



IS VANDALISM A WAY TO PROTEST?



Rickshaw-pullers damage over 100 vehicles and set fire to garbage and tyres from Mukhtangon to Rampura in the city yesterday after Dhaka Metropolitan Police extended a ban on rickshaws to eight roads. Unaware city dwellers caught up in the chaos run for safety while others request in vain not to damage their vehicles. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ, RASHED SHUMON



Farmers' group crosses

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were desperately seeking refuge from bitter cold in the desert.

Among the new arrivals, a group of around 100 Bangladeshis put their mufflers on and were shivering from the chilly weather and gusts of wind.

The group was waiting for a bus to take them to Choucha camp, just a few kilometres away. At the camp, they will have a shelter under a modern tent, blankets, food, potable water, healthcare, toll-free phone and entertainment by other people stuck there.

These facilities will be offered to the migrants until they board the aircraft to fly back home.

Of this group, about 30 had undertaken a 26-hour-long perilous journey from Sabah to travel 2,000 kilometres through trouble-torn Libya.

Though seemingly unusual, this particular group is Bangladeshi farmers sharing crops with Libyan land owners.

Their leader, Haji Kamal, from Sandwip, had been in Libya for the last 30 years. He shared crops on 100 acres of land and his men grew anything from chillies to tomatoes, potatoes, aubergines and various other vegetables throughout the year with the land owner providing the irrigation facilities.

At around 60, Kamal looked tired from the long journey. He lost the last of his belongings to Libyan bandits manning check posts on highways.

His language skills and Arab look, acquired over years of toil in the Libyan soil, did not melt the hearts of the bandits preying on innocent workers fleeing their country.

"It was harvest time and also suitable for preparing the fields for fresh sowing, but our dreams are over. I have nothing left anymore in that country," said Kamal displaying proudly his Bangladeshi passport as he posed for photograph with some of his fellow farmers.

Abul Khayer, a farmer from Noakhali, followed Kamal's footsteps soon after arriving in Libya four years ago.

"Being a farmer myself, I decided to see Haji Kamal when I heard about him and his farming profession," noted Khayer.

He had been working happily in the fields with modern equipment and irrigation facilities and earnings substantially.

According to him, farmers in Libya had the most advantages over many other migrants. They were respected and earned more money than many others.

Expatriates mentioned thousands of Libyans were killed since February 15 after many people rose against Gaddafi's 42 years of tyranny. It made Bangladeshis very worried about their future.

When the international coalition force on March 19 started bombing strategic points held by those loyal to Gaddafi, expatriates knew they were in imminent danger.

"Although bomb shells were falling ceaselessly around us, we decided to wait," said Abdur Razzak from Chapainawabganj.

"But over the last three nights before we started our journey to the border, debris from the powerful explosions fell on our dormitory and our leader Haji Kamal told us it was time to go home," added Razzak.

FOUR MORE BODIES FLOWN IN

Four more bodies of Bangladeshi nationals, who jumped from a ship on March 6 on their way to Greece from a Libya, were flown in to Dhaka yesterday, reports our correspondent.

The bodies have been kept in the mortuary of Sir Salimullah Medical College, confirmed Mafruha Sultana, director of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

Six other migrants' bodies, which arrived home earlier, are also lying in the same mortuary.

The bureau officials requested the family members of missing expatriates to contact them. The bodies would be handed over to them after confirming their identification.

According to BMET, at least 13 Bangladeshis died and another went missing after they jumped from the ship in an attempt to stay in Greece.

The authorities earlier handed over three other bodies of migrant workers to their relatives in Dhaka.

PM for global

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"The developed countries must come forward to help the countries, which are vulnerable to climate change."

She further said that adaptation to the climate change is not the only way to remaining safe from the disastrous impacts of the global warming. "Green house emission must be reduced to protect the globe from the impacts of climate change."

