



Nurul Islam, a street hawker, left, sells plastic products to a man in the capital's Moghbazar area yesterday. Nurul used to be a microbus driver, but he lost his job after suffering a stroke three years ago. As he was struggling to run his family of five, two youths came forward and bought him this rickshaw van. He now earns Tk 400-500 daily from selling plastic products. He has put up a sign on the van that says "Be careful, this patient had a stroke".

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Taliban slam US for stalling in talks

AFP, Kabul

The Taliban yesterday lashed out at Washington on social media, accusing the US of holding up negotiations over a potential withdrawal deal that would see the Americans end their 18-year war in Afghanistan.

Washington and the Taliban are still wrangling over a possible deal that would see US troops begin to leave Afghanistan in return for security guarantees.

However, there appears to have been little progress in reaching a deal in recent weeks, prompting the insurgents to saddle blame on the White House and what they say are a growing list of demands by the Americans to pave the way for a deal.

The Taliban "has the intention & capacity for a resolution," said spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid in a tweet.

"Negotiation process has been harmed by Trump's tweet, numerous US demands & quarrel b/w US & Kabul officials. @SecPompeo should refrain from blame-shifting. Our stance in principled & concerted - unlike them," he added.

The Taliban's remarks came a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the insurgents must make "demonstrable evidence of their will and capacity to reduce violence" in order to reach an agreement during a meeting with Central Asian officials in Uzbekistan.

Taliban sources told AFP last month they had offered to initiate a brief ceasefire of seven to 10 days to help secure a deal, but there was no announcement of the details of the proposal by either party.

SC clears

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Ltd and Hossain Dyeing and Printing Mills Ltd filed separate appeals with the SC challenging the HC verdict.

Yesterday, the apex court disposed of both the appeals.

HRPB's lawyer Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar for the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BITWA) to demolish and remove structures illegally built on the land of Turag river following the SC order.

He said the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Gazipur has submitted a probe report before the HC on October 11, 2017 saying that Nishut Jute Mills has occupied 150 feet by 170 feet of land and Hossain Dyeing and Printing Mills has occupied 159 feet by 166 feet of land of the river.

The HC delivered the verdict after accepting the probe report, Murshid said.

He also said the SC yesterday expunged a part of the HC verdict that declared the lease of the land of Turag river by Nishut Jute Mills Ltd "void ab initio" meaning invalid from the outset.

Advocate M Asaduzzaman, a lawyer for Nishut Jute Mills Ltd, however, told this correspondent that the lease obtained by his client over the land from the government is valid following the SC order.

The authorities can demolish the illegal structures, if there is any on the land of Nishut Jute Mills Ltd, he added.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud also appeared for Nishut Jute Mills Ltd, while Barrister Mohammad Mehedi Hasan Chowdhury appeared for Hossain Dyeing and Printing Mills, and Advocate Mafizur Rahman represented the BIWTA.

ICC launches investigation

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happened to the Rohingyas in Myanmar which brought them here to Bangladesh, a press release handed out at the conference said.

The ICC has jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. "This is the first time we are investigation the crime of deportation," commented Mochochoko.

Myanmar, however, is not yet cooperating with the ICC, said the official. "Myanmar is not talking with us, nor allowing us into the country," Mochochoko said.

The reason behind this is that Myanmar is not a state party to the Rome Statute, the 1998 treaty that established the International Criminal Court as an intergovernmental body with the jurisdiction to arbitrate the gravest of crimes. There is no obligation on their part to cooperate.

Mochochoko however commented that this is not an insurmountable challenge, and regardless of whether Myanmar allows them into the country, they will be able to identify perpetrators. "Our investigators are trained to find evidence and the evidence will lead [us] to the perpetrators," he said.

However, he also added that Myanmar's non-cooperation will impact the time needed to complete the investigation.

"The process will take as long as is necessary. It may take a year, two years, but in the end, justice will be done."

There is currently a team of investigators from ICC in the Rohingya camps, who will be looking into crimes committed against the Rohingyas since 2016.

The ICC cannot hand out death penalties, but can sentence individuals to different lengths of prison terms. It, however, is

dependent on respective states on arrest and can imprison individuals upon conviction, meaning, the court has to rely on Myanmar to arrest its own perpetrators.

"Should a conviction come, it will be a challenge for us to arrest anyone from Myanmar," remarked the official, adding that it is not going to be an insurmountable challenge.

"We currently have 15 outstanding arrest warrants," he said. This includes Joseph Kony, commander-in-chief of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, and Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of Libyan icon Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, and the "de facto" prime minister of Libya.

Till date, the court has indicted 44 people and investigated into crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Kenya, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Georgia and Burundi.

Bangabandhu's nation-building

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valuable citizens of the country, he adds.

About 400 Pak agents arrested from Mirpur

About 400 collaborators and Pakistani agents are rounded up from Mirpur by the law enforcement agencies. According to police sources, huge quantities of arms and ammunition were recovered from the same area.

