

Moon ride in Dhaka

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Waterlogging is the main cause behind damage of roads repaired only last year, he said.

The road from Basabo Flyover to Nandipara has been in a desperate condition for the last two and a half years, said resident of Madartek Mamun.

Mir Hajirbagh Road, which was repaired only three years ago has also been damaged at several points, said another resident.

Dinnath Sen Road and Rajanikant Road, dug up around five months ago to set a storm sewerage line in the area, still await repair though WASA completed its job three months ago.

Mokhlesur Rahman, a resident of Shatish Sarkar Road in Gendaria, said locals are astonished at the extent of negligence by authorities concerned who are yet to attend to the roads dug up five months ago.

These roads were in good condition before that, he said. Meanwhile, fresh diggings have started at different points of the city including Karwan Bazar, Moghbazar Wireless Road to Nayatola-Modhubagh and Distillery Road in Gendaria -- all causing huge suffering to the residents.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, when contacted, said they would take immediate steps to repair the dug up roads. He also said that repair of dilapidated roads would be taken up soon.

It costs around Tk 3000 to 4000 to hire other vehicles to pull up one single truck from there, he said.

Sub-divisional engineer of sub-division-2 of Roads and Highway Department Nur Hossain said they have already started repair works in the area and are now filling up the potholes with a sub-base of brick chips and sand. A thicker layer of bricks would be laid atop this, he said.

This is a temporary repair of the road. When we repair it on a permanent basis, we will seal this with a layer of bitumen, he said.

Nur said lack of a drainage system led to the logging of water here that flows from Jurain rail gate and Postogola Bridge. This water logging damage the road rapidly.

"We need to set up a drainage line connecting to Buriganga River, but the unavailability of necessary land through which to build this drain stops us," he said.

Sub-assistant engineer of Munishiganj division Md Firoz Alam also said that a drainage line is needed from Postogola to Postogola Shenabish near the bridge linking Buriganga Bridge to stop the rainwater from accumulating there.

Russia, US agree

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But as Obama made his first visit to Moscow as president, they still remained divided over US plans to install a missile defence shield in eastern Europe and Moscow's policy towards the pro-Western ex-Soviet state Georgia.

"The president and I agreed that the relationship between Russia and the United States (has suffered) from a sense of drift," Obama said at joint news conference in the Kremlin with Medvedev.

"We resolved to reset US-Russian relations. Today after less than six months of collaboration (since coming to office) we have done exactly that," he added.

The declaration signed by the presidents pledges to reach a new nuclear arms reduction pact to replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Obama said it provides for cuts of "up to a third" from current limitations.

It "commits both parties to a legally binding treaty that will reduce nuclear weapons," the White House said in a statement.

START is due to expire on December 5 but the declaration gave no target date for a renewal, instructing negotiators to complete the work as quickly as possible.

The declaration called for a reduction in the number of nuclear warheads in Russian and US strategic arsenals to between 1,500 and 1,675 within seven years and the number of ballistic missile carriers to between 500-1,100.

The cuts go beyond those levels set in the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) which calls for both countries to reduce the number of deployed warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 on either side by 2012.

"The declared reduction is a real agreement and it suits everyone," said Alexei Malashenko, analyst with the Carnegie Centre in Moscow.

"The Americans have decided to accept Russia as it is. Obama does not have the complexes from the Cold War and does not consider Russia to be an enemy of the United States."

The Afghanistan agreement means Russia has authorised the use of its airspace for the transit of US troops and arms, a major boost for Obama's bid to stem

Ha-Meem sues 1,600 for arson attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ha-Meem Group has filed a case against some 1,600 unnamed people in connection with the arson and vandalism at its factories in Ashulia a week ago.

Executive Director of the group, Md Nazrul Islam, filed the case with the Ashulia Police Station Sunday night.

Officer-in-Charge of Ashulia Police Station Monwar Hossain said the plaintiff alleged that some 1,600 protesters from outside entered the factories and set fire to them.

