder brothers Kamal and Jamal, who are all listed traffickers, were in the house, an incomplete two-storey building.

The house is situated on a large piece of land with an open field in the front and a betel nut grove in the back just 400-500 yards from a canal that connects to the sea.

There is one small enclosed outhouse made with bamboo and two open bamboo structures on the compound.

A number of people claimed that the outhouses on the compound are used to keep people brought to be sent to Malaysia.

Locals claimed that Kalam used to keep at least 10 guards around the huge place and they were paid Tk500 each every day.

The canal, it was learned, is used as the starting point for taking people to the second tier brokers on anchored ships.

This reporter met there with Jamal’s wife and another woman who did not identify herself. They gave this reporter Kalam’s contact number.

During the conversation with Jamal’s wife, Kalam called this reporter and said: “My family members and I are not involved in human trafficking. We are innocent. Advocate [Mohammad] Alam has brought such allegations

## 25 killed in Zakat stampede

deceased, Assistant Superintendent of Police of Kotwali model police Md Abdur Rashid said. “We will take action against those responsible after investigation.”

OC Kamrul Islam said the bodies would be handed over to their relatives after post-mortem examinations.

Deputy Commissioner Mustakim Billa Faruqi and SP Mainul Huq visited the injured at the hospital and assured financial assistance.

The Police Headquarters and the district administration formed two separate committees to look into the matter. Committee members visited the spot in the afternoon.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the loss of lives in the stampede.

Sixteen of the deceased could be identified. They are Shamima Begum, 60, her daughter Sakhina, 35, and granddaughter Lamiya, 6, Sid-dique, 11, Anguri Begum, 45, Meghna Bosak, 40,

Khodeja Begum, 60, Fazila Begum, 75, Fatema Begum, 60, Nazma Begum, 50, Jahura Begum, 40, Hamida Begum, 45, Sufia Begum, 35, Rezia Begum, 55, Sudharani Sarkar, 55, and Rupali, 35.

The deceased and injured were residents of camps for homeless and the Bihari people, slums, and the nearby villages.

Witnesses said the factory owner have been distributing Zakat clothes among the deprived people every year for the last three decades. Yesterday, the main gate of the factory, located on Atul Chakrabarty Road of the town, was opened after sehri for the distribution.

Mentioning that the stampede occurred since the people waiting outside wanted to get in at once, the locals said the casualties would have been avoided had the factory authorities taken any step to ensure discipline during the distribution.

Talking to reporters at the police station, Shamim claimed that they had never wit-

nessed such rush and haphazard situation in the past, for which they did not inform the police beforehand.

The district administration and the Religious Affairs Ministry each announced to give Tk10,000 to the families of every deceased.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan said legal action would be taken against those responsible for the incident. Talking to UNB over the phone, he said those who want to distribute Zakat should inform the local administration beforehand.

Deaths in stampede also took place earlier centring distribution of Zakat clothes, and recently during the Astami Snan bathing ritual of the Hindus.

On March 27, at least 10 Hindu pilgrims were killed and 40 others injured when rumours of a collapsing bridge triggered a stampede on a Bailey bridge over the Old Brahmaputra River at Langalbandh in Narayanganj. ●



**This safehouse is in the backyard of Abul Kalam's compound, which is only 400-500 yards away from the sea. This is where victims are kept before being sent out to the awaiting ships** **ABID AZAD**

due to a long time enmity since 2005.

“He [Alam] has filed several police cases against us since then. And now he has enlisted our names in the traffickers’ list as he has good connections with the local representatives and law enforcement.

“He even sent a BGB member to our house, who drove away my labourers and threatened

them not to work on my house.”

Advocate Alam later contacted this reporter over phone and said: “Kalam’s allegations are due to previous enmity. He is one of the biggest traffickers in this area.”

### A deadly matter

While investigating in Teknaf for a month,

## The unlisted brokers

**Abid Azad** back from Teknaf

When this reporter went to Katabunia village, which is one of the areas widely accused as human traffickers’ sanctuaries and safe points for starting voyage, and searched for one unlisted Moulavi Monir the local people of the area denied any knowledge of him.

The next day, however, Moulavi Monir stopped this reporter at Noapara Bazar in Sabrang and asked how he had got permission to search for him.

Later, Monir started threatening this reporter in the name of local journalist Javed Iqbal, police, DGFI, and NSI members.

“My neighbours told me that you were looking for me as if I am a human trafficker. How would you know that? Do you know Javed? I have also informed the police, DGFI and NSI about you, that why you are searching for those people,” Monir said.

Monir denied the allegations against him and said he has enmity with Teknaf union Chairman Nurul Alam, so Alam may have brought the allegations.

It was learned during the investigation that Monir, who does not seem to have any mentionable income source, had built a luxurious house in the coastal area. He allegedly asked and collected token money from human traffickers and yaba businessmen in the name of donations to mosques and madrasas in the area.

“If anyone refused to donate money, he threatened them since he has good relations with the police and other local and law enforcement representatives,” said Mohammad Alam, an inhabitant of Katabunia, who is also an advocate in the High Court.

