

Racial attacks on Bangalees on rise in East London

UNB, London

Ahead of parliamentary elections in Britain, incidence of racial attack has increased in the Bengali-dominated areas in East London where the racists killed a Bengali youth recently.

Shibkur Rahman was killed in the racial attack at 'Bo' area in East London.

In the run-up to the parliamentary elections, "race" issue will be used as trump card by the two major political parties.

In Tower Hamlets area, the racists also attacked Bengali Councilor Raza Mia and businessman Abul Monsur Lili.

Attack on Raza Mia made the Bengali people feel insecure in the mostly Bengali-populated Oldham. The racial attack has taken a severe turn recently local Bengali people said.

Oldham Councilor imposed a ban on holding any kind of political rally and procession for next three months.

The situation at Oldham aggravated just after an elderly White man was assaulted by an Asian on April 21. The incident was aired by local TV and Radio stations.

Following the incident, more than 150 White people launched an attack in the Bengali-populated area in Chatardon of Oldham on April 28, leaving at least 50 Bengalis injured.

A large number of houses, shops, business establishments owned by Bengali people were ransacked during the attack.

When Bengalis and Asians launched counter-attack, police rounded up 19 Bengalis.

As the news spread in different parts of the Britain, Bengali communities are passing their days amid fears of racial attack. They are preparing to arrange meetings in different areas, including Oldham.

Meanwhile, Oldham Councilor and police assured the Bengalis of providing securities, but they are apprehending fresh attacks on the Asians.

Work unitedly for peace

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government is determined to protect them.

"We have created an atmosphere where members of all religious communities large and small can perform their religious rites independently and without hindrance," she told the gathering.

Hasina said: "We are always mindful of taking care so that the small religious groups do not go extinct."

Seeking cooperation from all in maintaining the existing religious harmony among different communities in the country, she said: "We'll have to remain alert so that the environment is not destroyed."

Highlighting the significance of Buddha Purnima, the Prime Minister said the auspicious day is observed marking the birth, attainment of divine knowledge and passing away of Goutam Buddha.

She said the great Buddha preached non-violence, peace, harmony and peaceful co-existence and against racial discrimination.

"The relics of Buddhist civilisation is not merely elements of a religion, those are part of history and tradition," she said adding that the government had taken steps to preserve those.

She said Bangladesh government has presented a relic "Nilpadma" to the United Nations a few years ago.

Vote for BNP to save country

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while gave pay commission awards in three installments at a slow pace. This government has no right to stay on in power," she told the crowd.

Khaleda Zia said the Awami League government failed to ensure security of life and property of the people inside the country and security in frontier areas.

About border skirmishes, the BNP chairperson said this government is "India-lover. We cannot befriend India by sacrificing our national interests." She, however, made it clear that they "believe in peace, not in war."

Khaleda Zia observed the ruling quarters were trying to blame BDR tactfully for incidents along the border with India, especially after the April 18 clash between Bangladesh Rifles and Indian BSF.

Jhalakati JCD leader held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A JCD leader of Jhalakati district was arrested from his residence in the town in a case for toll collecting on Friday night.

The arrested was identified as Selim Khan, assistant secretary, JCD Jhalakati district committee. One Mohammad Yasin filed the case against 73 people including Selim Khan.

Police produced Selim before the court yesterday morning and the magistrate sent him to jail hajat cancelling his bail prayer.

Villagers

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stay back."

Minhaj Ali whose house was burnt by BSF said, "What guarantee do I have that BSF will not attack and destroy our houses again? Even if I can arrange money to rebuild my house, I will not do that and take the risk of staying in the area till we are sure that there will be no more conflict."

BSS adds: Indian border forces yesterday withdrew their extra reinforcements from the Baraibari frontier.

Official sources and local villagers said BSF withdrew their reinforcements in the past two days in line with the sector commander level flag meeting last week.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) withdrew its extra personnel from the spot earlier this week.



PHOTO: STAR

Stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding their immediate repatriation from the country.

Genetically altered babies?

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"The 15 children born at the St Barnabas programme since 1997 represented 'old news,'" Cohen said.

"We have not changed any DNA in any mitochondria," he said. "One sentence in our work has been taken out of context. What we did is to give it a boost."

"These papers have been published for years now," he added. "The editorial is written in an extent that makes it very controversial which was, of course, intentional. But the editorial is not correct."

