

PM's India visit to help resolve unsettled issues

Says foreign minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India creates a huge opportunity to resolve the unsettled issues affecting the relations between the two countries, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday.

The dialogue was organised ahead of the prime minister's visit to India starting from

December 18. The foreign minister did not comment on the arrest of Arabinda Rajkhowa, chairman of Indian separatist group United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA). She said Bangladesh is determined not to allow terrorists to use its land for any subversive activities against the country or its neighbours. Dipu Moni said, "There is a destructive fundamentalism which threatens us all. Every effort will be made to combat and eliminate terrorism originating from abroad and such as is grown on our own soil."

our unmatched way," the foreign minister said. Asked whether the government is under any political pressure, Dipu Moni said the ruling party was voted to power because of its strong stance against corruption, communalism and militancy. The present government would do everything to fulfil people's aspirations. The main opposition BNP had said it would wage a movement if any 'anti-state agreement' is signed with India. "If any political party has goodwill, it will cooperate with the government," she said. Addressing the inaugural session, MK Rasgotra, president, Centre for International Affairs of Observer Research Foundation in India, said

problems between Bangladesh and India have to be settled keeping in mind that people of the two neighbouring countries are "blood brothers." "We know the background of the problems and we can embark on a new type of relationship through talks," he said. He said violence has put the well-being of the people in the region under threat and they must get rid of it. Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes said the question of security today has many dimensions other than terrorism, which could be solved only through better understandings of the perspectives of different sides. BEI President Farooq Sobhan also spoke.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia visits Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday to see the preparations for the party's council to be held tomorrow.

Govt firm to safeguard human rights: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reaffirmed her government's commitment to safeguard people's human rights alongside ensuring their economic and social security.

"Human rights mean people will have food, clothe, shelter, proper healthcare services and quality education. Every citizen of the land will have freedom of expression and access to information with economic and social security," she said.

Hasina made the remarks when a five-member delegation of the United Nation Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), led by visiting special rapporteurs Magdalena Sepulveda and Catarina de Albuquerque, met her at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the morning.

Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

Hasina welcomed the UN independent experts to Bangladesh and said Bangladesh is a state party to all major international human rights instruments, including International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms

Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), etc.

"Our pressing concerns are to alleviate poverty, address people's basic needs and attain food security, strengthen democracy, establish good governance, eliminate corruption, strengthen institutions, establish the rule of law, tackle climate change challenges, provide energy security, counter terrorism, empower women and meet crucial infrastructure requirements," she said.

Hasina said her government is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of the vulnerable groups of people, particularly of women, children and minority communities.

As the UN delegation laid emphasis on ensuring proper sanitation and drinking water facilities for the people, the PM mentioned that the government of Bangladesh Awami League since its last tenure has been working to provide people with these two important services.

When the issue of stranded Pakistanis and Biharis came up at the meeting, the prime minister said the government keen to ensure their all human rights.

The UNOHCHR highly praised Sheikh Hasina's visionary leadership in recent international forums on climate change.

24 dredgers out of 28 inoperative!

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Niganj

Only four dredgers out of 28 in the country are fit for operations. The acting chief engineer of the Directorate of Dredgers even does not know the location and condition of the remaining 24 dredgers.

Water Resources Minister Romesh Chandra Sen and State Minister Mahbubur Rahman on a visit to the directorate in Narayanganj yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the irregularities and corruption in the directorate.

They expressed their dissatisfaction at a meeting with the high officials of the directorate. Local lawmaker Nasim Osman and other high officials of the directorate were present in the meeting.

The minister formed a four member technical committee headed by executive engineer of the directorate Abdul Aziz to locate the unfit dredgers and give a report within 15 days on their condition and how much money and time would be required to repair those.

Reform in law needed for implementation of RTI Act

BSS, Dhaka

Director of International Press Institute (IPI) David Dudge yesterday said the legal framework within which the media in Bangladesh operates should be reformed to ensure freedom of press and effective implementation of Right to Information Act.

Political influence on the media still remains in Bangladesh, he said adding both Awami League and BNP should stop all attempts to politicise the media.

He said this while speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city.

David Dudge is leading a three-member IPI delegation to Bangladesh.

Other members of the delegation Anthony Mills, IPI press freedom manager, and Trine Ostlyngen, media consultant of IPI Norway National Committee, and Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, IPI Bangladesh Committee president, also spoke.

Journalist Mozammel laid to rest

BSS, Dhaka

Mohammad Mozammel Huq, former president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and former press secretary to ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia, was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Shilori village under Choudhagram upazila in Comilla yesterday.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Jatiya Press Club in the city in the morning and the second at his village home after Asr prayers.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Awami League Presidium Member Obaidul Quader, Opposition Chief Whip Joyal Abidin Farroque, AL lawmaker Aslamul Haque, BNP lawmaker Shahid Uddin Chowdhury, BNP leaders Amanullah Aman and Khairul Kabir Khokan, AL leader Afzal Hossain, Information Secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury and Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad attended the janaza.