But Monir argued: “I am an innocent person. I studied and worked in a madrasa – how can I be involved in such a sinful crime?”

this reporter learned that there is a possibility for dead bodies of Malaysia-bound people to be found in Sabrang area as brokers here also torture trafficking victims.

On May 4, the Thai authorities discovered at least 32 mass graves of people believed to have been trafficked.

On May 25, Malaysia also found 139 graves, and signs of torture, in more than two dozen squalid human trafficking camps suspected to have been used by gangs smuggling migrants across the border with Thailand.

Human rights activist Nur Khan thinks after Thailand and Malaysia, it will not be surprising if such graves are found in Teknaf too.

“Since Bangladesh is the starting point for the deadly voyage to Malaysia, there should not be such mass graves in our country. But there are still possibilities since we have learned about kidnapping and torture in both Teknaf and Moheshkhali,” Nur told the Dhaka Tribune.

Several locals allege that there have been instances of killings in at least one of the listed broker’s compounds and it is also believed that there are dead bodies buried on the same grounds.

Advocate Alam claimed: “These people are big traffickers ... They even once tried to kill me with gunshots in broad daylight.” ●

Another unlisted accused named Mohammad Sharif in Deil Para reacted similarly.

He demanded this reporter talk to a Juba League leader in Cox’s Bazar over phone who asked the same question: How did this reporter get permission to conduct such investigation?

Sharif then called the BGB company commander at Shah Porir Dwip.

As the loud-speaker option on Sharif’s phone was on, the BGB member was heard asking: “What language does he [indicating this reporter] speak? How did he get permission to investigate in this area? If anyone wants to work here, he must take permission from the BGB.”

The BGB member refused to talk to this reporter and rather suggested that Sharif talk to the BGB CO about him.

Sharif later told the Dhaka Tribune that he was one of the biggest cattle businessmen in the area. ●



HAWKERS PAY TK9.3CR  
EXTORTION EACH DAY **PAGE 3**

BGMEA TO QUIT  
ALLIANCE **PAGE 15**

16% BANGLADESHIS GRADUATE  
TO LOW INCOME GROUP **PAGE 32**

## A security crisis in the making?

In the wake of the Asian boatpeople crisis, the Dhaka Tribune's Abid Azad travels down the migration routes along Bangladesh's jagged coast in search of answers. On the quayside alongside migrant smuggling boats he finds desperation and ambition in equal measure, and finds menacing eddies that portend far more trouble for the migrants than they bargained for. Beyond the horizon, in foreign waters, a vast network of human traffickers lies in wait. For Bangladeshis looking for a back door to a better life, a vast tide of greed and cruelty threatens to sweep away naïve hopes and whole communities with it. This is the seventh part of the Dhaka Tribune multi-part investigative report on human trafficking in Bangladesh

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR TIMES - VII

Abid Azad back from Cox's Bazar

Teknaf, the south-eastern-most tip of Bangladesh, has become a major criminal hub and safe haven out of which national and transnational criminal gangs freely operate.

Until a few years ago, Teknaf was notorious for its connection to illegal drug smuggling, mainly of yaba tablets produced across the border in Myanmar; now human trafficking has become the big money game in town.

As a result, Teknaf, located roughly 100km down the coast from Cox's Bazar, has become the epicentre of organised crime in Bangladesh.

Myanmar shares a 271km border with Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts, of which 54km of frontier lies in Teknaf upazila alone.

The nearly 271km border between Bangladesh and Myanmar is divided into two parts - a 64km zero line boundary on the Naf River and a 208km land boundary.



The boatpeople situation in May has given rise to the big question: uncurbed, could this human smuggling/trafficking racket soon morph into a national security crisis? **AFP**

According to inhabitants of the area, local representatives, human rights activists and NGO workers, law enforcement does virtually nothing and criminals operate with impunity in Teknaf and the whole Cox's Bazar area.

#### Impact on human security

Former election commissioner Brig Gen (retired) Sakhawat Hussain said: "Definitely the human trafficking issue in Teknaf is a threat to

>>> **PAGE 2 COLUMN 1**

## Tigers eye an end to Proteas juggernaut

Mazhar Uddin



Visiting South Africa will be looking to seal the series and continue their unbeaten run in the tour when they take on Bangladesh in the second and penultimate ODI at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today and as far as the hosts are concerned, they will be eager to correct their mistakes and make a comeback after losing the first match.

Despite brilliant displays in their previous two home series, the Tigers are yet to find their footing against the Proteas. The home side were unable to put up any sort of fight and in spite of their decision to play eight batsmen in the first ODI, the Tigers were shot out for 160 in the 40-over affair. The Proteas encountered no problems chasing down the target with Francois du Plessis smashing an unbeaten half-century.

However, it was debutant paceman Kagiso Rabada who stole the show last Friday, bagging six wickets, including a hat-trick and three maidens. The Tigers therefore, will be looking to nullify Rabada's threat by any means possible.

It was learned that the Bangladesh think-tank are mulling selecting left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny or paceman Rubel Hossain in the starting XI as they want to head into today's match with an extra bowler.

However, it is Bangladesh's batting which is the main area of concern.

>>> **PAGE 2 COLUMN 3**

## Sceptical Khaleda trusts no senior leaders

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia cannot bank on his senior colleagues making important decisions as she believes those leaders are acting as agents for the government.