Mitochondria have a relatively simple DNA genome, all of which is known, Cohen said. "It's a ring. However, on the top of this ring, there is a little area called the hyper-variable area. That region does not have a known function."

"In other words, if we sequence the DNA mitochondrial genome (in children conceived using this technique), it's likely that we would only find variations in this variable area."

The procedure has raised ethics

questions among some critics in the scientific community. Cohen and his colleagues wrote in the journal that this was "the first case of human germline genetic modification resulting in normal health children."

"Germine" refers to the genes that a person will pass on to his or her children.

"This news should gladden all who welcome new children into the world. And it should trouble those committed to transparent public conversation about the prospect of using 'reprogenetic' technologies to shape future children," said Erik Parens of the Hastings Centre in Garrison, New York, and Eric Jungst of the Centre for Biomedical Ethics at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland in a commentary in the journal Science.

But Cohen countered: "There are different levels of ethics. There are people who are saying, 'Why would you do something like this without maybe hard proof that it would work? That's one level of ethics. The

other one is, 'Well, you're tampering with nature,' which is the same question you get when you deal with any form of assisted reproduction." THE LITTLE THING THAT WE DID."

Of the 15 babies produced at the institute since 1997, 13 lived in the United States, one lived in Britain and another in France, Cohen said. The oldest of them turns four in a month.

He said the institute used the technique on 30 infertile women. Seventeen failed to become pregnant and one become pregnant but had a miscarriage, he said. The remaining 12 women delivered babies, with three of the women having twins.

"So far, from what we understand, they are doing OK," Cohen said of the babies. "And those two that had the mixed mitochondria, they're doing OK, too."

No government money was used in the research, Cohen said.

Tulow tilt may rob BAPEX

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from US company Okland, from 1998.

"The Irish company has been favoured by the government high-ups in the Second Round Bidding, resulting in a delay of decision in the whole bidding process," the source observed.

Back in June 1997, Petronas along with US oil giant Mobil proposed drilling of three exploratory wells in Block 9, and one in block 11 during the first three years of exploration. Petronas offer stood out, as it had proposed 20 per cent carried-over interest for BAPEX in each of these blocks.

However, at that time the government negotiation committee brushed aside all proposals for Blocks 9 and 11 excepting those submitted by Tulow.

Though financially weak and relatively inexperienced, Tulow proposed to drill 10 exploratory wells in each of the two blocks at a cost of 56 US million dollars (for each block). The authorities officially said that this offer was outstanding.

Unofficially Petrobangla experts however told The Daily Star many a time that Tulow's offer was just a stunt and not practical. In Bangladesh, there has been no instance of undertaking such a massive drilling programme.

Finally, reflecting what the experts had unofficially said, the government last year suddenly agreed to change Tulow's work programme down to drilling of three wells in the first three years in Block

9. The PSC for block 9 was signed recently with Chevron, Texaco and Tulow after further modifying the proposals.

The PSC for block 9 now gives BAPEX only 10 per cent carried-over interest while, Tulow, Chevron and Texaco will virtually get seven years to drill three exploratory wells.

According to sources, Block 9 PSC work programme requires the operators (Tulow and Chevron) to drill three wells in the first three years. If it makes any oil and gas discovery, the operators will develop it provided there is an energy market. If there is no market, the operators will wait for four years to allow the market to grow. If the market is unavailable during that period, the companies will relinquish the block or undertake fresh drilling of six more exploratory wells.

"In other words, the work programme grossly deviates from the original one," said a source. "If so, what was wrong with the Petronas offer that gave 20 per cent carried-over interest to BAPEX? Bangladesh's profit would have been higher if BAPEX had got more share."

Petrobangla would now convey the Petronas proposal and its observations to the higher authorities for their decision.

"But the higher authorities already told the negotiation committee that Tulow should be the operator in Block 11. In that case, the equity sharing issue between Tulow and Petronas would be a problem while BAPEX would never get

anything more than 10 per cent," the source added.

If the negotiations now reach a dead end over equity sharing and operatorship, the government would cancel the negotiation process. "As the election time is ahead, this is the last attempt to close the book on the second round block bid," said an official.

Buddha Purnima

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The day's main programmes include prayers at 5 am, hoisting of national and religious flags at 6 am, breakfast of monks at 7 am and peace procession in the city at 9 am.

