

Minister

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to Tk 400 extortion at each designated point across the country.

Demanding an end to such unbridled extortion by police, he suggested removal of hat-bazaars (markets) from both sides of the highway to reduce the traffic jam.

The meeting chaired by Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain asked the district administration to take steps to remove traffic jams in front of shopping centres and from highways during the Ramadan.

The meeting asked the authorities concerned to make sure that drivers of private cars, jeeps and microbuses fasten their seat belts, and do not use cell phones while driving.

The communications minister asked the law enforcement to take legal action against motorcyclists who do not wear helmets while driving.

The meeting also asked the authorities concerned to take legal action against the violators of traffic rules.

Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on communications ministry Mujibur Rahman, divisional commissioners, metropolitan police commissioners and representatives of transport owners association and Road Transport Workers Federation, among others, attended the meeting.

Bangladeshi dies

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to India crossing Burimari border on Saturday night.

"BSF men chased my son and others while they were returning home crossing the river. They threw stones at them that killed Rafiqul," he added.

"We have sent a letter to the BSF of BS Bari camp in the morning asking its officials for a flag meeting but are yet to hear from them," Subbarao said.

The body was sent to Lalmonirhat General Hospital for an autopsy.

Roads

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Ministry sources say frequent accidents on many of those roads claim several thousand lives every year.

Countless potholes coupled with stagnant rainwater on roads across the country are making the usually short journeys long-hour hazards. The potholes filled with rainwater have also become a death trap.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun on last Sunday blamed the poor state of a road in her constituency at city's Dakkhin Khan for an accident.

Earlier on February 3, a number of Awami League lawmakers in parliament voiced concern over the poor condition of roads and highways across the country and held responsible the communications minister for the delay in repairing those.

Tofail Ahmed, an AL veteran, on that day described the sorry state of the road in Brahmanbaria and shared the bitter experience of his visit to the area.

Deputy Speaker Col (retd) Shawkat Ali, who was presiding over the House sitting, also supported Tofail.

HC summons

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the MD, while the two top executives of the company as to why they should not be asked to compensate the victims.

Four workers died on July 21 when a makeshift lift carrying them collapsed in a terrifying free-fall at an under-construction building in the capital's Kkrail.

The HC bench of Justice A H M Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore issued the order following a report headlined "Construction Sites: Safety rules defied" published in The Daily Star on July 23.

Asgar Ali, a worker of the building, earlier filed a murder case against four officials of the construction firm and a contractor in connection with the deaths.

But Asgar told The Daily Star that the Builders for Future Limited settled the matter by giving Tk 3 lakh to each of the victim's family, and they are now preparing to withdraw the case.

The court also issued a rule upon the government to explain within two weeks why it should not be directed to prosecute the persons who were allegedly trying to withdraw the case and settle it outside the court.

Transit thru'

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at a limited scale.

Officials at the ministries of foreign affairs and commerce said, a framework of transit agreement may be signed alongside two to three protocols during the Indian prime minister's Dhaka visit in September.

It is also possible that only the framework will be signed during Manmohan's tour and the protocols towards the year-end, they said.

The committee, led by Tariff Commission Chairman Mujibur Rahman, in the report recommended signing of the framework before introducing the facilities.

They also suggested inking of different protocols for different routes under the framework.

Formed in November last year, the committee submitted the report to the government in April but made no recommendation on the fees to be charged for transit.

The official said, the committee will recommend separate fees for routes on rail, road and waterway. They will be charged per kilometre per tonne.

The government will finalise fees through negotiation with India following the committee recommendations.

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92 percent implementation rate, so those allegations are wrong," she said.

In this connection, Hasina mentioned that the government has improved the power generation and already 1,900 megawatt of electricity has been included in the national grid after the present government assumed power.

She said that the government has to improve the power generation further as the foreign investment is increasing day by day.

Bangladesh is now an attractive place for investment. Huge investment proposals are coming every day. For more foreign investment we have to provide them electricity and we are committed to improve the situation," she said.

In this regard, the premier said that there is a problem the government is facing regarding foreign investment, which is land. "The land is limited in the country and we will not allow using the agriculture land for any

Dhaka rolls out

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State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Tajul Islam, Sheikh Hasina's daughter and an organiser of the conference Saima Wazed Hossain and BSMMU Vice Chancellor Pran Gopal Datta.

Sonia is in Dhaka at Sheikh Hasina's invitation to attend a conference on "Autism Spectrum Disorder and Developmental Disabilities in Bangladesh and South Asia" as the chief guest. She is expected to meet the foreign minister and call on the prime minister and the president during her 24-hour stay.

She will also attend a special ceremony at Bangabhaban where President Zillur Rahman will confer "Bangladesh Freedom Honour" posthumously to former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi. Sonia will receive the award, the highest Bangladesh honour for any foreign national, on behalf of her assassinated mother-in-law.