Khaleda Zia strongly believes that her senior party colleagues pass party information on to the government, said party insiders.

The former premier is so sceptical about those senior leaders that she is taking advice from pro-BNP intellectuals on important issues especially when she devises any strategy.

A party leaders close to Khaleda Zia said her scepticism is so strong that she, in almost all cases, makes decisions alone especially af-

ter the two-month-long abortive violent protest across the country.

She is so perturbed that she even refused to hold any standing committee meeting, the highest policy-making body of the party, after backtracking from the movement.

A senior leader seeking anonymity told the Dhaka Tribune that Khaleda Zia did not disclose to any of her party colleagues about her recent one-to-one meeting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He also said she alone finalised the delegates and did not listen to anyone and disclosed it just a few hours before she set off for meeting Modi.

>>> **PAGE 2 COLUMN 1**

## BSF killing spree continues

Tribune Report

Members of the Indian Border Security Force killed a Bangladeshi cattle trader and injured two others early yesterday.

Deceased Mukul Hossain, 35, from Satkhira sadar went to India's Dubli area along with his accomplices on Friday night. A BSF patrol team from Kholisha camp opened fire at them as they wanted to enter Bangladesh territory illegally early yesterday.

Bullet injured Mukul fell into a jute field while others fled the scene. They later recovered Mukul upon getting his phone call. He died while being taken back to Bangladesh, reports our Satkhira correspondent.

Chairman of sadar upazila's Kushkhali union Abu Raihan said he had heard about the death of Mukul but could not say anything about the corpse.

Deputy Commander of BGB 38 Battalion Maj Mozammel said they were gathering details on the matter. He says they carry out awareness campaigns in the border area asking people not to go to India to bring cattle.

"We have nothing to do when they get killed for crossing the border illegally," Maj Mozammel told reporters.

On June 6, the BGB personnel recovered the body of a cattle trader from the Ichhamoti River, who was allegedly tortured to death by the BSF men.

The deceased was Rubel Hossain, a resident of Haroddoha village of sadar upazila. He and his accomplice Kawser Ali were caught by the BSF personnel while returning to Bangladesh.

Ashadul, another accomplice who managed to flee, alleged that the BSF members

>>> **PAGE 2 COLUMN 4**

## PM hosts iftar for family, relatives

UNB

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday hosted an iftar party for her family members and relatives at her official residence Ganobhaban.

The Prime Minister went round different tables set for the guests, exchanged pleasantries with them and enquired about their wellbeing.

Before the iftar, a special munajat was offered seeking continued peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

Prayers were also offered seeking eternal

peace of the departed souls of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib and other martyrs of the August 15 massacre, martyrs of the War of Liberation and the heroes of all democratic movements.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Engineer Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain, Awami League Advisory Council Member Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, AL Organising Secretary AFM Baha-uddin Nasim, MP, Imran Ahmed, MP, Sheikh Helal Uddin, MP, and Sheikh Fazley Noor Taposh, among others, attended the iftar party. ●

## BNP demands UN probe into subversive acts during its movement

UNB

BNP yesterday demanded an international probe under the UN's supervision into the subversive acts carried out during the blockade and hartal enforced by the BNP-led 20-party alliance in the first three months of this year to identify the real perpetrators.

Giving his party's reaction to the Prime Minister's remark that a tribunal to be formed to try Khaleda Zia for indulging in subversive acts, BNP spokesman Asaduzzaman Ripon

came up with the demand at a press briefing at the party's Nayapaltan central office.

He said: "We've long been demanding an international investigation into the allegations raised by the Prime Minister and her government regarding the violence. We're renewing our demand following the Prime Minister's recent comment on it."

Justifying their demand, Ripon said: "The government is blaming BNP and Khaleda Zia for the supervise acts while we're claiming BNP did not do it and we have no connection with it." ●

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Sceptical Khaleda trusts no senior leaders

Another senior leader said the party had a plan to enforce a three-day shut-down when Khaleda Zia was prevented from coming out of her office but she declared the non-stop blockade programme.

"We do not know who she had talked to before announcing the programme, he told the Dhaka Tribune.

About throwing its weight behind the Hafazat rally, he said, the BNP did not make the decision in the party forum.

In last December at a standing committee meeting Goyeshwar Chandra Roy told Khaleda that there were many agents inside the party.

"There are many leaders within the party who earned huge money when we were in power. But those leaders have never been seen in the movement."

Those leaders have had no liaison with

party activists. Those leaders are basically government's agents lurking in the party just to save their property, said Goyeshwar.

As Khaleda can not put her faith in senior leaders, she is now taking advice from pro-BNP intellectuals and important decisions are taken without any consultation with standing committee members.

A senior leader in exchange for anonymity said mistrust had not grown in a day or two.

"On December 29 when Khaleda called the March for Democracy none of the senior and even mid-ranking leaders was seen on the street. After that those who assured that they would lead the movement were even out of reach over phone. Basically they went into hiding leaving Madam alone."

A standing committee member said many leaders from top to the grass-roots have a

strong hunch that there are many government agents inside the party and a few of them always accompany Khaleda Zia.

