

Border issues to be resolved thru' discussion: FM

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad yesterday said Indo-Bangladesh border issues should be resolved through discussion at diplomatic level between the two countries to end frequent troubles.

Talking to UNB he said Bangladesh believes that the outstanding border issues should be resolved on the basis of 1974 Indira-Mujib border agreement and both sides had agreed to sit and settle the problem.

"Bangladesh would soon send its team to Delhi to deal with the matter," Azad said. Formation of the team, dates for the meeting and agenda are being discussed.

In reply to a question, he said the border problem would be solved through bilateral negotiations, the way outstanding issues were settled in the recent past.

When his attention was drawn to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's remark at an election rally in Guwahati Saturday that recent border clash happened because of political rivalry in Bangladesh, Azad said possibly the Indian leader made his observations because of political reasons in his country.

There have been outcries in India over the April 18 Rowmari border skirmish, following incursion by soldiers of the Indian Border Security Force, in which at least 16 BSF and 3 BDR men were killed.

Alleged arms dealer held in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

CMP arrested an alleged arms dealer based in Cox's Bazar from a hotel in Laldighi Par area yesterday afternoon.

The arrested was identified as Md. Jalaluddin, 35, who allegedly ran a powerful network in Cox's Bazar and some other parts of the greater Chittagong region, known as safe haven for terrorists.

Acting on a tip-off, DB police led by assistant commissioner Monirul Islam raided a room in Hotel Atlantic at around 3pm yesterday and nabbed Jalaluddin. A sophisticated gun and two bullets were recovered from his possession.

Police said preliminary investigation proved Jalal's involvement in arms trade.

A case under the Arms Act was filed with Kotwali thana in this connection.

In another raid, police arrested a notorious terrorist from Bakalia at midnight on Sunday.

Bakalia thana police led by OC Narayan Prasad Roy arrested Md. Hasan alias Hasannya from his Syed Shah road residence at around 12:45am on Sunday.

Police also recovered one LG and two bullets from his possession.

Hasan, a deputy of JCD cadre Morshed who also allegedly runs a terrorist group based in Bakalia and Bahaddarhat area, was wanted in a case under PSA filed last year.

We want peaceful atmosphere, violence-free campus: PM



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the inauguration ceremony for two Dhaka University halls at the TSC yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday her government would continue enhancing budgetary allocation for the education sector to ensure standard of education.

"We put emphasis on education, and that's why, we have increased allocation for this sector and are making relentless effort for raising standard of education," she said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of two residential halls of Dhaka University.

Referring to Tk 682 crore allocation for the sector in the current budget, she said her government has taken a massive initiative to make people into human resources, introducing technical courses in educational institutions and establishing twelve science and technology universities.

"We have supplied ten thousand computers to the secondary schools and are pursuing to establish high-tech park, IT village and biotechnology institute to modernise education system and face the challenges of the twenty-first century," she said.

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Yasmin murder: Hearing on death ref resumes today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Hearing on the death reference of three policemen in Yasmin murder case will resume in the High Court today, court sources said.

The hearing was discontinued after one of the two judges comprising the Death Reference Bench—Justice Ruhul Amin -- was elevated to the Supreme Court earlier this year.

This time the Death Reference Bench comprises Justice Abdul Matin and Justice Marziul Huq.

Three policemen were sentenced to death by the trial court in 1996 after the rape and murder of 17-year-old domestic help Yasmin in Dinajpur in August, 1995.

The incident had sparked off a massive public protest across the country, leading to death of seven

protesters in police firing in Dinajpur.

The trial court in Rangpur found SI Manirul Huq and constables Amritalal Barman and Abdus Sattar found guilty of rape and murder of Yasmin. The then SP of Dinajpur Abdul Motalib and a doctor at Dinajpur hospital, who were accused of suppressing evidence, were acquitted.

The state had appealed against acquittal of the SP and the doctor. The SP allegedly tried to destroy evidence in the case, describing Yasmin as a prostitute and the doctor tried to do so by giving an autopsy report with no mention of rape and murder.

Yasmin died after she was dropped from a Panchagrah bound bus at Dashmille near Dinajpur town. Conductor of the bus had requested a local tea stall owner to help her

board a Dinajpur bound bus. At that time a Dinajpur bound police van arrived there and the policemen offered her a lift. Some time later, her body with signs of strangulation and sexual abuse was found about a mile away, thrown from the van.

The policemen reported that she jumped from the vehicle and died. She was buried by police next day after autopsy at Dinajpur hospital. The autopsy report did not say it was a case of rape and murder.