More than 17,000 non-Bengalis of Ishwardi loco-shed area peacefully surrender their arms to the district authorities. Earlier, a 24-hour curfew was imposed in the locality for the arms combing operation.

Mass grave found in Feni

Yet another example of Pakistani

savagery comes to light with the discovery of a mass grave in Feni. A senior official of the district administration informs that about 3,000 skeletons were exhumed from the grave at the compound of a college.

FBCCI's plea to earn more foreign exchange

Ashraf Ahmed, convener of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI), urges Bangabandhu to adopt a policy to export goods against cash convertible foreign exchanges so that more foreign exchange can be earned and imports can be obtained from the cheapest sources. Barter trade should be avoided as far as possible, he requests.

Ashraf Ahmed also urges the government to set up a tariff commission immediately to review the present rate of customs duty and to allow import of motor car tyres, tubes, textiles, etc., from sources other than Pakistan as the import of these goods from Pakistan has been banned.

Govt. takes over 392 industries

A spokesperson of the government informs that the government has so far taken control of the production and management of 392 industries including 18 textile mills, 32 jute mills and 35 chemical industries.

Sources: February 6, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

Oldest manmade timber structure

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study, published in Journal of Archaeological Science.

"This type of construction reveals advanced technical know-how and, till now, is the only known type from this region and time period. The shape of the individual structural elements and tool marks preserved on their surface confirm sophisticated carpentry skills."

The structure was discovered in 2018 during the construction of the D35 motorway near the town of Ostrov, Czech Republic.

The wooden lining of the well was found at a depth of about 5 feet (1.74 metres) below the surface.

Upon its discovery, archaeologists scrambled to set up protective boundaries surrounding the site in

case of further discoveries.

However, researchers determined that the well was an isolated construction that served nearby settlements rather than being part of an ancient town.

"The construction of this well is unique," said Jaroslav Peška, head of the Archaeological Centre in Olomouc, Czech Republic, at the time of the excavation.

"We believe it was used by settlers during what we call the Neolithic Revolution, during a transition from a lifestyle of hunting and gathering to one of agriculture and settlements.

"These people likely built simply-structured houses and domesticated animals and they were skilled at making ceramic objects," Peška said.

No decision yet

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India makes religion the test of citizenship, was passed by parliament in December last year, sparking nationwide protests. The centre is yet to publish the draft rules.

The government says the CAA will help minorities from three Muslim-dominated countries to get citizenship if they fled to India because of religious persecution. Critics say it is designed to discriminate against Muslims and violates the secular principles of the Constitution.

Protesters against the law fear the CAA, along with the NRC - the exercise to identify illegal immigrants - will be used to target undocumented Muslims in the country. Several non-BJP states have said no to the NRC and have refused to start work on the National

Population Register, which they fear will lay the groundwork for the NRC.

Critics say protests against the law by citizens and the opposition are the main reason behind the delay in the implementation of CAA.

Sources say the centre is proactively reaching out to the non-BJP chief ministers who have refused to implement the contentious law. The ministry is in touch with such leaders and is trying to bring them on board before the rules are published.

"There have been concerns of many states (on CAA)...we are in touch with many CMs - both of BJP and opposition parties- and are trying to address their fears and explaining the government's position," the minister added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

had earlier said there had been no discussions on nationwide NRC.

"I want to tell the 130 crore citizens of India that since my government has come to power, since 2014, there has been no discussion on NRC anywhere. Only after the Supreme Court's order, this exercise was done for Assam," he had said.

This contradicted Home Minister Amit Shah's declaration in parliament that a nationwide NRC was in the works.

After the PM's comments, Shah told news agency ANI: "There is no need to debate this (pan-India NRC) as there is no discussion on it right now, PM Modi was right, there is no discussion on it yet either in the cabinet or parliament."

He had his heart

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dignitaries, including ministers, development activists, diplomats, business persons, and members of the civil society.

The event began with a one-minute silence in his memory.

Noted cultural activist and lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor recited "Shahjahan", one of Abed's favourite poems by Rabindranath Tagore, while Tagore songs were performed by Shama Rahman and Adity Mohsin.

"Abed bhai is no more, but he is actually living amongst us through his work," said Mazeda.

Brac, founded by Abed in 1972 at the age of 36 as a small relief and rehabilitation project in north-eastern Bangladesh, has grown to be one of the most effective development organisations in the world, touching the lives of over 100 million people worldwide.

It is specialised in development programmes focusing on health, education, microfinance, and social enterprises. Currently, Brac operates in 11 countries in Asia and Africa, with affiliate offices in the USA, the UK and the Netherlands.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres in a message for the occasion said Abed's contribution in poverty alleviation and sustainable development are sources of great inspiration for the UN. UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo read out the message in yesterday's event.

"Sir Fazle Abed's vision became Brac's vision. He was against all forms of exploitation and discrimination. He was a strong advocate for women and through Brac he designed development models that placed women at the centre," said Guterres.