"On January 3, there was a plan that Khaleda will take position in Nayapaltan office and that was highly confidential but that news was leaked out too leading to Khaleda's confinement to the office..

Mistrust, doubt and suspicion have gripped the party so much so that no one believes anybody.

When a leader is arrested others think that the imprisonment is a result of a secret deal with the government and similarly when someone is freed from jail others term it a negotiation.

A few days ago Khaleda held a meeting with senior leaders but did not say anything rather told off the senior leaders for their anti-party comments. ●

## BSF killing spree

had tortured Rubel to death and threw him in the river.

Meanwhile, two Bangladeshi cattle traders from Moheshpur of Jhenidah were shot and wounded by the BSF members early yesterday. They are Abdur Rashid and Tariqul of Anantapur village of the upazila, reports UNB.

A patrol team of BSF's Fatehpur camp opened fire on the cattle traders when they were returning home, leaving duo bullet injured. Family sources said Tariqul managed to flee but the BSF men had caught Rashid. He is undergoing treatment at a hospital in India.

Rostom Ali, company commander BGB Kushumpur, said: "The incident occurred in Indian territory. We have sent a letter to the BSF for a flag meeting but are yet to get any response."

At least 20 people were killed while 42 abducted and 29 injured in BSF attacks between January and May this year, according to rights body Ain O Salish Kendra, prepared based on reported news reports.

Early Thursday, another Bangladeshi young man was shot to death by the BSF members on Lohakuchi border of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat. The deceased was Abu Sayem Hossain Jammu,35, a resident of Talukdulali village of the upazila.

BGB and local sources said a team of BSF troops from West Chamta camp in Cooch Behar opened fire on a group of cattle traders, including Sayem.

On June 25, a cattle trader was killed while another injured when members of the Indian BSF fired rubber bullets and hurled hand bombs at them near Porsha border in Naogaon.

Zahurul Islam, 32, and Bokul Hossain, 30, were injured in the sudden attack and brought back to Bangladesh by the other traders. Zahurul died on his way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The Indian BSF has been killing Bangladesh nationals every now and then along the border - be it a farmer working at his field or traders bringing cattle from India. They are also accused of kidnapping, torturing and attacking bordering villages in the name of chasing criminals.

However, reports say many wanted Bangladeshi criminals, militants, gold and drug smugglers have crossed the border without any hindrance.

Since 2010, the Indian authorities have been saying that they would use non-lethal weapons but it has never been materialised. Despite making such pledges, the BSF high-ups defend shooting at Bangladeshi people by saying that they open fire for self-defence only. ●

## A security crisis in the making?

our national security. Now the whole picture of Teknaf has been revealed by this issue."

"Human trafficking has now become a big issue. But the drug business also flourishes there and there are huge possibilities for arms dealing through the Teknaf area, since all of these types of crime are connected with each other," he said.

He further said: "Bangladesh's national security is facing a crisis. We have already seen that Myanmar's Border Guard Police (BGP) are attacking our Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel. They have even abducted our soldiers."

"But the government does not seem to be as concerned about this matter as they should be. At the same time, law enforcement agencies do not arrest the culprits who have been exposed in the media," he added.

"Rohingyas are now becoming another problem. They are illegally getting passports, too. Although a large number of them are going to Malaysia on this route, they are being branded Bangladeshi. So, all in all, Bangladesh is going to face several different kinds of problems," he told the Dhaka Tribune.

According to human rights activist Nur Khan: "A large amount of money has been illegally sent abroad due to human trafficking, illegal migration, drug smuggling, and the hundi business."

Smuggling drugs into Bangladesh through this region has long been a serious problem, he told the Dhaka Tribune.

"If this continues, it will not be long before we see this sea route as a conduit for arms trafficking and the arms business," he added.

"Earlier, people in our country were mostly

involved in criminal activities inside the country. Now, human trafficking has allowed them to develop a well-organised transnational connection beyond the country's borders. Although they are still at the bottom of the ladder, people smuggling and human trafficking have inducted them into the world of transnational crime," Khan told the Dhaka Tribune.

Bangladeshi brokers mostly work to recruit Malaysia-bound fortune-seekers from all over the country. They get paid according to the number of migrants they can get on board a boat or a ship, allowing them to earn a huge amount of money.

But this is barely a drop in the bucket in comparison with the total ransom amount collected by brokers in Thailand or Malaysia.

Somewhere between Bangladesh and Malaysia, the business plan transforms from people smuggling into human trafficking - and, for some victims whose families fail to pay the ransom, descends into a kind of forced labour that is slavery in all but name.

The entire process is thus conducted by brokers from Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia.

The Dhaka Tribune has learned that Myanmar's Sittwe area, locally known to both traffickers and migrants as "Shita Pahar," is controlled by brokers and gangs from Myanmar, while the main business is mostly controlled by brokers in Thailand.

Whereas a Bangladeshi broker may earn at most Tk20,000 for each voyager, a broker in Thailand or Malaysia can earn as much as Tk180,000 for each one.

Bangladesh thus loses both potential human resources and, at the same time, a huge amount of money which ends up in the pock-

ets of brokers in other countries.

