

Rohingyas get fair treatment

Says Razzaque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said Bangladesh is not mistreating Rohingya refugees as is being published in some international media.

"Despite being a poor country, Bangladesh has been providing shelter and other assistance to Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds."

"There was no crackdown on Rohingyas in Bangladesh, but an international media used such objectionable word," said the minister when UNHCR Country Representative Craig Sanders met him at his office.

Replying to Sanders' request to register the unregistered Rohingyas, Razzaque said any initiative to register them encourages them to enter Bangladesh, as they think international organisations will help them or resettle them in some developed countries.

There are around 24,000 Rohingya refugees in Kutupalong and Nayapara in Cox's Bazar while estimated four lakh unregistered Rohingyas spread all over the region.

Denied citizenship and persecuted in Myanmar, some two lakh Rohingyas infiltrated

the borders of Bangladesh. Many of them were repatriated, but many more later infiltrated.

There were talks several times between Myanmar and Bangladesh on repatriation without any significant development on the issue.

Stating that repatriation of the refugees to their own country is the permanent solution to the problem, Razzaque said they are creating socio-economic burden on Cox's Bazar.

UNHCR has to take an initiative on emergency basis for their repatriation, he added.

The minister said as long as Rohingyas are here, UNHCR has to increase assistance and take effective measures to repatriate them.

Agreeing to the fact that international media's information that Rohingyas in Bangladesh are ill-treated is not right, the UNHCR envoy said Rohingya problem has spread to the Southeast Asian region, including Thailand and Malaysia.

He appreciated the refugee camp management in Cox's Bazar camps and assured the government of increased assistance from UNHCR.



The official talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Chinese counterpart Wen Jiabao was held at the Great Hall in Beijing yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: PID

Army HQs' clarification

BSS, Dhaka

The army headquarters yesterday issued a clarification on a news item on army chief's visit to India.

An ISPR press release said that attention of the Army Headquarters has been drawn to a report on the Chief of Army Staff Gen Md Abdul Mubeen's visit to Siachen area of India, published in a section of newspapers on March 17 and 18.

Quoting different sources including an English daily (The Indian Express), the report said that Gen Mubeen's visit to Siachen is the latest addition of the steps taken one by one for several years in order to send the message to international community that Siachen glacier is the inseparable part of India.

The fact is that the official visit is approved by the Bangladesh government and following the visit programme drawn up by the Indian government, the army chief visited Army installation located in Leh town in Ladakh, the ISPR release said.

It points out that Leh area is located 490 kilometres inside north-east of Siachen glacier of India. Besides, the army chief visited the area, which is being visited by tourists from different areas of the world every year.

"Misunderstanding between two friendly countries may be created by such news published without knowing correct information, which is not expected," the release added.

COUPLE MURDER IN KHULNA Two sons shown arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two brothers have been shown arrested on charges of killing their parents at their home in KPS labour colony in Khulna on Tuesday night.

Niren Chandra Mandol, 55, senior security guard of Khulna Power Station, and his wife Reba Rani Mandol were killed in their bedroom. And a case was filed with Khalishpur Police Station on Wednesday.

Chittagong University student Rajib Kumar Mandol and his brother Sajib Kumar

Mandol, an SSC examinee, have been shown arrested as suspects in the case.

Sub Inspector SM Shafiqul Alam, investigation officer (IO) of the case, filed a petition with the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) yesterday for taking the two brothers on a ten-day remand.

The IO said that he had sufficient circumstantial evidence to suspect that the two sons might have been involved in the murder, because the main gate was locked and the bedroom was closed from inside.

TINNI MURDER CASE Ex-JP MP Ovi asked to appear before court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked former Jatiya Party (JP) lawmaker Golam Faruq Ovi to appear before the court on March 24 in connection with model Syeda Tania Mahbub Tinni murder case.

Judge Krishna Devnath of the District and Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after the prosecution appealed to the court for asking the accused to appear before the court on the next scheduled date.

