

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-bazars (markets) from both sides of the highway to reduce the trafficjam.

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 enforcers 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," Subedar Based 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 Kakrail.

The HC bench of Justice A H M S h a m s u d d i n 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 of 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.

It will determine fees within next two weeks and make recommendations to the government accordingly, a Tariff Commission official said.

"I assume the agreements to be signed will be only on certain routes," Finance Minister AMA Muhith told journalists at a views

exchange meeting at the Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF).

Muhith said they will sit in August and finalise the routes for which deals will be signed.

The finance minister also said it will take time to open all the routes.

Muhith said the committee on transit submitted a primary report to the Prime Minister's economic affairs adviser and he was yet to get its copy. So, he is not in a position to say anything specific at this moment.

An official of the Tariff Commission said the framework of the agreement will contain, among other things, outlines of the routes and how those would be made operational. Besides, issues related to transit with Nepal and Bhutan will also be there.

The protocols will mention the amount of fees and other detailed modalities.

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.

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 Taliban, 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, Alamgir 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.

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 marxism," 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 planning.

"Once you decide to strike, it is better to kill too many than not enough, or you risk reducing the desired ideological impact of the strike," the book said.

The document and the video repeatedly refer to multiculturalism and Muslim immigration; the author claims to be a follower of the Knights Templar -- a medieval Christian organisation involved in the Crusades, and sometimes revered by white supremacists.

IMMIGRATION

Norway has traditionally been open to immigration, which has been criticised by the populist Progress Party, of which Breivik was a former member. The Labour Party, whose youth camp Breivik attacked, has long backed multi-culturalism to accommodate Norway's different ethnic communities.

About 100 people stood solemnly early on Sunday at a makeshift vigil near Oslo's main church, laying flowers and lighting candles.

"We are all in sorrow, everybody is scared," said Imran Shah, a Norwegian taxi driver of Pakistani heritage, as a light summer drizzle fell on unusually empty Oslo streets.

"At first, people thought Muslims were behind this," he said, referring to some initial suspicions that the attacks might have been by al-Qaeda, perhaps in protest at Nato-member Norway's role in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Breivik, tall and blond, owned a farming company called Breivik Geofarm, which a supply firm said he had used to buy fertiliser -- possibly to make the Oslo bomb.

Home-grown anti-government militants have struck elsewhere in the past, notably in the United States, where Timothy McVeigh killed 168 people with a

truck bomb in Oklahoma City in 1995.

The district attacked is the heart of power in Norway. But security is not tight in a country unused to such violence and better known for awarding the Nobel Peace Prize and mediating in conflicts, including the Middle East and Sri Lanka.

YEARS OF PLANNING

Breivik's lawyer Geir Lippestad told Norwegian media, "He wanted a change in society and, from his perspective, he needed to force through a revolution," Lippestad said. "He wished to attack society and the structure of society."

He added that the actions had been planned for some time.

The suspect is reported to have had links with right-wing extremists.

Police have not speculated on motives for the attack but the bomb in Oslo targeted buildings connected to Norway's governing Labour Party, and the youth camp on Utoeya island was also run by the party.

His lawyer, Lippestad, said: "He's stated that he went to Utoeya to give the Labour Party a warning that 'doomsday would be imminent' unless the party changed its policies."

Lippestad says the suspect remained calmed and balanced throughout a 10-hour night of interrogation.

"I think he's realised what he's done, and he views himself as sane," he said.

Norway has had problems with neo-Nazi groups in the past but the assumption was that such groups had been largely eliminated and did not pose a significant threat, says the BBC's Richard Galpin, near the island which remains cordoned off by police.

Aid reaches drought-ravaged Somalia

AFP, Nairobi

The International Red Cross said yesterday it had handed out 400 tonnes of food in drought-hit parts of rebel-held southern Somalia as the UN prepares to host emergency talks on the crisis in the region.

"The distribution took place in the Bardera district and passed without incident, with the knowledge of the authorities and the recipients," ICRC spokesman Yves Van Loo told AFP in Nairobi.

It is the first ICRC-led food drop direct to locals in Shebab-controlled zones since 2009, he said, adding that further food drops will take place in the coming days.

Pak troop dies in thwarted suicide attack

AFP, Peshawar

A Pakistani soldier was killed yesterday as troops foiled an attempt by a suicide bomber to attack a military checkpoint near the Afghan border, officials said.

The bomber's explosives detonated when he was shot outside the Chag Malai post seven kilometres (four miles) east of Wana, the main town in the lawless South Waziristan region, local official Saifur Rehman told AFP.

Withdraw

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Daily Star asking not to be identified.

A number of other villagers echoed him.

They said the outraged villagers took the law in their own hands and killed the students, as the law enforcers failed to take action against repeated incidents of robbery.

Responding to newsmen's question as to alleged involvement of law enforcers in the incident, Deputy Inspector General of Police Mohammad Amir Uddin said they will probe everything about it.

Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Savar police, said they were aware of robberies in the locality and a team was on patrol that night. But the angry villagers killed the six students before police reached the scene.

The investigation team interviewed some villagers including Abdul Malek who filed a robbery case against the victims.

Khair Bepari, father of Al-Amin, said the team heard the incident from his son for two and a half hours and took both of their signatures.

The victims' families appealed to the team for immediate withdrawal of the robbery charges against the six slain students and Al-Amin.

The slain students were Towhidur Rahman Palash, Kamruzzaman Kanto, Shams Rahim Shamam, Sitaf Jabi Munif, Ibrahim Khalil and Tipu Sultan.

Abdul Kader Suraj, disabled father of Kanto, leaning on the shoulders of his relatives arrived on the scene where his son was killed. He broke into tears seeing the ground where his son was lying dead, and demanded justice for the deaths of his son and his friends.

Families of some other victims also went to the scene for the first time along with the investigation team, as they dared not to go there alone.

Over two hundred villagers including women gathered around the investigation team and protested various news reports published on the issue, and claimed that the killed youths were robbers.

Savar police filed a murder case against around 600 unnamed villagers in this connection and arrested two accused -- Sanwar Hossain and Md Selim of Baradeshi -- on Saturday.

The Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate allowed police a two-day remand yesterday to interrogate the arrested two.