Bangladeshis are caged, tortured and ransomed by foreign traffickers while the reach of foreign criminal organisations and their local associates grow stronger and more wealthy on its borders.

It is not inconceivable that future inroads of transnational crime into Bangladesh may be financed by the very ransom payments now being paid out to secure the release of Bangladeshi citizens from human traffickers in South-East Asia. ●

## Tigers eye an end to Proteas juggernaut

Elegant opener Soumya Sarkar needs to convert his starts into big ones while the veteran trio of Tamim Iqbal, Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur Rahim will be desperate to return among the runs after sorry outings in the series so far.

The home side will once again rely upon their most experienced cricketer, Shakib al Hasan, to lead the side from the front.

South Africa on the other hand will be looking to maintain their dominance over the opposition. The bowling department has fared well throughout the tour so more of the same will be expected from the likes of Rabada, Imran Tahir and Kyle Abbott.

The pitch is likely to remain the same today with some assistance for the pacemen early on while light showers are expected throughout the day.

The match will begin at 3pm and GTV and Star Sports 2 will telecast the game live. ●



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# Who shelters human traffickers?

In the wake of the Asian boatpeople crisis, the Dhaka Tribune's Abid Azad travels down the migration routes along Bangladesh's jagged coast in search of answers. On the quayside alongside migrant smuggling boats he finds desperation and ambition in equal measure, and finds menacing eddies that portend far more trouble for the migrants than they bargained for. Beyond the horizon, in foreign waters, a vast network of human traffickers lies in wait. For Bangladeshis looking for a back door to a better life, a vast tide of greed and cruelty threatens to sweep away naïve hopes and whole communities with it. This is the last tranche of the multi-part investigative report on human trafficking in Bangladesh. Watch out for a series of four case studies starting tomorrow

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR TIMES - VIII

Abid Azad back from Cox's Bazar

Since 1996, human smugglers and traffickers have thrived in Teknaf and, supported by massive profits, have built up a recruitment network throughout the country.

According to local inhabitants and officials, the trafficking business could not have developed without four key persons in the Teknaf area: the local MP, UP chairman, upazila chairman, and panel mayor of the municipality.

Allegations of these powerful individuals' links to organised crime are an open secret in Teknaf.

A Bangla national daily newspaper reported that MP Abdur Rahman Bodi topped a police and intelligence agency list of players of the three top criminal activities in Teknaf - human trafficking, yaba smuggling, and illegally naturalising Rohingya immigrants, as well as illegal hundi business.

He was listed along with 26 of his relatives.

In Teknaf, there are two factions of the Awami League - one is pro-MP Bodi and the other anti-Bodi.

The anti-Bodi faction is led by union parishad Chairman Nurul Alam, recently selected as Teknaf Jubo League president.

A follower of former AL MP Mohammad Ali, Nurul has built up his own group to carry out his political activities, and to fight against Bodi and his supporters.

On the other hand, Bodi and upazila Chairman Jafar are on the same side.

Police and BGB officials are wary of going on record about political patronage for human traffickers, saying they fear reprisals from high levels of the government.

The Dhaka Tribune has learned that local representatives have benefited from the illegal trade. Some have invested financially in human smuggling and trafficking operations.

Traffickers and people smuggling brokers provide manpower and funding for election campaigns, it was learned.

Sources said MP Bodi had asked local representatives to raise funds for him to be able to make large donations to the poor.

"But think about it ... Where does Bodi get all this money from and how do all of his followers raise so much money for him?" asked



These are some victims of human trafficking rescued recently at the sea and kept in a government office in Teknaf of Cox's Bazar

ABID AZAD

a BGB official.

A local union parishad member in Teknaf, on condition of anonymity, said: "If we name traffickers, we will face tremendous pressure. They are very wealthy. Even if they are caught, it will not take much time to secure bail."

The Teknaf economy largely depends on human trafficking, the yaba trade, illegal naturalisation of the Rohingyas and other illegal activities, locals said.

But in Teknaf, police and local representatives are wary of publishing a formal list of suspects of everyone - from top to bottom - believed to be involved in human trafficking or the yaba business.

Human rights activists have called for a probe into the income and assets, over the last decade, held by MP Bodi and other Teknaf members of parliament, chairmen, law enforcement personnel and locally powerful persons.

They also asked: where does all this illegal money go?

Although both law enforcement and local elected officials have been implicated in organised crime by Teknaf inhabitants, no local

representative or law enforcement official has so far been brought before the law.

Yet it is widely believed that human trafficking could not take place without the complicity of government officials.

On May 26, the Dhaka Tribune reported that a recent intelligence report submitted to the Prime Minister's Office said that because of the direct involvement of law enforcement agencies with these rackets, investigations into these cases see little or no progress.

A separate report was also submitted to the Home Ministry recommending action against 24 police officials.

The report said only 688 cases out of 2,501 cases filed since 2004 over incidents of human trafficking have been disposed of, according to the Police Headquarters monitoring cell.

Since the trafficking business took off in 1996, no accurate data has been compiled on how many people have attempted to migrate, how many have died, or how many have gone missing.

According to a report by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), be-

tween June 2013 and June 2014 more than 53,000 people fled by sea from the Bangladesh-Myanmar border region.