BFUJ President Ruhul Amin Gazi and Secretaries General MA Aziz and Altaf Mahmood, former BFUJ president Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, former secretaries general Shahjahan Mia and Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, DUJ presidents Jhal Alamgir and Abdus Shahid, general secretaries Omar Faruque and Muhammad Baker Hossain, JPC President Shawkat Mahmud and General Secretary Kamaluddin Sabuj also attended the janaza.

Acting BFUJ President Kartik Chatterjee and former JPC general secretary Swapan Kumar Saha were present on the occasion. Later, the information minister and the state minister for LGRD and Cooperatives paid their last respects to Mozammel Huq by placing wreaths on his coffin.

On behalf of Awami League, Obaidul Quader along with party leaders laid wreaths on his coffin.

Besides, BFUJ, DUJ and JPC leaders also placed wreaths on the coffin of Mozammel Huq.

Akhter Ahmed buried

BSS, Dhaka

Akhter Ahmed Khan, former secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Minister (Press) at Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, was laid to eternal rest beside his parents in the city's Jurain graveyard yesterday.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held at the National Press Club at 10:00am and the second one at noon at Razarawdi Primary School Maidan.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Awami League Presidium Member Obaidul Quader, Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University AAMS Arefin Siddiq, AL lawmakers Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Aslamul

Haque, former special assistant to the chief adviser of the caretaker government Dr M Tamim, AL Information and Research Secretary Afzal Hossain, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, Information Secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury and high officials of the foreign and information ministries attended the janaza.

BFUJ President Ruhul Amin Gazi and Secretaries General Altaf Mahmood and MA Aziz, former president Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, former secretaries general Shahjahan Mia and Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, DUJ President Shah Alamgir and General Secretary Omar Faruque, JPC President Shawkat Mahmud and a large number of journalists including BSS Chief Editor Ihsanul Karim Helal and Managing Editor Azizul Islam Bhuiyan also attended the janaza.

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni, BFUJ Acting President Kartik Chatterjee, former JPC general secretary Swapan Kumar Saha and Baby Moudud were present on the occasion.

Later, information minister, foreign minister and the state minister for LGRD and cooperative placed wreaths on the coffin of Akhter to pay their last respects.

On behalf of Awami League, presidium member Obaidul Quader along with a number of party leaders laid wreaths on his coffin.

Besides, leaders of BFUJ, DUJ, JPC and Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote placed wreaths on the coffin of Akhter.

QULKHWANI Qulkhwani of Akhter Ahmed Khan will be held at the JPC auditorium after Asr prayers today (Monday).

Girl commits suicide under wheels of train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage girl yesterday committed suicide under wheels of a speeding train at Moghbazar in the city.

Identity of the girl aged about 16 could not be known immediately, police said.

Sub-inspector (SI) Mesbah-ul-Alam of GRP said they recovered the body crushed under the wheels of a Kamalapur-bound train from Mymensing around 12:45pm at Wireless gate in the area.

He said "Locals and railway guards shouted at her while she was proceeding towards the train coming from opposite direction. The deaf to all pleas, the girl kept walking and was crushed, Mesbah said.



Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad places wreaths on the coffin of Akhter Ahmed Khan to pay his last respect to the late journalist at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS Process to set up tribunal begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday initiated the process of setting up the tribunal and other offices for holding the trial of 1971 war criminals.

The law ministry officials yesterday said that setting up the tribunal and offices might be completed within one month. Meanwhile, Law Minister Shafigue Ahmed yesterday told the reporters at his secretariat office that the government would start the process of the trial of war criminals after setting up of the tribunal and relevant offices.

ASSM Zahirul Haque, a deputy secretary to the law ministry, told The Daily Star that the engineers and staff of the Public Works Department (PWD) started shifting the

existing offices from 14 Abdul Gani Road building, where the tribunal and other offices for the trial will be set up.

Administrative Appellate Tribunal, three Administrative Tribunals and Directorate of Registration from 14 Abdul Gani Road building would be shifted to Janata Tower at Karwan Bazar.

The officials have fixed the places for setting up the tribunal, offices of the judges, prosecutors, investigators, security officials and rooms for the witnesses, journalists and observers of the trial, he said.

The parliament has passed the International Crimes Tribunals (Amendment) Act 2009 and taken resolution for the war crime trial and the government allocated Tk 10 crore in the budget for it.

JS to beef up security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The House committee at a meeting yesterday decided to beef up security in and around Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) Bhaban.

The committee recommended to the law enforcement authorities and other authorities concerned to deploy 80 additional police forces to strengthen the security of the parliament.

Abdus Shahid, chairman of the House committee, told journalists that they have taken the decision as different individuals have been receiving death threats and the parliament is not out of that threat.

Shahid, also chief whip of JS, was talking to the waiting reporters at his Jatiya Sangsad office emerging from the meeting of House committee.

"The committee thinks that security of parliament is not adequate comparing to its vast area," Shahid added.

