

INT'L CONFERENCE ON AFGHANISTAN

Strengthening democratic instts help bring stability

Says Dipu Moni

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said strengthening the democratic institutions in Afghanistan would help bring stability in that country.

She also strongly condemned the misuse and abuse of any particular religion or belief for the purpose of terrorism and extremism.

Addressing the 'International Conference on Afghanistan' in the Netherlands on Tuesday, Dipu Moni underscored the necessity of education to repel the menaces of terrorism and violence, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

The foreign minister assured Afghanistan of all-out cooperation in strengthening the institutions of the war-ravaged South Asian country and said Brac, a Bangladeshi NGO, had been working relentlessly in Afghanistan to

alleviate poverty through micro-credit programme and spreading education.

She said the nation-building activities such as eradicating poverty, spreading education and empowering women that Brac had undertaken would help bring social stability there.

Traditionally, the people of South Asia tremendously benefited from historical regional cooperation and efforts and now it is again the time to seize the regional opportunities for the welfare and the prosperity of Afghanistan and the people of the whole region, she added.

She hoped that the forthcoming presidential election on August 20 and the parliamentary election next year would pave the way for further stability in Afghanistan.

Dipu Moni also lauded the initiative of US President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for the

reconstruction of Afghanistan.

President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai, Prime Minister of the Netherlands Jan Peter Balkenende, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and foreign ministers from a number of countries, including the US, UK, Russia, France, Australia, Pakistan, Germany, Italy, Spain, New Zealand, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Canada, Greece, Japan, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey took part in the discussion.

On the sidelines of the conference, Dipu Moni had important meetings with a number of foreign ministers, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

During the meeting with Hillary, Dipu Moni invited her to visit Bangladesh.

Accepting the invitation, Hillary said that the visit could be arranged in future at a mutually convenient time for both the governments.

During another meeting with Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Bert Koenders, Dipu Moni appreciated the Dutch government for launching the 'Development-related Infrastructure Facility (ORIO)' programme in Bangladesh.

The Dutch minister assured her that the programme would be more flexible than Development-related Export Transactions (ORET) programme and it would be more pro-poor and would help the developing countries to finance its priority sectors.

Dipu Moni requested the Dutch minister to diversify and include Bangladeshi ceramic and pharmaceuticals in the import basket.

Dipu Moni also had meetings with her Afghan, Australian and Turkish counterparts and discussed various bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual importance.



Workers of a garment factory block a busy road in Chittagong yesterday following a rumour that the authorities are closing down the factory without paying their salaries.

End gender discrimination

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said it is important to eliminate discrimination between men and women to move towards economic and social independence, and all should work together to achieve the target.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters

Association (BGMEA) and UNFPA jointly organised the discussion and a rally to celebrate the International Women's Day.

BGMEA President Abdus Salam Mursheedy at his speech as the chief guest said 85 per cent of the garment workers are women and garment factories have been playing an important role in empowering women and

to establish their rights.

BGMEA Director Nahid Hasan, UNFPA Deputy Country Representative Panchai Suchita, Syed Mamunul Islam of Ministry of Labour and Employment, Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin and Siddiqur Rahman, Selima Ahmed of Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry were also present.

BDR MASSACRE

Confusion created in public mind over probe: ASK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday expressed concern as confusion has been created in the public mind over the enquiry into the Pikhana carnage, identifying the persons responsible and interrogation of the arrested BDR personnel.

Executive Director of the rights body advocate Sultana Kamal in a statement also expressed concern for the unnatural deaths of a number of BDR jawans in custody and the authorities are not giving proper explanation of the issue and the trial of the incident.

She mentioned that the tenure of the government enquiry committee formed to investigate into the incident has been extended by 30 more days on the fourth time.

She said adequate time is required for proper investigation into the incident. But

extension of time may give the expression that those who are taking decision in this regard are either not giving enough attention to it or are failing to comprehend the matter properly.

The ASK executive director said the news of 11 BDR jawans have been known so far. In none of the cases, proper explanation on the reasons of their deaths was available from the authorities.

Moreover, the deaths of BDR jawans in heart attacks and increase of suicidal incidents by the jawans after the start of the 'Operation Rebel Hunt' are of grave concerns.

Sultana Kamal said it should be clearly informed where, in which process and by whom the arrestees are being interrogated. It has not been clearly known how many BDR jawans have joined their jobs and how many are now staying at Pikhana.

Proper statistics of how

many BDR jawans were arrested in the operation are not being given. Information from different sources said those who have joined their jobs are under a type of detention.

The ASK chief said, "We think that the human rights organisations, including the National Human Rights Commission, should be allowed to visit inside the Pikhana and talk to the BDR jawans undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

The families living inside Pikhana have been ordered to leave their residences. As the order has been given without making arrangement for alternative housing, they are in dire problems.

The government should give quick attention to arrange continuation of academic activities of the children of these families and the students of education institutions inside Pikhana.

Provost of DU Shamsunnahar Hall resigns

DU CORRESPONDENT

The provost of Shamsunnahar Hall at Dhaka University submitted her resignation letter to the vice chancellor yesterday.

Prof Dr UAB Razia Akhter Banu told The Daily Star that she handed her resignation letter to Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique in the evening, citing personal reasons.

Hall sources, however, said Prof Razia submitted the resignation letter in the wake of a clash between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders and activists on Monday.

Hall sources said a faction of BCL men, who were involved in Monday's clash, was demonstrating on the hall premises since the incident demanding her resignation.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Right to Information Forum has hailed the government for passing the Right to Information bill in parliament.