Executive Director Abul Kashem of the NGO HELP Cox's Bazar, who has worked on anti-trafficking issues since 2011, said: "Often, officials are not aware about what trafficking is. They evade the issue saying that people go to Malaysia of their own accord."

Kashem says: "Traffickers carry out their activities under the shelter of protection provided by their patrons."

But several chairmen in Teknaf denied involvement in human trafficking. One even denied it was a problem there.

Teknaf upazila Chairman Jafar Ahmed claimed: "There is no human trafficking in the Teknaf area."

He said: "The Myanmar government provides opportunities for Rohingyas to go to Malaysia by sea. Some Bangladeshis go with them. But now everybody is exaggerating about it."

"I had no idea that one could make such a huge amount of money from human trafficking. I just came to know about it from the media." ●

## A lure too good to be true

Abid Azad

Nirmol Tonchonga, a 20-year-old day labourer from Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar, had no idea what fate had in store for him when he decided to try his luck as an illegal migrant in Malaysia.

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Along with hundreds of illegal migration seekers who were also looking to earn enough in Malaysia for a better living back home, Nirmol wants to forget how he spent those one and a half years of his life.

For days, he was stacked like caged animals and ate just once a day in the belly of a human trafficking ship and endured inhuman torture in Thai forest camps.

Ironically, he never made it to Malaysia, and when he finally returned to his Cox's Bazar home, he was less of a human being. Non-stop torture in the Thai forest camps left him with a crippled leg and a traumatised mind.

"I never imagined that I would have to stay two and a half months in a camp in Thailand, get to eat and drink only twice a day and spend 10 excruciatingly long months in jail in a foreign country," Nirmol said while talking to this correspondent at his uncle's homestead in Ukhiya.



As a day labourer, he earned Tk250 a day. On days nobody hired him, he had no income.



“Juhur Ahamed, a local businessman, told me that I could earn more if I went to Malaysia. Jhum cultivation was not an option anymore. So, that seemed the only way we could change our fate. So, I decided to give in to the lure,” Nirmol said.

Juhur told Nirmol it would take only Tk2.5 lakh and he would be walking on Malaysian soil within seven days.

### **The voyage**

Juhur sent Nirmol and his friend Uthiya Fu to a safe house at Shah Porir Dwip in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar where they, along with two other men, spent the night.

The next day, a man named Ismail in his 40s, took the four of them to the edge of the Bay where another 250 people were waiting to embark a small ship. They were told that the ship would reach Malaysia in just seven days.

“We took enough food and water to survive seven days. But none of us took any extra attires. In two days, my water exhausted,” Nirmol said.

They were kept in the belly of the ship. There was no window, only a small door. The place was so suffocating that Nirmol had a constant headache. They were allowed to come on to the top deck only after sunset.

By the fifth day, all of them ran out of their food reserves. A team of five to six people, including the boatmen, was in charge of the boat. They gave the victims rice and mashed potato once a day. They would be beaten up mercilessly for wanting more.

### **Life in the Thai camp**

It took them 14 days to reach Thailand. Nirmol thought they had reached Malaysia but soon realised the truth. They were taken to a camp in a deep forest.

For two and a half months, they lived in small tents, each of which accommodated 12-15 people, and were given food and water twice a day.

“Around 10 to 12 people kept a close watch on us. Six of them were Thai I guess. The rest were either Bangladeshis or Rohingyas. They looked the same but spoke different languages.”

Nirmol saw three people die of illness and starvation at the camp. The corpses were taken deeper into the jungle.

After about a month, the traffickers told Nirmol to call his brother Mangal and ask for a Tk2.5 lakh ransom.

Mangal told this reporter: “We arranged Tk2.5 lakh by selling our land and homestead and gave it to Juhur. But whenever we asked him when we would get Nirmol back, Juhur told us to wait.”

In the meantime, Nirmol had fell severely ill and one day he got unconscious.

“When I came to, I found myself in a jail. But there was nobody I knew. I did not know the language either. After staying there for 10 months, I was taken to a hospital where I got treatment and finally started moving my legs. All this time, I was crippled.”

Nirmol finally came back to Bangladesh on September 9, 2014, with help from the International Organisation for Migration.

***Human Trafficking In Our Times-VIII: [Who shelters human traffickers?](#)***

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## Back in one piece from neverland

Abid Azad



Trafficking victim Raihan, who returned from Malaysia recently, poses for a photograph inside a fishing boat - the same kind used for shipping them off

Photo- ABID AZAD

There have been numerous reports on how Bangladeshi victims have escaped the captivity of human traffickers or how they have been rescued by law enforcers or rights bodies.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

But there are also instances, though rare, of traffickers returning people alive upon payment of certain amounts of ransom.

Before becoming a victim of human trafficking, the story of Md Raihan, an 18-year-old lad from Cox's Bazar, was pretty much the same as any other who fell into the lure of a "neverland" called Malaysia.

Raihan's inspiration was his cousin Nazrul, who went to Malaysia illegally and changed the fate of his family by sending money back home.

He could not have set out on the perilous journey just like that. Inevitably, he fell into the trap laid by a broker named Hamid.