Abed also understood that opportunity starts with the help of education, and Brac's education model has been replicated around the world.

"For Bangladesh, in the 1970s diarrhoea was the biggest killer. Sir Fazle Abed helped the country make dramatic advances in overcoming the disease through highly effective national campaigns.

"Today the focus is shifting towards resilience in the face of climate change and humanitarian crises. Brac today is among the main responders to the Rohingya crisis. I know that Brac will continue to keep alive the vision of its founder."

Guterres said the UN will stand with Brac in carrying forward Abed's important work.

Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus said Sir Fazle Abed had made extraordinary contributions in the development of Bangladesh and

left his footprints everywhere in the country.

"Abed needs to be understood if Bangladesh is to be understood. If we forget Abed Bhai, it will be like forgetting our life," he said.

The depth and strength of his thoughts are really inspiring, said Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank.

"He has actually changed the definition of NGO. We need to realise that," he said, suggesting that an institution has been established to study Abed, which will enrich the next generations.

Gonosshasthaya Kendra Founder Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury said Abed has unequivocally supported the health programme that Zafarullah did, including the establishment of a kidney dialysis centre. He said he is working to establish a kidney transplant centre and name it after Abed.

"Abed's smile was so inspiring. I don't want to think that Abed is dead, but he is alive, smiling and inspiring," he said.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), said Abed has helped establish many organisations, and CAMPE is one of those.

"He was like a banyan tree for us. We will continue to follow his legacy," she said.

Dr Martha Chan, lecturer of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School, said the world remembers Sir Fazle Abed as a hero and giant in the world of development.

"I think of you as a quiet revolutionary who was able to translate your radical, creative, expansive visions into practice - like few revolutionaries were able to do," she said.

Brac Global Board Chairperson Ameerah Haq said Brac has been recognised as the world's best NGO for the last five consecutive years.

Laurie J Spangler, CEO of Enclude Capital UK Limited; Dr Erum Mariam of Brac University; Chandra Shekhar Shah and Shukendra Kumar Sarkar of Brac; Sir Abed's son Shameran Abed, daughter Tamara Hasan Abed, nieces Anadil Hossain and Tanya Murshed also spoke at the event.

Former finance minister AMA Muhith, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, former ministers Rashed Khan Menon, Dr Moyeen Khan and Abul Hasan Chowdhury, economist Rehman Sobhan, jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller, Australian High Commission Charge De Affairs Penny Morton, DFID-Bangladesh Head Judith Herbertson, among others were present.

OC closed

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night.

He was produced before a Rangpur court yesterday and the court sent him to jail.

Talking to this correspondent, the father said his daughter, a college girl, went to her tutor Sohel on Saturday afternoon. But he took her to an isolated place in Boterhat village and raped her there.

Later, the girl returned home and disclosed the incident.

On information, Haragachh police arrested Sohel on Saturday night and took him to the police station. After his arrest, Rakibul Hasan, chairman of Haragachh union and councillor of Haragachh municipality Mahbubur Rahman, went to the police station and started lobbying for freeing Sohel, said the father.

Early Sunday, the chairman and the councillor left the police station with Sohel. The two then arranged an arbitration at the Haragachh union complex where they put pressure on the victim's family to settle the matter. But their attempt failed as

local journalists appeared there.

The father said Rakibul became angry as they tried to talk to journalists. Later, Rakibul and Mahbubur left the spot.

Talking to The Daily Star over phone, Rakibul said sorry for what he had done.

OC Nazmul told this correspondent that the victim's father came to his police station to file a case on Saturday. But he did not record the case as he thought the place of occurrence is under Kaunia Police Station.

But police high officials said the incident took place in Haragachh area.

Meanwhile, the girl was sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for tests yesterday morning.

Libya rivals agree to turn truce into lasting ceasefire: UN

AFP, Geneva

Representatives of the warring parties in Libya meeting in Geneva have agreed on the principle of turning their shaky truce into a lasting ceasefire, the UN's Libya envoy said yesterday.

"The principle has been adopted from the first session. Now the question is what are the conditions," Ghassan Salame told reporters in Geneva.

Five senior officers appointed by the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) and five appointed by the Libyan National Army (LNA) of strongman Khalifa Haftar are taking part in the talks.

"We started yesterday to discuss with them... an attempt to transform the truce into a more solid one, less often violated by either side," he said.

The talks are being moderated by Salame, who last week lashed out at what he branded "unscrupulous" foreign players for meddling in the conflict in the North African country.

The talks started on Monday and were expected to continue yesterday, Salame said.

"There is a genuine will for both parties to sit together and start negotiating together," he said.

"So far we had separate sessions for both parties but I'm sure the time will come for the two sides to sit together," he added.

At a summit in the German capital last month, world leaders committed to ending all foreign interference and to upholding a weapons embargo to help end the long-running civil war.