He said construction of an underpass linking parliament building and six buildings of lawmakers on Manik Mia Avenue is underway.

The chief whip said the House committee also recommended to the Speaker to allocate Tk 3,500 per month for the lawmakers so that they can buy toiletries and other stationery.

WAR CRIME Dhaka to ratify Rome Statute of int'l court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will take steps to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) so that the ICC can hold trial of genocide, crime against humanity and crime of aggression in future in Bangladesh, Law Minister Shafigue Ahmed said yesterday.

He said if Bangladesh ratifies the Rome Statute 1998, it would get technical assistance from the ICC in holding trial of the 1971 war crimes.

He was talking to reporters after a meeting with ICC President Sang-Hyun Song at his secretariat office in the morning. During the talks, the ICC president requested the minister to take steps to ratify the Rome Statute.

The cabinet will finally decide on ratification of the statute, he said adding it will enable the country to protect human rights and establish justice.

The minister assured him of taking steps in this regard. Asked whether the ICC president discussed holding trial of war criminals, Shafigue told reporters that it is a domestic affair.

If Bangladesh ratifies the statute, the ICC can provide training to the prosecutors involved in the trial proceedings of the war crimes and provide logistic supports, the minister said.

1 electrocuted, two shanties gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was electrocuted while he was seeing the fire from the rooftop of his house that broke out at MCC Bihari camp and gutted two shanties in city's Pallabi yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Foysal, 18, son of Ahmed Ali of the area.

Police said the fire originated from a mosquito coil in the house of Saleha Begum at about 7:25am and soon engulfed the adjoining house of Altaf Hossain.

Iqbal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station said, "Foysal came in contact with a live electric wire while he was seeing the incident from the rooftop of his house."

On information, two firefighting units extinguished the blaze at about 7:50am. Foysal was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead, said the OC.

SEDITION CASE SQ Chowdhury granted bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail for two months to BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury in a sedition case.

After hearing a bail petition filed by Salauddin, the HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin also issued a rule upon the government to show cause why the petitioner should not be granted regular bail in this case.

The BNP leader appeared before the High Court for bail. The case was filed with Fatkchhari police station in Chittagong against Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, on December 3, for delivering 'provocative' speeches regarding August 15, 1975, and the historic verdict in Banga bandhu murder case.

DHAKA TODAY

Workshop Progoti organises a workshop on 'The office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and Civil Society: Working together to increase transparency and accountability'. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9:30am.

Report release World Bank and UNAIDS will jointly release a report titled '20 years of HIV in Bangladesh-Experiences and way forward'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6:30pm.

Art exhibition The inaugural ceremony of an art exhibition by Razaul Karim will be held. Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts. Time: 12:00noon.

Workshop Odhikar organises a workshop on ratification of the ICC statute by Bangladesh. Venue: Brac Centre Inn. Time: 9:30am.

Book launching The launching ceremony of a book titled 'Living with Tides and Tiger The Sundarbans Mangrove Forest' Venue: Words 'n Page, Gulshan-1. Time: 6:00pm.

View exchange meet FOWD organises a view exchange meeting on news presentation in sign language in electronic media. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 5:00pm.

Obituary STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamal Uddin Ahmed, a former secretary to the government, passed away at a city hospital on Saturday at the age of 64, says a press release.

He was buried at Banani Cantonment graveyard. His qulkhwani will be held after Asr prayers tomorrow at House-18, Road-19, Sector-14, Uttara in the city.

Abul Khair Saudagar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Khair Saudagar alias Abu Member, elder brother of Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem, passed away on Saturday night at the age of 84, says a press release.

He was buried at his family graveyard after namaz-e-janaza yesterday. Dhaka Khudra Byaboshayi Kalyan Parishad President MA Motaleb Bhuiyan expressed shock at his death and prayed for salvation of his departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.



Namaz-e-janaza of former National Press Club President Mozammel Huq was held at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

'Build memorial for martyred Indian soldiers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A memorial should be built to commemorate the sacrifices of the Indian soldiers who embraced martyrdom during the War of Liberation in 1971, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

The speakers also urged the government to name streets in the capital after the then Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, who was the chief of Indian army during the liberation war, and Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, general officer commanding in chief of the Indian and Bangladesh forces in 1971.

Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the discussion on 'Role of India and Friends in the Liberation War of Bangladesh' at the WVA auditorium in the capital to mark the 38th anniversary of the day when India recognised Bangladesh in 1971.

Ershad visits ancestral home in West Bengal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Former president HM Ershad yesterday reached his ancestral home at Dinhatra under Cooch Behar district in West Bengal, India on a four-day personal visit.

A large number of curious people and his relatives welcomed him.

During his address to the gathering, Ershad recalled the memory of late Kamal Guha, a former West Bengal minister and leader of Forward Bloc, who was his friend and classmate.

Replying to questions from media persons, Ershad expressed the need of re-introduction of train service between India and Bangladesh through Gitalaha.



Today is the sixth death anniversary of journalist Nripen Biswas, says a press release.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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