The law will help the people receive information easily, the forum said and hoped that the government will form an independent and strong Information Commission immediately to fulfil the people's aspirations.

The decision of the government to pass the bill is a milestone, Convener of the forum Shaheen Anam said in a statement on Monday.

The forum thinks that making it compulsory for all government organisations and the non-government organisations funded by the government and foreign donors to provide information is a main positive point, said the statement.

The forum also said it would assist the government at all levels of the implementation of the law.

Dhaka College students clash with hawkers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some students of Dhaka College blocked Mirpur Road in front of the college following a string of clashes with hawkers in the area over buying a CD last night.

The agitating students blocked the road for over one hour at 8:30pm.

Officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station told The Daily Star that the clash erupted when a student of the college was beaten by the hawkers at New Market over bargaining for the CD at around 8:00pm.

Few minutes later, the students equipped with sticks attacked the hawkers and also pelted brickbats at them creating tension in the area.

The attackers also hurled brickbats at police when they reached the spot, police said.

However, police brought situation under control at 9:30pm.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion

Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children organises a discussion marking the World Autism Awareness Day. Venue: Social Service Department auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Seminar

Centre for Health, Population and Development at IUB organises a seminar on 'Within marriage sexual violence in Bangladesh'. Venue: Library building, IUB. Time: 10:30am.

Fashion exposition

The inaugural ceremony of the 13-day fashion exposition will be held. Nogordola organises the event. Venue: Banani branch of Nogordola (House-3G, Road-11). Time: 11:00am.

Publication ceremony

The publication ceremony of five books translated by Prof Kabir Chowdhury will be held. Venue: Public Library seminar room. Time: 5:00pm.

Redtimesbd.com

The launching ceremony of the online news service REDTIMESBD.COM will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:30am.

SEC asked to form expert body to tackle global recession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Undertaking at a meeting yesterday instructed the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), capital market regulator, to form an expert committee comprising businessmen, economists and share market experts to tackle the ongoing global meltdown.

It also asked the respective companies to remain cautious from persons who are responsible for unstable share market.

"We have instructed the SEC to form a three to five member expert committee comprising economists,

businessmen and share market experts and to take preparation in advance in line with the advice of the expert body to tackle the global recession," Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir told reporters after the meeting.

Alamgir said, "We have also asked the SEC to keep close contact with regulatory body of different countries, including the US that look after share market."

The committee discussed the recent unstable trend of country's share market.

TIM Fazle Rabbi, Moynuddin Khan Badal, Biren Shikder and Khaleedur Rahman Tito were present at the meeting.

WEATHER TODAY

Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:15pm today and rises at 5:49am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 17.6 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.5	20.4	68	54
Chittagong	31.0	18.8	58	72
Rajshahi	33.8	20.6	79	38
Khulna	33.7	21.0	69	72
Barisal	32.2	19.0	70	62
Sylhet	31.0	18.7	69	58
Cox's Bazar	33.2	19.0	52	65



BCS (Info) Betar Officers' Welfare Assoc executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Nazrul Islam, deputy press secretary to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and Salahuddin Ahmed, director of Bangladesh Betar, were elected president and general secretary of the BCS (Information) Betar Officers Welfare Association, says a press release.

Slain BCL leader Rajib laid to rest

RU CORRESPONDENT

The slain general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Dhaka Medical College (DMC) unit Abul Kalam Asad Rajib was buried at the Hatem Khan Graveyard in Rajshahi city yesterday.

The victim's family sources said the body reached his residence from Dhaka in an ambulance at 7:15am.

Rajib left behind his wife, father, mother, two brothers and a host of relatives.

His father Reaz Uddin Sarder is a businessman in Rajshahi city.

Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton attended the namaz-e-janaza at Hatem Khan Graveyard.

Rajib was killed following a series of clashes between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Dhaka Medical College on Tuesday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Robbers looted valuables including around 200 tolas of gold ornaments and cash around Tk 7 lakh from an apartment at Panchlaish in Chittagong yesterday.

Police said a group of robbers numbering 7 to 8, introducing themselves as guests entered into the house of one Md Ayub, a businessman, at Sugandha Residential Area at around 2:00pm. Then they looted valuables and cash keeping the inmates hostage at gunpoint in a room and ran away.

Filing of a case in the connection was under process when this report was filed at 8:00pm yesterday.

Obituary

UNB, Dhaka

Maj (ret'd) Ashrafur Haq Khan, managing director (Public Relation) of Bangladesh Export-Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), passed away due to cancer at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city yesterday at the age of 54.

He left behind his wife and only daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at Banani Army Graveyard.

Abdun Nur Master

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Abdun Nur Master, a social worker and a member of the advisory committee of Jatiya

Samajtantrik Dal, passed away due to old-age ailments at his residence at Bharthokhola in the city yesterday at the age of 76.

He left behind his wife, son, two daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Bharthokhola after the Maghrib prayers.

Qulkhwani

METRO DESK

Qulkhwani of Anwara Ahmad will be held at House # 32, Road # 5, Dhanmandi R/A after Asr

prayers tomorrow (April 3), says a press release.

All are requested to attend the doa and pray for salvation of her departed soul.

Anwara Ahmad, wife of Taslim Ahmad, first home secretary of Bangladesh, passed away on March 26.

She left behind her husband, one son, one daughter and a host of friends and relatives to mourn her death.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 12th death anniversary of Amin Laskar, former president of Bangladesh Chemist and Druggist Association and founder member of Saarc Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at DOHS mosque at Baridhara in the city after Maghrib prayers.

