

Dhaka, Phnom Penh to sign four deals

Cambodian PM arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen arrives here this morning on a three-day official visit when Dhaka and Phnom Penh are expected to ink four deals to boost bilateral relations.



This is going to be the highest level visit from Cambodia. Hun Sen is coming at the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Bangladesh premier visited Cambodia on January 21-23, 2001.

Hun Sen will lead a delegation comprising deputy premier, foreign affairs minister, agriculture minister, forests and fisheries minister, minister of culture and fine arts and senior officials of the Royal government of Cambodia.

The official talks between the two premiers will be held tomorrow, and SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

End 5-year circle of instability

British envoy calls upon political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert W Gibson yesterday urged all political parties to strengthen democracy and put an end to the "damaging five-year cycle of electoral violence and instability."

"I hope all political parties will refrain from violence and confrontation and work together urgently to strengthen democratic accountability," SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Shakib at it again

FROM PAGE 1 will be given no prizes for guessing that at the eye of the storm was Tigers superstar Shakib Al Hasan. This time Shakib was reportedly involved in a scuffle with spectators who, it was learnt, were taunting the all-rounder's wife -- who was standing above the dressing room area -- during the rain break.

"There was an incident and there was some misunderstanding," Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star over the phone. "We have heard the version of one of the parties, and we will look into it in greater detail once the series is over. I cannot say anything more at this moment."

The Daily Star understands that Shakib was told of the incident involving his wife, after which he came out of the dressing room and confronted the offending spectators. It was also learnt through eye witnesses that Shakib physically attacked the spectators quite brutally and that security personnel had to ask him to stop, after which the involved parties were taken to the CEO's box where the matter was resolved for the time being.

Other than the obvious indiscretion of laying hands on paying spectators, there are two other questions that can be raised. It is strange that during an international match outside information -- by which Shakib came to know of the incident -- can enter the dressing room and more alarmingly, how a player involved in the match can exit the dressing room and enter the general viewing area.

"It was not in my control and neither did it happen near me," said skipper Mushfiqur Rahim when asked about the incident after the match. "I did not hear about it at the time; I was busy calculating the equations of the match. I think you will get a better idea if you talk to the management."

"Of course (I regret it). You hear a lot of things and of course one may feel bad. But whatever a spectator does or says, we have to accept it and take it in our stride. The fault was ours -- not just his but the whole team's. It can happen to anyone, but the whole team has to suffer."

On condition of anonymity, a BCB official said that it is a serious offence to physically assault a spectator and as far as he knows, there are serious ICC-sanctioned consequences for such an action. Moreover, he was of the opinion that a player entering the spectators' zone during an international match was a serious security breach and may lead to an investigation.

It may also be mentioned that Shakib has been a repeat offender when it comes to indiscipline. During the second ODI against Sri Lanka in February, Shakib made a vulgar gesture to a live TV camera and was subsequently banned for three matches. He was also in hot water during the ICC World Twenty20 when he gave a



PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladesh has turned fever pitch ever since the World Cup kicked off in Brazil on June 12. With loyalty divided mostly between two camps, the Argentina section of fans makes sure the flag flies high and handsome before their beloved team's early Monday morning clash against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ministry asked to study feasibility

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Most ministers in the meeting favoured having the Dhaka-Chittagong Expressway elevated on the existing four-lane road. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will make the final decision in this regard, added Kamal.

After conducting the feasibility study, the government will pick the strategic partner for construction of the under-

ground railway, he mentioned.

The purchase committee also approved Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation International of Australia, Oriental Consultants of Japan, Associated Consulting Engineers Consultants Ltd of Bangladesh, and Castalia Ltd of New Zealand as consultants for a feasibility study on the expressway project. The government

will pay the consultants around Tk 84 crore for the service.

The consultants will make a detailed design of the project and estimate the cost of the scheme.

The purchase body endorsed the appointment of a consultant to enhance the institutional capacity of the Dhaka Mass Transit Co Ltd. A joint venture company led by the Japan-based

Oriental Consultancy Co has landed the job at a cost of around Tk 27 crore.

The Dhaka Mass Transit Co Ltd has been implementing the metro rail project.

The meeting okayed Tk 152 crore erosion prevention work in the 1.3-kilometre area of the Padma at the Padma bridge project site. The army will do the job with funds from the Padma bridge project.

First case of Bangladeshi MERS victim detected

FROM PAGE 16

cough and respiratory difficulties on June 9. On information, researchers collected and tested the blood samples at the IEDCR and found the virus, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

As per the rules, the IEDCR has reported this to the World Health Organisation, Moshtak said.

Those who came in contact with the patient are under surveillance of the National Rapid Response Team at the IEDCR.

The patient is recuperating, said Moshtak.