Describing Bangladesh as one of the countries most vulnerable to the climate change, Hasina said people here are not only fighting against poverty, natural disasters caused by global warming have also appeared as another critical problem for them.

"Climate change, in fact, is an injustice to our people. They're not contributing at all to the climate change, but they're the worst victims of the climate change," she said. He premier said steps to protect the globe from the impacts of climate change must be taken at the earliest possible time. "The more is the delay, the more we will

suffer."
The weeklong conference began on March 24. Some 300 environmental experts and activists from 60 countries are participating in the conference that will conclude on March 31.

State Minister for Forests and Environment Hasan Mahmud, climate change experts Dr Selimul Haque and Dr Atiq Rahaman, and Forests and Environment Secretary Mesbahul Alam also spoke at the function.

16 tonnes of

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A case was filed as per Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act against the factory's detained manager Mahmud Hossain and the owner.

Mentionable, DoE closed three factories in Hazaribag on same allegations last month. Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research later found dangerous levels of chromium in the feeds, says a press release.

Poultry and eggs become poisonous on consuming these, posing serious health hazards.

Hearing on charge

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indicted in the supplementary charge sheets on March 21.

Earlier, the court took into cognisance the charges against the 26 accused after the Criminal Investigation Department indicted them after a fresh investigation following a court order on February 3.

With them, total number of the accused now stands at 850. The charges include murder, arson, looting, hiding of bodies and sedition.

The court witnessed a heated argument between the prosecution and the defence on whether the hearing on the charge framing could be started yesterday.

Defence lawyers argued that the 26 accused will not be able to defend them as some of them are yet to appoint lawyers and others did not get necessary documents.

Prosecutor of the case Mosharrar Hossain Kajol then said the court can start hearing on the charge framing as the defence counsels received all documents against earlier charge sheeted 824 accused.

Defence lawyers then said there is no scope to conduct a hasty trial of the case considering the number of accused. "If you continue the hearing, then question will come whether the trial is being held following the CrPC," told Aminul Haq, one of the defence counsels, to the court.

The court said since the case is under one sessions hearing, the charge framing has to be held at a time. At this point, a large number of lawyers present in the jam-packed court room started shouting saying 'shame', 'shame'.

The court then adjourned the proceedings for 15 minutes. After resuming the proceedings, it allowed only the chief prosecutor to read the FIR filed on 28 February in 2009 with the Lalbagh Police Station.

15 drug

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the label of maximum retail price (MRP) are sold, says a press release of the commerce ministry.

Janata Medical Hall, Ahmed Medical Hall, and Janasheba Pharmacy were fined Tk 18,000, as they put on sale some medicines with expired date.

Chandpur Traders, Yeasin Traders, Selim Rice Bhandar, and Firoz Traders in Mohakhali kitchen market were fined Tk 28,000 for selling products weighing less.

Libya

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Libyans snatched all the money and valuables they wanted to take back home.

"They [Libyan protesters] attacked our camp in Darna twice -- on January 14 and February 18-- and took away everything we had. I was left with only a mobile phone which I kept hidden in the sleeves of my shirt," he said.

Ananada went on, "We had to take shelter in a local madrasa and then in a community centre where we used to get only a bread and some water a day. Our days were much worse on the Egyptian border where we had to stay in the open space."

"Thank God I could return home with the help of International Organisation for Migration on March 2, after waiting for five days at the border."

Ananda, 30, is the lone bread earner for his four-member family consisting of his parents and younger sister.

"I could save only around Tk 1 lakh while in Libya for around two and a half years. I did not get my pay for the last two months. Now I am running my family with the savings. I don't know what shall I do once this moneyspent," he said.

Ananda said he wanted to stay in the north African country for about five years and then come back with a considerable amount of savings to start a business.

"It will be a great help for me if the government arranges soft loans for the returnees. This will enable me to start a business and run my family," he added.

More int'l orgs

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organised by Italian Committee for Microcredit in partnership with Bologna University.