The court also transferred the case to the Seventh Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka for its quick disposal.

On November 25 in 2008, another Dhaka court asked Ovi to appear before it, but he did not comply.

Tinni's body was found floating in the Buriganga on November 11 in 2002, and a case was filed with Keraniganj Police Station. Five persons, including Tinni's husband Saftap Uddin Pal, were arrested in this connection.

CANTONMENT HOUSE Khaleda's petition sent to chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's petition challenging a government notice that asked her to vacate the cantonment house was sent to the chief justice as Khaleda expressed "no-confidence" in a High Court bench.

The HC bench of justices Syed Mahmud Hossain and ATM Fazle Kabir sent the petition to Chief Justice Mohammad Fazlul Karim for necessary direction.

The court also termed the no-confidence submission by Khaleda's counsel unprecedented.

Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Khaleda's counsel, told the court that his client apprehended that justice would not be had from this bench as it was hasty for a verdict.

Earlier in the day, he sought four weeks' time before the hearing of the petition.

The court refused to grant the time, as Khokon did not place any specific reason for the delay.

The bench has already deferred the hearing four times this year.

Attorney General Mahbub Alam, however, opposed Khokon's submission and told the court that Khaleda Zia's counsels had been repeatedly asking for time with an intention to delay the hearing.

The attorney general was in favour of holding the hearing yesterday.

The court on May 27 last year stayed the eviction notice for three months asking Khaleda Zia to handover the house to the military estate officer by June 30 of the same year. It also issued a rule upon the government to explain as why the notice should not be declared illegal.

'Hold discussion in JS before signing int'l agreements'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists at a media workshop yesterday called on the government to hold open discussions in parliament and at academic levels before signing any international agreements.

The government should also put emphasis on conducting substantial research or holding opinion poll prior to signing any multilateral papers, they added.

The rights activists and academics made the call at the media workshop on 'International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Rome Statute' in the city.

Odhikar organised the programme in cooperation with Coalition for International Criminal Court and Swiss Embassy.

Gabriele Derighetti, deputy head of Swiss Embassy, Rebecca DE Lozada, programme associate of CICC Asia and Pacific, Salimullah Khan, chief academic adviser to law department of Stamford University, Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University and Odhikar Secretary Adilur Rahman spoke at the event.

Salimullah called on the government to carry out substantial research or holding opinion poll prior to signing any multilateral papers.

"Being a small country, Bangladesh should emphasise research prior to signing any international treaty or convention to boost the country's morale in the international community."

Addressing as the chair, Adilur said the government made a commitment to extending its hands by supporting the movement for international justice by formally joining ICC.

DE Lozada said, "Ratifying the statute would elevate the country's status to international arena and create scope for playing a constructive role against four crimes - genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression."

On July 17, 1998, international community reached a historic milestone when 120 countries adopted the Rome Statute, the legal basis for establishing the permanent ICC.

The Rome Statute entered into force on July 1, 2002 after ratification by 60 countries.

'Politicians still interfere in judiciary'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's judicial system is still under the influence of politicians and executives, though the judiciary was separated from the executive branch of the government in papers, Neeti Gobeshana Kendra (NGK) said yesterday.

The research organisation also pointed out a delay in setting up a judicial secretariat as the reason behind this.

At a programme styled 'Judiciary in Bangladesh: Review 2009' at the National Press Club in the city, NGK disclosed its research findings.

Sanaullah Mia, president of Dhaka Bar Association, said there was no noticeable improvement in making the judicial system independent during the last one year of the Awami League (AL)-led government.

Sanaullah further said that the attorney general's office is interfering in the judiciary very often, especially in political cases.

Mahbulul Haq Ripon, director of NGK, also spoke at the programme.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the ninth death anniversary of legendary poet Afaur Obaidullah, says a press release.

On the occasion, Abu Zafar Obaidullah Library will hold a milad mahfil at his village home at Babuganj in Barisal.