Two workers were killed during the three-day unrest at several garment factories in Ashulia on June 28-30.

Dutch help

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Bert said, "Tipaimukh is a bilateral issue between Bangladesh and India."

Netherlands is one of the countries that have been supporting Bangladesh since its independence. Last year it provided 58 million euro in water management, education, health, governance and human rights sectors, said the Dutch minister.

Referring the global economic meltdown Bert said Bangladesh has achieved remarkable economic figures since 1990 and doing well during the global economic recession.

However, he emphasised on the importance of improving business environment in Bangladesh to attract more local and foreign investment and said the government's zero tolerance to corruption is crucial to create the confidence.

Meeting with foreign minister During the meeting with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at her office in the morning, they discussed the gamut of bilateral relations and other issues like development cooperation, investment, water management and climate change, human rights, Rohingya refugees and the trial of war criminals.

Referring to climate change, Dipu Moni said steps are needed to rehabilitate the environmental refugees.

On trying the war criminals Dipu Moni said the government, as per mandate of the people, had taken steps to try the perpetrators against humanity during the country's War of Independence in 1971.

She said the international community is with Bangladesh on the issue. "Transparency and international standard in the process of trying the war criminals would be maintained," she said seeking Netherlands support in this regard.

Dipu Moni told Bert Koenders that Rohingya refugees had been committing various crimes like smuggling, terrorism and other anti-social activities. They are also destroying the forests of Bangladesh.

In the morning the Dutch minister also visited Water Resources Minister Romesh Chandra Sen and the Water Development Board office to see the progress of different water related projects supported by the Netherlands.

JS body

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capital in the name of Sajeda Hosen during the BNP-led government. Later when he was the housing and public works adviser of the caretaker government, he purchased another flat at Concord Apartment built on Rajuk land in the name of Sajid Hosen.

It has also been alleged that the former adviser expanded 'Musafir Tower' at Kakral up to the 16th floor from the ninth floor without approval of Rajuk during their tenure of last BNP-led government.

The committee found that Mainul had purchased a floor of a building at Gulshan Avenue at a cost of Tk 8 crore in the name of his son misusing his office of the adviser to the caretaker government.

"We asked the housing ministry to come up with the documents of the allegations against the former adviser," Nasrul Hamid Bipu, chief of the parliamentary sub-committee, told The Daily Star yesterday after a meeting at the Jatuya Sangsad Bhaban.

The parliamentary standing committee on housing and public works ministry formed the five-member sub-committee on June 25 to investigate alleged corruption, misuse of power against former adviser Mainul Hosen and other allegations of anomalies occurred in the last seven years in the ministry and its other bodies.

Former adviser Mainul has however refuted all allegations raised against him.

Concern

FROM PAGE 16
Ashraf Kaiser, Syed Gausul Alam Shaon, AZM Saifuddin, Syed Apon Ahsan, Shami Kaiser, Sanaul Arefin, Asaduzzaman Noor, Tarik Anam Khan, Yusuf Hasan and Sarwat Ahmed.

Cabinet okays

FROM PAGE 1
The law minister said the amendment will be brought in the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973 in order to make it update. The amended law will be titled as International Crimes Tribunal (Amendment) Act 2009, he said.

There are provisions for trial of the armed forces and their associate forces under the 1973 act, he said, adding that his ministry has recommended an added provision to try individual and group crimes for the trial of war criminals.

An official concerned said that the draft amendment also proposed reforming the definition of "associate force" to include groups such as Rajakar, Al Badr and Al Shams militias who collaborated with the Pakistani occupying forces in 1971.

The law minister said a provision for appeal against the tribunal's verdict has also been included in the draft amendment, which is not in the original law.

"A temporary tribunal will be constituted for the trials. A prosecution team of five to 10 lawyers headed by a public prosecutor and an investigation committee will also be specially formed," Shafique said.

He said those who have skills, efficiency, quality, honesty and acceptability will be appointed as investigators and prosecutors for holding the trial of war criminals.