Global Center for Development and Democracy (CGDD), headed by Alejandro Toledo, former president of Peru, expressed full support for Prof Yunus and Grameen Bank.

In an open letter by its executive director, Ana Maria, it said, "On behalf of CGDD, and particularly, on president Alejandro Toledo's, we wish to express our support in these moments which we believe are not easy for you, your organisation and all the women members of your world-class institution that serves millions of poor people."

"Our organisation, which cares about international development, has been following very closely the happenings, and is very much concerned about the progress which could be lost if the country's leaders fail to appreciate what makes the Grameen Bank work."

The Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions Leadership or CARD MRI of the Philippines, which has more than 15 lakh members and clients, said, "We have witnessed your strong commitment for poverty eradication."

"We have witnessed how you have inspired many indi-

viduals of various professions, different institutions, donor agencies, cooperatives, all sorts of banks including commercial and international, to adopt and implement microfinance as an effective and strong tool for poverty eradication worldwide."

CARD MRI is a member of the Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association, Thailand, Microfinance Council of the Philippines, and the Women's World Banking, the USA.

Pakistan-based Kashf Foundation said Dr Yunus and Grameen Bank are today global icons and torchbearers for the mission to eradicate poverty and to provide sustainable choices to poor households across the world. The work of Grameen has been replicated across 100 countries and has benefited over 17 crore poor women globally.

"As South Asians, we are all extremely proud that Dr Yunus and the Grameen Bank were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, a veritable honour that highlights the pioneering role that Bangladesh has played in the field of poverty alleviation."

"We are opposed to the current campaign to maliciously malign the reputation of Dr Yunus and the government's attempts to remove him from office."

The foundation urged the government of Bangladesh to retract from its position and

allow Dr Yunus and the Grameen Bank to continue their work in the field of dignity building.

It said, "We have always viewed the Bangladeshi government as a supporter of microfinance programmes and it is through the active support of the government that Grameen and other MFI programmes have burgeoned across the country."

"The current stance of the government is therefore extremely surprising and equally unacceptable."

Kashf Foundation, the first specialised microfinance institution in Pakistan, said they have seen the positive impact that Grameen has had on the lives of poor people. As a result of Grameen's successes, similar programmes have been established in Pakistan, including the organisations Kashf Foundation and Kashf Microfinance Bank.

The foundation urged the Bangladeshi government to resolve the issue so that the work of Grameen, Dr Yunus and that of millions of women across Bangladesh continues growing stronger.

The supports for Yunus came after Bangladesh Bank terminated him from the office of managing director of Grameen Bank, causing outrage home and abroad, and prompting calls from countries such as the USA to reach a compromise.

Dig up untold stories

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print media category, for her story on the sexually tortured female victims of Narayanganj district.

Also, producer Lt Col (Retd) Kazi Sajjad Ali Zahir Bir Protik won an award, in the electronic media category, for an episode on a freedom fighter boatman broadcasted on Boishakhi television.

Each award winner received a crest and a cheque of Tk one lakh.

For the first time, a special award was given to the concerned officials of a Channel i programme titled 'Muktijuddha Protidin'

Channel i Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagor accepted the crest and a cheque of Tk 50,000.

Speaker Abdul Hamid, who distributed the awards as the chief guest, said journalist Bazlur Rahman always did responsible journalism and actively helped in the movements for realizing peoples' democratic rights through his newspaper write-ups.

Bazlur Rahman was one of the vital organisers of the liberation war, he added.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Dhaka University vice chancellor, also the award's jury board chairman,

emphasised the necessity of liberation war related journalism to present the realistic picture of the war period before the next generations.

Liberation war museum trustee Dr Sarwar Ali said the award acknowledges the journalists for their efforts to present the liberation war history through their stories and programmes.

Jurists of the Award including writer Selina Hossain, journalist Jaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, and Major (retd) ASM Shamsul Arefin, among others, spoke on the occasion.