Many brokers would take lakhs of taka from illegal migration seekers before sending them off. There are also brokers, like Hamid, who would tempt simpletons, like Raihan, by telling them that they would have to pay only after they start earning in Malaysia.

"So, we [Raihan and his 20-year-old cousin Shamsu] decided to follow Nazrul's suit. We did not tell our families that we were going to Malaysia. One night, when everyone fell asleep, we sneaked out and went to a quiet village in the remote island of Moheshkhali which was surrounded by a jungle," said Raihan while talking to this reporter in a house in the Cox's Bazar town recently.

As soon as they had arrived at the village around 9pm, they were captured and locked inside an earthen cottage with a thatched roof. There were 28 more people inside that cottage and they were kept under constant watch by armed guards.

"The gang had female members too. But they were mostly cooks."

There were many more such cottages in the village and they are all used for the same purpose.

Around one in the morning, they were taken to a fishing boat and stacked inside a cold storage used for keeping fish. A total of 10 men, all armed, were in charge of the boat.

After two days and one night, the boat reached Shita Pahar and they were shifted to a cargo boat, where 300 more people were held hostage at gunpoint.

The traffickers tied a black ribbon to the wrists of Raihan and some others. There were also people with green, red and blue ribbons. He does not know what the different colours stand for.

### **From Bangladesh to Thailand**

They were kept at Shita Pahar for 20 days and every day more people were brought in. Finally, when the number climbed to 600, they decided to move. Around a hundred were women and 15-20 were children, all from Myanmar.



“One day, suddenly the traffickers started stuffing us back inside the fish storage because a team of the Myanmar Navy was approaching. After four hours of negotiation, the traffickers reached a Tk15 lakh deal with the navy guys. Two days later, we started for Malaysia.”

Six days and six nights later, they arrived at the edge of a jungle in Thailand. Small fishing boats took them from the cargo boat, 20 at a time, and dropped them in the middle of a shallow river. They had to walk through throat-high water to reach land.

In the evening, they were stuffed inside small black covered vans, 20 at a time again. There was no room to move and they were not allowed to make any noises.

The vans travelled for 12 hours in the dark. Sometimes police would stop them on the way and the drivers would say they were carrying fish.

“Finally, we reached a hilly area around dawn. Then we had to walk eight hours to reach the top of the hill, which was much taller than any hills in Bangladesh. It was the rainy season and walking all the way to the hilltop was a difficult task. Many slipped and got injured.

“All this time, we were given very little food and water. Whenever we cried of hunger and thirst, we were beaten mercilessly.”

### **Buying and selling**

The hostages were divided into two groups – one who could meet their ransom demand and others who could not.

“There are separate buyers for the women. They never buy any man. These buyers sell the women to brokers.”

They set a Tk1.8 lakh ransom for each of the hostages, who were expected to ask their relatives back home to arrange the money and pay it to the agents of these traffickers. They would beat those up mercilessly whose families could not arrange the money within three days.

Three days later, Raihan and his cousin Shamsu were sold to a man named Hazi for 6,000 Malaysian ringgit (Tk1.22 lakh) each. Some were sold for as little as 2,000-3,000 ringgit.

“I saw that at least 30 people were killed and buried at the hilltop.”

Hazi took the 25 of them to a place on the Malaysian border. They walked from 5pm to 5am to reach that place.

### **From Malaysia to Bangladesh**

Finally, they were stuffed in three small black sedan cars, seven in each, and taken across the border into a house inside the Malaysian territory.

“I did not know after how many days we got to take a bath. They gave us food but took away all our belongings and gave us half-pants to put on. Then they called us one by one and asked whether our families had arranged the ransom.

“They learned that the family of one of the victims, Russel, had managed the money and deposited it into an account of the Sonali Bank in Bangladesh. But a little later they talked to someone over phone in Bangladesh and learned that their agents had not got the money. Right away, one of them hit Russel hard in the head. He started bleeding profusely and soon fell unconscious.”

Raihan telephoned his family but he was told that they would need a few more days to arrange the money. That meant more torture.

Finally, three days later, his family arranged Tk3.6 lakh for him and his cousin and they were released. Then they went to their cousin Nazrul's place.

A few days later, Raihan contacted a man named Hossain, who he knew was the main broker. Raihan then managed a job and saved 2,000 Malaysian ringgit to finally come back home.

He met another Bangladeshi broker in Malaysia and that man eventually made the arrangements for Raihan's homecoming.

**Case Study I: *A lure too good to be true***

**Human Trafficking In Our Times-VIII: *Who shelters human traffickers?***

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## Runaway teens now spurn Dhaka and go to Malaysia

Abid Azad

A year ago, 16-year-old eighth grader Mohiuddin from Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar reached a conclusion that he did not have the preparation to sit in the Junior School Certificate examination.

Instead, he decided to try his luck in Malaysia, by going there illegally, like some people in locality.

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mohiuddin soon found some other teenagers from the school and a few cousins who also had similar plans; and they made a big plan to set off

for the voyage.

Mohiuddin's classmate Jamal knew a broker named Manjur, a resident of the neighbouring Ramu upazila who works for a gang that sends people to Malaysia. Manjur's reporting boss was another man named Salamatullah.