English is proposed as the official language for the trials but the amendment keeps Bengali as well, he said. Meanwhile, prime minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad yesterday told a press briefing that the proposal for amendment of the law was approved to bring those involved in 'anti-humanity' acts during the Liberation War in 1971 to justice.

The anti-humanity acts include killings, arson and rape, he said.

MOBILE COURT BILL
The draft of the Mobile Court Bill 2009 will now be placed in

the parliament and once it is passed as an act, the executive magistrates will regain their power to summarily try some offences to help maintain law and order and check criminal activities, said a secretary, who was present at the cabinet meeting.

The executive magistrates, who are officials from the administration cadre of the government, were stripped of judicial powers on November 1, 2007 with the separation of the judiciary from executive organ of the state through amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedures.

The secretary said the mobile courts against the criminal activities including adulteration can only be operated by judicial magistrates after separation of the judiciary.

But in the face of demand from the cadre officials, the immediate past caretaker government on October 29, 2007 promulgated the Mobile Court Ordinance 2007 empowering the executive magistrates to operate mobile courts and hold summary trials of some specific offences.

The ordinance, however, ceased to have effect, as the present parliament in its first session did not pass the ordinance act.

Sources said as per the draft bill placed by the home ministry in the cabinet, the district magistrates may delegate the authority to executive magistrates through written order to operate mobile courts in their jurisdiction for maintaining law and order and containing offences.

The mobile courts can only fine the offenders, in default, it can give the convicts three months' simple imprisonment, says the draft bill.

The law enforcement agencies along with other organisations concerned will be bound to give necessary assistance to executive magistrates in operating the mobile courts, sources said.

Govt's fair price

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observed the matter. The journalists informed high officials of the district administration of the irregularities.

Additional District Magistrate Md Fazlur Rahman, who is heading a three-member committee to investigate the food scam, told The Daily Star that they also found some irregularities as reported. The committee will soon submit its report, he added.

Acting Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ashok Kumar Debnath told this correspondent that they would send the report to the ministry concerned soon after receiving it.

"Actions against the culprits involved in the scam will be determined by the higher authorities," he said.

As per the rules, different institutions at the grassroots get sanctions through applications for TR rice for small repair and rehabilitation works, which they implement with the proceeds coming from the sales of the sanctioned foodgrains.

The government this time has fixed the rate per tonne TR rice at Tk 29,429, but the TR recipients in most cases are being compelled to sell their sanctioned grains at half the price.

Besides, there are allegations of gross irregularities against the institutions receiving the TR allocations from the government.

ASHULLA UNREST HC asks 14 labour leaders to surrender in 8 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed 14 labour leaders and workers to surrender before the trial court within eight weeks in connection with a case filed against them following the recent vandalism in garment factories in Ashulia.

The HC bench of Justice MA Wahhab Miah and Justice Abdur Razzak asked the law enforcers not to harass or arrest them in the case during the period.

The court also asked security personnel not to harass or arrest them in three other cases until submission of police reports in this regard. The three cases were also filed on charge of killing a garment worker and vandalism in the same incidents.

The petitioners include advocate Mantu Kumar Ghosh, adviser of Bangladesh Garment Strik Trade Union, its president Idris Ali and general secretary KM Ruhul Amin and office secretary Joly Talukder.

They appeared before the HC bench, seeking anticipatory bail in the case.

Ashulia police filed four separate cases on charge of vandalism, arson and killing of a garment worker during the three-day violent incidents in the factories at Ashulia.

Advocate Hasinur Rahman appeared for the petitioners.

Draft law

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"Necessary measures will be taken under the proposed law to ensure foolproof security of the family members of Bangabandhu," the home secretary told The Daily Star after the meeting.

Home ministry officials said the law needs to be formulated mainly to protect the two daughters of Bangabandhu - Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana.