Then amidst public anger and protest, the government ordered a second autopsy at Rangpur Medical College Hospital. The body was exhumed from the grave four days later and the autopsy found evidence of rape and murder.

Election within 90 days of JS dissolution mandatory: CEC

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed said yesterday holding general elections within 90 days of dissolution of parliament is mandatory, but the constitution does not say what to do if the polls cannot be held within the timeframe for any exigencies.

"There is constitutional provision that the election must be held within 90 days of dissolution of parliament. And we are certain that the election will be held within the stipulated time," he said.

Asked what if the election could not be held within the period for any unforeseen reasons, like big floods or other natural calamity, the CEC said constitution did not spell out

anything on the matter.

"We hope the best, but are also prepared for the worst," he said, adding if the election couldn't be held within 90 days, the next course of action could be sorted out in consultation with all concerned.

Syed, however, said he did not see any reason that holding the election within 90 days will not be possible. With a laugh, however, he said if there be flooding, the electioneering of the candidates might be hampered, not the election, as there is no chance of floods during the polling ahead.

On deployment of army personnel at the polling centres, the CEC said the Election Commission would follow the past practices, experiences and traditions.

Syed also mentioned that there are certain army rules on the number of troops to be deployed. "We will also have to check it."

He said the EC would need thousands of security people, including police, BDR, army, Ansar, VDP and even scouts, as volunteers for the election.

Asked whether three-month time of the caretaker government will be enough to rein in the terrorists and recover illegal arms, the CEC cited a saying that "a determined government can do anything."

"We will have to keep confidence in the political parties, the parties must also keep confidence in us for making the election acceptable to all," the CEC said.

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Border situation Govt reluctant even to lodge protest: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said farmers in the country's frontier areas can not harvest paddy or cultivate their lands due to huge deployment of Indian troops at the border.

He said although lakhs of people near the border since the April 18 incident have been living in fear of attack from the aggressively positioned Indian troops, the government is reluctant to take any effective measures or even lodge any protest to India.

Addressing a big rally at Muktangan as chief guest prior to leading a mass procession of the BNP-led opposition alliance, Bhuiyan strongly protested Indian

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DCCI board accepts Benazir's resignation

STAR REPORT

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) board yesterday accepted the resignation of its president Benazir Ahmed, said a press release.

"The board highly appreciated the unprecedented gesture shown by Benazir Ahmed in upholding the prestige and image of the premier chamber of the country by assuming full moral responsibility of his personal and/or his company's alleged irregularities recently reported in the media," the release said.

It said that the board reluctantly accepted the resignation after discussing the circumstances under which Ahmed offered to step down and the utmost concern displayed by him for the image and dignity of DCCI.

"The DCCI board put on record its highest appreciation for the commendable example set by Ahmed to keep up the high standing of the DCCI," the release added.

Drug haul:Two Nepalese women remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Nepalese women, arrested for their alleged involvement with carrying ten kilograms of marijuana, were placed on a one-day remand for interrogation yesterday.

Cantonment police produced Sunita Punam Agar and Bindu Maya Gorong before the CMM's court at 4:00 pm yesterday with prayer for seven-day remand.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Kazi Meraj Hossain granted them one-day remand.

No bail petition was moved on behalf of the accused.

The two Nepalese women were detained by customs at the Zia International Airport on Sunday with ten kilograms of marijuana.

Prior to boarding a TG flight number 322 to Thailand scheduled for 2:00 pm Sunday. The two were

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BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan addresses a gathering at Muktangan prior to four-party alliance's mass procession in the city yesterday.

Stand-off over: DMP decides to redeploy team at ZIA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) will re-deploy its team at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) as soon as possible.

The decision was taken at a meeting between the ministries of home and civil aviation and tourism here yesterday.

DMP withdrew its 30-member unit from ZIA on Thursday, complaining that the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) stopped utility services like water and power to the police camp there.

CAAB officials denied this, saying the police team was notified about six months back to move to a new site to facilitate construction work at the site of their camp. But they declined and left the camp on Thursday without any notice, the officials said earlier.

After the withdrawal of police, CAAB deployed some Ansar personnel in the canopy area to maintain law & order.

As per yesterday's decision, the police team will get an office room under the northern driveway and a 'camp' with lock up facilities near the CAAB office besides its canteen.

The room selected for office, now used as a store room of CAAB, will be cleared today so that police can resume duty at the canopy and car park areas, sources concerned said.

The issue of setting up of a permanent police station at ZIA will be taken up later, the sources said.

Home Secretary MM Reza, Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Sharafat Ali, CAAB Chairman Air Commodore Iqbal Hossain, IGP Nurul Huda and other officials attended the meeting.