The award includes a 200 taka gold medal and a three-page citation that reads "Mrs Indira Gandhi stood by the side of the people of Bangladesh from the beginning of the Liberation War to the present day."

Diplomatic sources termed Sonia's visit a "wonderful idea" that will strengthen the ties between India and Bangladesh. India has a special relationship with Bangladesh, and particularly the Nehru-Gandhi family had been very close to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The plate on the left mentions that the award was conferred as the highest token of respect and gratitude of Bangladeshi nation for Indira Gandhi's immense contribution to Bangladesh's War of Independence.

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Sonia will speak at the conference on autism alongside Sri Lanka's First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa and Maldives vice-president's wife Isha Hussain. Fehmida Mirza, speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, was due to attend the conference, but could not come for pre-occupation at home.

Noted artists Qayyum Chowdhury and Hashem Khan designed the medal symbolising fraternity, peace and achievement.

Star

Butcher shops

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Fire fighters said around 40 mostly butcher shops were burnt to ashes.

"The fire took a few minutes to engulf the whole floor," said a butcher shop owner Saiful Islam.

He said he had 40 goats tied in an iron case in his shop. "All of them were burnt alive. I could do nothing to save the animals. I just ran for my life," he said.

Saiful said like some other meat traders he also lost a large quantity of meat ready for sale.

A vegetable vendor Mohammad Hasan Ali said he was asleep in his shop with two employees. He was awakened by fire alarm raised by other people living in the market.

It took about two hours for 11 fire-fighting units to douse the blaze.

The traders estimated the loss at about Tk one crore, though fire brigade officials said it would be much less.

Amini sued

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permission of the ministry.

Nazrul Islam Sarder, a lawyer of Dhaka Judge's Court, filed the case with the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against Amini on charges of making derogatory comment about the country's constitution.

According to the complaint, Amini told a meeting in the city's Lalbagh on July 14 that the recently-amended constitution will be thrown into the dustbin. Amar Desh, a Bangla daily, published the comment the next day.

The complainant also said the accused is a close collaborator of militants.

In the past, Amini along with his supporters brought out a procession in support of Afghan Talibans, the complainant added.

Meantime, a High Court bench yesterday summoned Amini to appear before it on August 2 to explain his remarks about the constitution. The bench earlier set the date for July 27 following a writ petition by writer and columnist Shahriar Kabir.

The HC also ordered the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner to take legal steps against the IOJ leader for making the comment.

BNP upbeat

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the government to disclose details of all deals signed with India. He hopes the government will discuss water sharing, transit deal and border killing with Sonia and ensure the country's interest in transit deal, Alangir said.

The BNP leader also said they have to see whether Bangladesh is getting the fair share of water and the border killing is stopped.

Sonia Gandhi arrived in the capital last night. The prime minister of India will also visit Dhaka soon and a number of deals including transit are expected to be signed during his visit.

The main opposition has been strongly opposing the government's move to provide transit facilities to India as it thinks the country is getting nothing in return.

The BNP leader told reporters, "We want to keep relationship with India on the basis of equality. Our chairperson has already said we have to see first how Bangladesh can be benefited from the transit deal."

Implementation of all deals including transit will depend on people's support, he noted.

Supply water

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since the present government assumed office.

In 2009, Wasa charged Tk 5.57 per unit which was raised last year to Tk 6.04 in the first phase and Tk 6.34 in the second phase.

Officials said Wasa is currently supplying 210 crore litres of water daily against the demand for 225 crore litres. Of the supply water, 90 percent comes from 587 deep tube wells while 10 percent from four water treatment plants.

Star

Gunman acted alone

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missing people and the toll could rise to 98, in the worst case.

NECESSARY!

In his first comment via a lawyer since he was arrested, Anders Behring Breivik expressed willingness to explain himself in court at a hearing likely to be held today about extending his custody.

"He has said that he believed the actions were atrocious, but that in his head they were necessary," lawyer Geir Lippestad told independent TV2 news, adding that his client admitted to both the shootings and the bombing.

Breivik was also arrested for the bombing in Oslo's government district that killed seven people hours earlier. Police believe Breivik drove to Utoeya after the explosion in the capital.

Lippestad, speaking late on Saturday, did not give more details of possible motives by Breivik.

Breivik hated "cultural Marxists", wanted a "crusade" against the spread of Islam and liked guns and weightlifting, web postings, acquaintances and officials said.

A video posted on the YouTube website showed several pictures of Breivik, including one of him in a scuba diving outfit pointing an automatic weapon, reports Reuters.

"Before we can start our crusade we must do our duty by decimating cultural Marxists," said a caption under the video called "Knights Templar 2083" on the YouTube website, which took down the video on Saturday.

A 1,500-page electronic manifesto written in English and said to be by Breivik - posted under the pseudonym of Andrew Berwick - was also put online hours before the attacks, suggesting they had been years in the making.

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Aid reaches drought-ravaged Somalia

AFP, Nairobi