The previous AL government passed a law on June 21, 2001 for providing full-time security of Special Security Force (SSF) to Hasina and Rehana. Hasina was then given the Ganabhaban, official residence of the prime minister, while Rehana was given a residence in Dhanmondi, stirring a huge controversy.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance government however scrapped the law in December 2001. The present government has decided to formulate a new law in line with a similar law that was scrapped by the BNP-led government.

Hasina survived several assassination attempts. On August 21, 2004, Hasina, the then leader of the opposition in parliament, survived a grenade attack while addressing a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital. The attack left 24 people including AL leader Ivy Rahman dead.

In 2000, 80-kg RDX was found in Gopalganj where Hasina's helicopter was supposed to land. She was the prime minister at that time. She also came under intense fire in Chittagong in 1988 that left several people killed.

Sources said Hasina and Rehana might get round-the-clock SSF and other security as per the draft law. They may even get special houses.

The prime minister's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad told reporters after the meeting that the cabinet meeting also approved Mobile Court Law and National Information and Communication Technology Policy 2009.

Seven school

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Abdul Gaffer, a school staff, said he raced to the scene hearing screams of the injured children lying in the debris of concrete, bleeding. They all were crying and looking for comfort by calling their parents, he added.

Mukti Rani Paul, acting headmaster of the two-storey school, said, "All of a sudden the chunk of plaster fell on the students of the ground floor creating a huge panic among the children and staff."

Sources from the school said the school building was last repaired in 1994. Thereafter the school authorities repeatedly requested the district education officer and engineering department for the renovation of the school building that was established in 1967. However, the government authorities took no measures against the school authorities' reminder.

Bimal Samadar, Public Relations Officer of Macadam, said that over 99 percent of their clients are aspiring non-professional drivers. Samadar added that whenever they recruit instructors they ensure educational qualifications and put them through a short training course.

"There is virtually no qualified instructor in our country so we have to train them to become instructors for our own fleet of training vehicles," Samadar said.

140 killed in China

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Rebiya Kadeer," the government said in a statement, according to Xinhua.

However Uighur exiles, who have long chafed at Chinese rule in Xinjiang, accused Chinese security forces of over-reacting in quelling peaceful protests by thousands of people, and said police had fired indiscriminately.

Riot police and other security forces armed with machine guns and carrying shields were seen in Urumqi on Monday, preventing further protests, according to an AFP reporter here.

The demonstrators who gathered Sunday had been demanding justice for two Uighurs killed last month during a fight with their Han Chinese co-workers at a factory in southern China. Accounts differed over what happened next in Urumqi, but the violence seemed to have started when a crowd of protesters refused to disperse.

Rioters overturned barricades, attacking vehicles and houses, and clashed violently with police, according to media and witness accounts. State television aired footage showing protesters attacking and kicking people on the ground. Other people, who appeared to be Han Chinese, said dazed with blood pouring down their faces.

Mobile phone service provided by at least one company was cut Monday to stop people from organising further action in Xinjiang.

Tensions between Uighurs and the majority Han Chinese are never far from the surface in Xinjiang, China's vast Central Asian buffer province, where militant Uighurs have waged a sporadic, violent separatist campaign. The overwhelming majority of Urumqi's 2.3 million people are Han Chinese.

Wu Nong, director of the news office of the Xinjiang provincial government, said more than 260 vehicles were attacked or set on fire in Sunday's unrest and 203 houses were damaged. She said 140 people were killed and 828 injured in the violence.

She did not say how many of the victims were Han or Uighurs.

Xinhua also reported 140 people died and that the death toll "was still climbing."

Xinhua said several hundred people had been arrested in connection with the riot and police were searching for about 90 other "keysuspects."

Uighur exiles condemned the crackdown.

"We are extremely saddened by the heavy-handed use of force by the Chinese security forces against the peaceful demonstrators," said Alim Seytoff, vice president of the Washington, D.C.-based Uyghur American Association.

"We ask the international community to condemn China's killing of innocent Uighurs. This is a very dark day in the history of the Uighur people," he said.