Ministry identifies 61 upazilas as 'copy prone'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Education has identified 61 upazilas as "copy prone" areas during the Higher Secondary Certificate Examination (HSC) examinations beginning on May 10.

The 61 upazilas, out of 463 in the country, were identified on the basis of reports from the education boards during the recently concluded SSC examinations as well as HSC and SSC examinations in previous years, ministry officials said.

The ministry has asked the seven education boards in the country to take effective measures to check copying during the examinations.

The boards will launch a massive campaign against copying in examinations by publishing advertisements in newspapers and sticking posters, they said.

Paramilitary BDR will be deployed at the copy prone areas along with police to maintain law and order the examinations.

Stern action will be taken against teachers for helping students in copying. "The teacher should not only be withdrawn from examination duty but his salary will also be held up for a year as a punishment," an official of the ministry told this correspondent.

A total of 5, 61114 examinees will sit for the examinations under the seven boards.

Of them, 1, 64,534 will appear under Dhaka Board, 1, 69,441 under Rajshahi Board, 69, 235 under Comilla Board, 71, 458 under Jessore Board, 45,230 under Chittagong Board, 34,85 under Barisal Board and 17,91 under Sylhet Board.

Bomb recovery: 4 remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people who were arrested on Sunday in connection with the discovery of a powerful bomb under the driving seat of a DCC commissioner were placed on a one-day remand for interrogation yesterday.

Mohammadpur police produced Rahman, Sobhan, Shamim and Kamal before the CMM's Court, Dhaka, at about 4pm yesterday with a prayer for a seven-day remand.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Biman Bihari Borua granted police a one-day remand for interrogation for each of the four arrested. No bail prayer was moved on behalf of the arrested persons.

A 'suspected powerful bomb' was recovered on Sunday afternoon from under the car of DCC commissioner Habibur Rahman Mizan in front of his office adjacent to the Prime Minister's official residence at Mirpur Road.

Police was called in immediately who informed army bomb experts. Later, the experts deactivated the bomb and took it away for inspection.

According to some in the police, the bomb could be activated by remote control device while others suspected it to be a timing device.

Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?



The Daily Star - প্রথম আলো

Tipu Treatment Fund

Donate generously to this Fund Save Tipu from Disability

Send donations to: Savings Account No. 25002111 Dhaka Bank Ltd, Karwan Bazar Branch, Dhaka

First hybrid rice seeds may hit market next boro season

REAZ AHMAD

The first hybrid rice varieties are likely to hit the market in the next boro season, helping the country's agriculture sector to reach a new level of productivity.

Talking to the Daily Star yesterday, local experts and rice breeders said farmers would be able to increase the food production to a surplus level with the application of homegrown hybrid seeds.

The country attained food autarky in 1999-2000 thanks to a new record of cereal (rice, wheat and maize) output of 25 million metric tons (MT).

Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Dr MA Hamid Miah said that the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) has developed two hybrid rice varieties in 1999-2000 and that a pilot production programme in this regard has been launched.

Dr Miah was talking to Star during a three-day international meeting on hybrid that began in the city yesterday with a goal to expand hybrid cultivation in rice-eating regions across Asia.

The National Seed Board (NSB) is expected to approve these two hybrid varieties for their production in the next boro season, Dr Miah said.

He said hybrid rice is tipped to cover one million hectares of land in the country by the year 2010, which means almost one-third of the total boro area would

come under hybrid cultivation, Dr Miah explained.

Primary field trials show the newly developed home-grown hybrid varieties have the potential to grow eight to eleven tons of rice per hectare compared to BRRI's inbred lines' yield potential of seven tons per hectare.

The BRRI has so far developed some 40 inbred high-yielding varieties but has been struggling since the early 90s to make a breakthrough in the hybrid field.

The agriculture ministry which had allowed four private companies to import different hybrid rice varieties from China and India three years ago to augment food production rapidly is happy at the latest development.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told the Star over telephone, "Finally, we're making a breakthrough. With the development of homegrown hybrids, the country's agriculture would have a further boost."

An expert said Bangladesh has to produce twice the volume of rice that it now produces in the year 2020. For that level of production to achieve, he said, yearly growth rate of rice production has to increase between 2.6 and 3.6 per cent than the current 2.2 per cent a year.

Earlier, speaking at the inaugural session of the fourth technical committee meeting of an IRRI-ADB project titled, 'Development and Use of Hybrid Rice in Asia,' Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture Dr Shoaib Ahmed also said that the National Seed Board would

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