Other programmes are Buddhapuja at 10 am, Pindadan at 11 am, seminar on Buddha and world peace at 4 pm, Prodeep Puja and prayer for peace at 7 pm and illumination of monastery at 7.30 pm.

The main function will be held at the international monastery at Merul Badda where Dr S A Malek, Prime Minister's political advisor, will be present as chief guest.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana M Nurul Islam and A K M Rahmatullah MP will also attend the programme as special guests, said a Buddhist Federation press release.

Bangladesh Buddhist Cultural Association will bring out a colourful procession from Shahbagh (in front of the National Museum) at 8 am today.

News Analysis

India warm to Bush's NMD plans

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India's welcome of US President George W Bush's proposals to build defence against missiles and cut nuclear arsenals goes beyond thawing relations between the two countries since New Delhi's testing of nuclear device in May three years ago, officials here say.

While virtually the rest of the world has been cautious in reacting to Bush's plan for a new global security architecture, Indian External Affairs Ministry put out a statement Wednesday night commending several components in the plan.

India hopes that reduced dependence on offensive nuclear forces under the Cold War theory of Mutual Assured Destruction will lead to a defensive arrangement based on multilateral cooperation in tune with post-Cold War era political realities.

The External Affairs Ministry, in a statement, said Bush's plan is a "significant far-reaching effort to move away from the adversarial legacy of the Cold War".

Officials here point out that this is perhaps for the first time that India has come closest to United States' view of global security, moving away from a deterrent-centred stance to a

mixture of deterrence and defence. India's response to Bush proposals also marks a shift away from its espousal to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty as a cornerstone of global security.

The prevailing world security structure, according to officials, is predicated on the consistent increase in quantity as well as quality of nuclear weapons setting off an arms race. But the new structure relates to deep cuts in nuclear weapons and de-alerting - elements which are in keeping with India's nuclear policy.

But, more significantly, India, the officials argue, realises the inevitability of a movement towards a defensive system and there is little India can do to stop it. Having gone nuclear, it makes no sense for India to hang on to past reservations and be excluded from multilateral consultations, which Bush has promised, for a new international security architecture, they point out.

Officials here say India must stay in the multilateral consultations for the new global security system as this will be a big additional help to end the developed countries' reservations about New Delhi's going nuclear in 1998. It may also help India earn international recognition as a nuclear power, they say.

India would certainly not like to let go the opportunity of becoming a key participant in the international debate on National Missile Defence (NMD) as propounded by Bush.

Officials here attach considerable significance to the fact that on the day India reacted positively to Bush's proposals, US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice spoke to Indian Defence and External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh over telephone and informed that Bush would be sending his personal envoy and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to New Delhi on May 10 to explain the "new framework for security and stability that reflects the world today".

Rice told Singh that US considered India a "friend and ally" and the assessment by officials in Delhi is that Bush has decided to rope in New Delhi in consultations for a new security arrangement. India also acknowledged as much by its response.

Officials here say India's reservation was against any unilateral action and favoured multilateral negotiations on the global security regime. What Bush proposed was a multilateral effort, they argued.

Barisal Poura activities stopped

BSS, Barisal

The activities of Barisal Poursabha have come to a stand still in the transitional period of upgrading it into a City Corporation.

The Poursabha is not approving any financial matters or taking any new decision now.

On April 4, the government decided to upgrade Barisal Poursabha into a City Corporation. But administrator, deputy administrator and commissioners have not been appointed so far for running the corporation. So, the activities of the Poursabha have become deadlocked.

Traffic police

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Reports of passengers' harassment at the ZIA have increased due to lack of police surveillance. Police were responsible for maintaining law and order in canopy and car parking area of the airport.

Passengers' harassment by the brokers has increased in the canopy and car parking area as there is nobody to look after it," sources at the airport said last night.

No initiative to overcome the situation was taken till last night, sources added.

CAAB officials, however, said they are always ready to discuss the prevailing situation with the police.

Meat trader

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Khodeza said that following several threats she had filed a general diary with Joydevpur thana, but police are yet to take any action in this regard.

Sirajul Islam was murdered on February 2, 2001 allegedly by Hafiz Uddin, Shabiron, Anwar Hossain, Delwar, Selim, Masud, Titu, Jahid and Khaili.