The association, led by a former prominent Xinjiang businessman now living in America, Rebiya Kadeer, estimated that 1,000 to 3,000 people took part in the protest.

Xinjiang Governor Nur Bekri said in a televised address early Monday blamed Uighur exiles led by Kadeer of causing the violence, saying, "Rebiya had phone conversations with people in China on July 5 in order to incite and Web sites... were used to orchestrate the incitement and spread propaganda."

China Mobile phone service was suspended in the region "to help keep the peace and prevent the incident from spreading further," a customer service representative in Urumqi said. The woman would give only her surname, Yang.

Adam Grode, an American Fulbright scholar studying in Urumqi, described a heavy police and military presence in the city Monday.

"There are soldiers everywhere, police are at all the corners. Traffic has completely stopped but people are walking on the sidewalks," Grode said.

He said authorities took him to the police station Monday morning after seeing him taking photographs from his apartment window. They deleted his photos, confiscated his passport and released him. They gave no reason for taking his passport, but said it would be returned Tuesday.

A government statement quoted by Xinhua said the violence was "a pre-empted, organised violent crime. It is instigated and directed from abroad and carried out by outlaws in the country."

Seytoff dismissed the accusations. "It's common practice for the Chinese government to accuse Ms. Kadeer for any unrest" in Xinjiang, he said.

Seytoff also read a brief statement from Kadeer: "The real cause of the problem lies with the Chinese government's policies toward the Uighurs. It's not alleged instigation by me or some outside forces."

The clashes Sunday in Urumqi echoed last year's unrest in Tibet, when a peaceful demonstration by monks in the capital of Lhasa erupted into riots that spread to surrounding areas, leaving at least 22 dead. The Chinese government accused the Dalai Lama of orchestrating the violence a charge he denied.

Two more

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The two met their tragic end while working on the third floor of a nine-storey under-construction building on Road-14.

Witnesses said Arif was caught on an electric wire while working and Lovely caught the same wire as she tried to save him [Arif]. Soon after Lovely caught the wire she fell on ground from the third floor.

Their fellow workers rushed them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors on duty declared them dead.

Earlier on July 2, another construction worker died of electrocution during work at Kadomtoli. On the same day a woman and her domestic aide died catching snapped Desa wire in Moghbazar.

On July 1 another woman and her son died being caught in snapped Desa wire in Lalbagh.

Date for Tipai

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the parliamentary delegation.

"Process is underway to form a team with members of the parliamentary standing committee on water resources ministry, secretary of the ministry, members of the joint river commission and water experts," said a press released issued by the parliament secretary.

The parliamentary body earlier formed a parliamentary delegation comprised of its six members without any BNP lawmaker as the party does not have representation in the committee. BNP immediately denounced formation of the team. However, committee member and lawmaker Hamidur Rahman Azad of Jamaat-e-Islami, a component of BNP-led four party alliance, has been included in the parliamentary team for visiting the dam site.

Committee Chief Abdur Razzaq later urged BNP to propose the name of one of its lawmakers for inclusion in the team but the main opposition party is yet to announce any name.

BNP earlier gave the names of five water experts for inclusion in the team as a condition for announcing the name of its lawmaker for the delegation.

The parliamentary body at a meeting at the Jatuya Sangsad Bhaban also discussed the ongoing rehabilitation works in the Aila-affected areas.

Banks are also responsible for industries becoming sick, he said, adding that they give the capital as loan, but not the working capital. As a result, many industries become sick.

The finance minister said banks are going to implement 'Basel-II compliance rule', and fresh loans are not likely to be defaulted.

On Sunday, he released a list of 2,196 loan defaulters in parliament.

On defaulted loans, he said however influential a loan defaulter might be, he is a defaulter. The government will take similar legal steps against all loan defaulters.

Muhith mentioned that most of the big loan defaulters are owners of sick industries. They now want waiver of interest, and say they are ready to pay the principal amount.

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