One day, the five teenagers bunked school and met Manjur secretly.

"Manjur told us that we did not have to pay him right away. It was okay with him if we paid him after going to Malaysia. He also told us that he would arrange a trip on a ship for us," Mohiuddin said when this reporter met him recently.

"We were so happy that we started daydreaming about what we were going to do with all the money that we were going to earn in Malaysia. We wanted to build big houses and expensive cars!"

One evening, the five boys sneaked out and came to the Sonapara bridge near the Bay of Bengal with Manjur.



They were all set and waiting with excitement to get on board a ship and set off for Malaysia, with very little idea that they might eventually be abducted to remote jungle camps in Thailand and tortured there.

However, Mohiuddin's father Md Islam, who was in the same area at that time, spoiled the show. Some people in the area saw Mohiuddin and informed his father.

Islam rushed to the bridge, got hold of his son and his companions, but Manjur fled the scene.

All this happened about a year ago. But it was not until March 3 this year that Mohiuddin realised how fortunate they were to have not boarded that ship. He came to know that one of his schoolmates, who went on the same voyage with help from a different broker, had been missing for months.

The broker

The missing boy from Mohiuddin's school is Monjur Alam, a seventh grader and resident of West Holudia in Ukhiya. Monjur was lured by a broker named Bashir, who ran an electronic gadgets repairing shop in Morichcha Bazar.

Monjur's father Ilias told this reporter: "One day, Monjur did not come home from school. Later I came to know that he sneaked out of school at tiffin break. Then I heard about Bashir and sought help from the local union council member and chairman but they did not help me.

"A month after my son went missing, I got a phone call from a man. He demanded Tk18,000 for returning my son. I obliged and paid the money to a woman in a burqa near the Teknaf branch of Islami Bank. But there was no news of my son."

A few days later, Ilias caught Bashir with help from some local people and took him to the local union council chairman. But a union council member vouched for Bashir and the chairman released him. Immediately, Bashir fled the area.

"Then I went to the Ukhiya police station but they did not take any human trafficking cases. Instead, they told me look for my son more seriously."

Bashir was popular among teenagers in the area. The boys used to "load" songs in their mobile phone memory cards from his shop. They trusted Bashir and believed in the stories he told about the beautiful life in Malaysia.

According to a number of teachers, students and guardians of the Morichcha Palong High School, Bashir has so far handed over 25-30 teenagers to human traffickers.

Assistant Headmaster Nazrul Islam said: “There was a time when teenagers ran away to Dhaka. Now, they want to go abroad. This cannot be good for the future of our nation.”

*Case Study II: [Back in one piece from neverland](#)*

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## Where have all the missing people gone?

Abid Azad

On one night nearly three years ago, Yusuf went to the Dargar Chhora ghat in the Bay with his elder brother Yunus, who was about to embark a ship headed for Malaysia seeking migration illegally.

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Yusuf, who could see the risks, did not quite support his brother but could not stop him either because he was the younger of the two.

“It was around 3am when he [Yunus] boarded a small fishing boat and set off on an uncertain journey. I had no idea that it was going to be the last time I was seeing my brother. We have not heard from him since, nor do we know his whereabouts,” Yusuf said while talking to this correspondent recently.

“He hugged me and told me to take care of our parents and not to worry. I begged him not to go, but he did not listen to me,” Yusuf recollected the last memories with his brother.

A resident of Lengur Beel village of Sadar union in Teknaf upazila, Yunus left behind his wife and two daughters. He was not the only one from the locality to have embarked on that perilous journey.



This reporter has found that at least 57 others from the area set off for Malaysia on that night; and nobody knows anything about any of them.

Yusuf, the only witness, said: “There were three brokers – Mahmud Ali from Mitha Panir Chhora, Jiabul from Dargah Chhora, and Ezahar Mia from Jaliya Para. They passed on my brother and other to three other people whom I did not know.”

Talking to the families of some of those missing victims, this reporter came to know about a person named Moulavi Nazir, who was said to be the local ring leader of human smugglers.

Mahmud, Jiabul and Ezahar used to work for Nazir who lived in Jaliya Para but in now in Malaysia.

The unusual thing about all these people going missing is that none of their families have ever got any call for ransom.

Yusuf said: “We learned from sources that the smugglers will ask for ransom when the migrants reach Thailand. So, we arranged a large amount of money. We are still waiting but nobody has called in these two and a half years.”

Nurul Haq, father of a 14-year-old missing victim named Abdullah, told this correspondent that he had paid broker Jiabul Tk68,000.

“Jiabul first asked for Tk68,000 and said he would take my son to Malaysia if I gave him the money. I gave him the amount. A few days later, he demanded another Tk70,000. I could not pay that. Around 20-25 days later, he went to Malaysia and never came back. The two other brokers also do not live in this area anymore,” Nurul said.

The families of some of the victims filed two cases with the Moheshkhali police station in May this year. Police arrested three people in connection with the cases but there is still no news of the people who went missing on that night.

**Case Study III: *Runaway teens now spurn Dhaka and go to Malaysia***

**Case Study II: *Back in one piece from neverland***

**Case Study I: *A lure too good to be true***



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