Abu Zafar served in the government as a minister, an ambassador and also an assistant director general of United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation Asia and the Pacific region.

He authored a number of books, including Satnarirhar, Ami Kingdombontir Kotha Bolchhi, Kokhono Rang Kokhono Sur, Komoler Chokh and Amar Somoy.

Qulkhwani

METRO DESK

Qulkhwani of Begum Hasiba Pokhraj, a noted social worker, will be held at her house at Kolakopa in Nababganj after Juma prayers today.

She died in a road accident on March 16 on Jamuna Bridge on her way to Rajshahi at the age of 48, says a press release.

Hasiba was the wife of Khondokar Shamsul Alam Pokhraj, a businessman and a valiant freedom fighter. She was associated with a number of organisations, including a high school and a free medical centre in Nababganj.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday protesting attacks on its activists by the BCL activists at Eden Girls' College.

Mob vandalises hospital in Gazipur after patient's death

UNB, Gazipur

Angry relatives of a patient and local people vandalised a hospital in Tongi following death of a young man due to alleged wrong treatment.

Family sources said Chan Miah, 25, of Ershadnagar was admitted to the United Hospital with chest pain early yesterday.

He died soon after the doctor gave him two injections, they said.

Enraged by the death of Chan Miah, his relatives and local people attacked and ransacked the hospital in the morning.

However, none was injured as doctors and other staff members fled the hospital during vandalism.

DU teachers protest torture of female students

DU CORRESPONDENT

The pro-BNP and pro-Jamaat teachers of Dhaka University yesterday formed a human chain on the campus protesting "torture" of female students at two girls' colleges in the city and "criminal activities" by BCL activists at other institutions.

Over 50 teachers under the banner of Teachers of Dhaka University organised the programme at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla around 12:00 noon.

Teachers said they formed the human chain protesting 'repression' on female students at Badrunnesa Girls' College and Eden Girls' College by BCL leaders and activists.

It was also a protest against chaotic situation at different educational institutions across the country through tender manipulation and extortions.

Speaking at the programme, pro-BNP teacher Prof ABM Obaidul Islam said BCL has created 'unrest' at educational institutions by tender manipulation and extortions.

Female education is being discouraged through doing 'repression' on them, he added.

Prof AFM Yusuf Haider, Prof Tasmeri SA Islam, Prof Shahida Rafiq and Prof MA Shahid participated in the demonstration.

1.4 lakh ton seeds to be given to farmers

UNB, Dhaka

Some 1.40 lakh metric tons of quality seeds of paddy, wheat and maize will be distributed among farmers to boost production in the next four years.

These improved varieties of seeds will be produced by BADC and BARI in selected areas under a Tk 597 crore project approved by the Ecnc on March 16.

Sources in the agriculture ministry said the country would produce 43.27 lakh metric tons of additional paddy and wheat by using the improved seeds.

The seeds will also be used for generation

in a bid to raise production of food grains and attain self-sufficiency in food.

Under the project, some 25,000 metric tons of paddy, wheat and maize seeds would be procured, processed and distributed among farmers during the current fiscal year.

About 26,500 metric tons of seeds will be distributed in 2010-11 fiscal, 28,000 metric tons in 2011-12, 29,500 metric tons in 2012-13 and 31,000 metric tons in 2013-14.

The project also aims at imparting training and technical backup to the project personnel, farmers and private entrepreneurs for quality seed production and utilisation.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:09pm today and rises at 6:03am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 37 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and Rangamati and the lowest of 17.5 degrees at Srimongal.

The 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	35.5	24.8	51.4	3
Chittagong	36.3	22.3	63	43
Rajshahi	35.5	18.8	46	38
Khulna	35.5	23.6	56	58
Barisal	35.7	22.8	60	61
Sylhet	36.1	21.1	40	40
Cox's Bazar	37.0	23.0	62	59

