

# Rohingya issue

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reports RFA, a non-profit corporation that broadcasts news and information in nine Asian languages.

Asean Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan has taken "a personal interest" in the Rohingyas and had spoken directly to Bangladeshi and Myanmarese representatives during a meeting of the grouping's foreign ministers in Phnom Penh this week, according to the Asean website.

Both Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and her Myanmarese counterpart Wunna Maung Lwin agreed to cooperate and keep Asean informed on the status of the ethnic group following deadly ethnic violence between Rohingyas and Rakhines in western Myanmar in June, reports RFA.

"We will keep our eyes and ears on the plight of these unfortunate people," Surin said on completion of the Asean meeting and talks between Asean ministers and their foreign counterparts.

He said he appreciated the concern of the Asean people for the "sufferings" of the Rohingyas, who number around 8,00,000 in Myanmar and are considered to be some of the world's most persecuted minorities.

Aside from Myanmar, Rohingyas also live as migrant workers in many of the other Asean states -- Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Myanmarese President Thein Sein had requested the United Nations refugee agency this week to place Rohingyas in refugee camps or send them out of the country. His request was immediately refused by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Many of Myanmarese Rohingyas have lived in the country for generations, but Thein Sein said the ethnic minority is made up of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and that "we cannot accept them here."

Bangladesh, where an estimated 3,00,000 Rohingyas live, has turned back boatloads of the oppressed group arriving on its shores since the outbreak of the unrest.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was also in Phnom Penh this week attending the Asean meeting, met with Thein Sein in Siem Reap ahead of a US-Asean business forum and raised the issue of the Rohingyas with the Myanmarese leader, officials said.

A senior State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity,

## Waters

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Under Secretary General Shashi Tharoor.

In his latest book, Tharoor, a former junior foreign minister of India who quit the ministry in April, 2010, argued that "we must all help persuade the West Bengal leadership that these waters are not ours to give but a shared natural resource (as we accepted in the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan), which we should use responsibly and equitably."

The book "Pax Indica: India and the World of the 21st Century", which was launched by Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari here on Wednesday said West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's objections to signing of the Teesta water-sharing treaty between India and Bangladesh in September last year "was widely seen as a setback for a relationship that was once again beginning to blossom after a long freeze."

Mamata had pulled out of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's entourage to Dhaka.

Tharoor wrote that cooperation on sharing of Teesta waters is indispensable for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to be able to claim that Bangladesh had "gained from her friendship with India".

## CNG auto-rickshaw strike called off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Drivers of CNG-run auto-rickshaws last night called off their indefinite strike following assurance from the communications minister to meet their demands.

"We have withdrawn the strike as the minister has assured us over the phone that he will hold a meeting with us and find out a suitable solution to our problems," Zakir Hossain, general secretary of Dhaka Zilla Auto-rickshaw Sramik Union, told The Daily Star.

Minister Obaidul Quader said he would take necessary measures to release the workers, who were detained by law enforcers during strike hours, added Zakir.

Two associations of the drivers enforced the strike in the capital on Wednesday to press home their 10-point demand including stopping collection of higher daily deposits by the auto-rickshaw owners; cancellation of route permit system for auto-rickshaws; and provision of necessary parking spaces.

## Beast of a father

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under Katiadi upazila of Kishoreganj on April 23 this year.

Police said they cracked the case two and a half months after the murder. Quoting witnesses, they said the father, Shamsuddin alias "Khasta Dakat", strangled his youngest daughter Mohana Akhter with the help of elder daughter Babita Akhter and three others.

They dumped the body near a pond.

On Thursday, police arrested Shamsuddin and Babita while they were fleeing a relative's house. A judicial magistrate's court sent the father and daughter to prison.

On April 24, the day after the killing, Shamsuddin lodged a murder case against Abdul Motaleb alias "Kajol Master" and his five family members.

While investigating, Katiadi police found the case statement riddled with inconsistencies. At one stage, they quizzed the victim's mother Helena Akhter and got some vital information.

Helena told police she saw one Nazrul Islam Khan and some others talking to her husband in whispers and moving suspiciously in their house on the fateful night.

Following up the leads, police arrested Nazrul Islam who later confessed his involvement in the murder.

In his statement, Nazrul said they killed the victim to grab the properties of Kajol Master.

Sub-Inspector Rakibul Islam of the police station has filed a murder case accusing Shamsuddin, his daughter and three others.

## Get int'l survey

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environment, human habitation and economy.

Addressing a human chain programme in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital's Topkhana, they also called on the Indian government to cancel its plan for building the dam before conducting the survey.

The speakers said if the dam is built without any concern for the fate of around 80 lakh haor residents, they might have no choice but to beg for their livelihoods.

The Indian government has decided to construct the dam on the Barak river at Tipaimukh of Manipur state.

The haor residents also urged the Bangladesh government to take effective measures for collecting signatures of some other countries to ratify international river convention, which is imperative to ensure due rights over the common rivers.

They said although the government had formed a haor development board more than 30 years ago, successive governments did nothing to activate it.

Organised under the banner of "Residents of Haor Areas," the programme was addressed by green activist Habib Raja, among others.

On Friday, a car bomb killed a leading female politician, Hanifa Safi. No one has claimed responsibility.

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