Police arrested two accused in the case, but they were released on bail. The other accused are still at large, the family members said adding, the 'killers' are moving freely.

The family members claimed that Siraj was murdered as he was a witness of Kulsum rape and murder case.

They demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Arsenic level in 47 dists crosses

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treatment plant is coagulation. But the University of Connecticut (patent pending) has claimed a novel and cost effective Arsenic Remedy Technology (AsRT) for the immobilisation of inorganic arsenic such as arsenates and arsenites.

Quoting field survey reports, they said, in some arsenic affected villages many families due to high iron in their tubewell water cannot drink the water directly, but to make it drinkable they just keep the water after withdrawal from tubewell for some time, when a brown precipitate settles at the bottom and the users decant the upper clear water or use a common filter to arrest the flood.

"It is a burning question how and where to dispose arsenic rich flood. Many think that arsenic-rich flood if disposed on soil, may contaminate the aquifer," the scientists said adding that in the laboratory (of SOES) we found that cow-dung can eliminate arsenic in volatile form.

Referring to some tests, the SOES scientists said arsenic removal system of Jadavpur University was proved to be 93 per cent to 98.5 per cent effective according to official test results of Government Industrial Toxicological Research, Lucknow, India, National Test House, India, CSIR Institute at Nagpur, India as well as independent research conducted by Asia Arsenic Network (AAN), Japan and Thailand Bureau of the Asia Arsenic Network.

The AAN (Japan) has purchased 300 units of arsenic removal system from CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) New Delhi, India and installed in arsenic affected areas across Bangladesh, experts of the SOES said.

The SOES researchers said the actual solution of groundwater arsenic contamination in Bangladesh and India would be achieved through proper watershed management utilising the available surface water.

Ensure sunlight

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and many structures in the old part of the city should be protected to protect our heritage.

On the Uttara third phase project, they urged Rajuk to look into the problems of traffic from the model town to the city. Other civic amenities should also be considered.

Architect Mohammad Rafiq Azam said, due to lack of awareness, vision and financial support, buildings were built in the city without any direction, which not only destroyed natural resources but also engulfed open spaces.

"Unplanned urbanisation, particularly building apartments without farsightedness, has made the whole environment unfriendly and unliveable," Rafiq said.

Considering the population and urban settlement, construction of

small, large and high edifices is essential. But the growth has to be environmentally healthy and aesthetically correct.

Among the panelists, Quamrul Islam Siddique, Secretary, Ministry of Public Works and Housing, said there is no dearth of creativity but an ideal situation is absent to implement the thoughts. He announced a government plan to form of an Advisory Council comprising architects, artists, other experts and eminent citizens for planning and implementation of the Master Plan for Dhaka city.

Among others present were Managing Editor of The Daily Star Syed Fahim Munaim, Dwijen Sarma and Anisul Haque of the Prothom Alo.

Noor willing to contest polls on AL ticket

BSS, Dhaka

Asaduzzaman Noor, a cultural personality, is willing to contest the upcoming election from Nilphamari-2 constituency on Awami League ticket.

Noor said he was indebted to the soil of Nilphamari. He is closely associated with the town as his childhood memories are linked with it, he said.

He recalled with gratitude the love and affection of the people of Nilphamari. He is keen to serve the people by contesting the coming election. He, however, is ready to contest the election from any other seat, in the district, if the prime minister wants so.

One stabbed to death in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

One young man was stabbed to death by some local people at Faradpur village under Godagari upazila in the district on Friday night.

The victim was identified as Shamsul Alam, 22, son of Aftab Uddin of the same village.

Witnesses said a group of local people armed with lethal weapons attacked and stabbed him indiscriminately as a sequel to previous enmity over some mango trees on a disputed land.

He was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where he succumbed to his injuries at about 11.30 pm.

A case was filed with Godagari thana in this connection. None was arrested till filing of this report at 7.30 pm.

CMCH doctor robbed of Tk 2000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A doctor of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) was robbed of Tk 2,000 on the hospital campus yesterday morning, hospital sources said.

Dr Abdul Matin, came under attack by the snatcher at 8.30 am yesterday as he got down from a rickshaw on the campus.

The snatcher took away the money at gunpoint.

However, Panchlaish police could not confirm the incident.