The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), which was first identified in 2012, has affected a total of 700 people in 22 countries of the world. Most of them were found in Saudi Arabia, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Of the total 700 people, 209 persons, or around 30 percent, died, he said.

Scientists have yet to identify the

source of the virus, but camels are suspected, Moshtak added. The virus can transmit from affected person to others, he added.

The symptoms of those affected by the virus are respiratory problems, coughs and cold.

"If anybody feels so, we advise them to report to the nearest hospital," he said.

As cautionary measures, Moshtak Hossain suggested that all maintain hygiene practices, including washing

hand, stopping spitting here and there and covering mouth while coughing or sneezing.

He also advised that the affected person is kept isolated when admitted to the hospital, and wearing masks before seeing the affected person.

The IEDCR would set up a desk at the Shahjalal International Airport in a day or two for those travelling from the Middle East for a voluntary check up.

"If anyone wants, he or she can report to us at the desk," the physician said.

Bought out!

FROM PAGE 1

Chisty with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court, Sherpur, in July 2009.

The complainant accused Chisty and 12 others of killing his freedom fighter brother Saidur Rahman on November 2, 1971 and his father Mokhesur Rahman, then a union parishad chairman, on November 9, 1971 after brutal torture at the Pakistan army camp in Jamalpur.

The murder was reported in Jamalpur Muktiyuddher Itihash, a book on the history of the war in the district, and also in the March 14, 1972 issue of the Bangla daily Purbadesh.

Hamidur lodged another case against Chisty and 13 others with Sribardi Police Station in Sherpur on July 13, 2009, on charges of murder, arson, loot and rape during the war of independence.

Another victim, M Fazlur Rahman, filed a case with the Jamalpur Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in 2009, accusing Chisty and three other Al-Badr men of killing his father Saiduzzaman on November 12, 1971.

Despite such legal moves, Chisty managed to get his name placed on the list of freedom fighters.

In 2009, around 60 freedom fighters from Bakshiganj, Jamalpur, applied to the Muktiyoddha Sangsad central command to drop Chisty's name from the list. They also called upon the district social service officer for cancellation of the honorarium provided to Chisty.

THE FAKE

Wahidur Rahman, chief engineer of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), managed a false certificate in 2004 to get his tenure extended, according to war heroes closely involved with the Sangsad.

Several freedom fighters from Wahid's home area in Chouddagram, Comilla, said he had neither participated in the Liberation War nor obtained any training as a freedom fighter.

Wahid's name was not found in 'Muktibarta', a list of freedom fighters, prepared by the 1996-2001 Awami League-led government.

"He [Wahidur Rahman] never fought in the Liberation War," Mainuddin Pintu, office secretary of Muktiyoddha Sangsad's Comilla district command, told The Daily Star.

Aga Masum, who was deputy commander of Chouddagram unit Bangladesh Liberation Force (BLF) in 1971, said, "Wahid is not a real

freedom fighter. He will not be able to say where he took his training."

Asked under which sector he had fought and from where he had received training, Wahid declined to say anything in this regard.

The High Court on May 26 suspended his candidacy for the central command council election for three months following a writ petition filed by a freedom fighter.

The petition questioned his candidacy and said he might misuse his powers as LGED chief engineer to win the election. Later, the Supreme Court stayed the HC order for two weeks.

The Liberation War Affairs Ministry on May 14 sent a letter to Wahid asking for documents backing his claim that he was a freedom fighter. The letter mentioned the ministry had also wanted those documents earlier but he had provided nothing.

In response to this letter, Wahid submitted some documents but the ministry was not satisfied with those, sources said.

Similar allegations are rife against SM Mortuja Hossain, who hails from Fatikchhari, Chittagong.

Borhanuddin Chowdhury, ex-commander of Fatikchhari Muktiyoddha Sangsad, told The Daily Star that Mortuja Hossain didn't fight or get training during the Liberation War.

LGED CONNECTION

Many desperately want positions in the central command council since there is big money involved -- around Tk 2 lakh a day from Muktiyoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra and around Tk 7 crore annually, or 4 percent, from the lease money the government earns from haat-bazaars.

Money also changes hands for places on the freedom fighters' list.

So, according to sources, Wahid did whatever he could to ensure his victory and that of his panel.

The engineers under the LGED ministry worked for him across the country. They were directly involved in the election campaign.

They spent huge sums on buying votes and managing district

commanders. In many places, local administration and elected representatives helped Wahid manipulate the election, alleged freedom fighters.

Sources said Wahid even formed a committee comprised of his colleagues, including Executive Engineer Md Baset, assistant engineer (admin) Zahirul Islam and Assistant Engineer (Dhaka zone) SM Feroz for coordinating his election campaign and maintaining liaison with executive engineers in districts.

Sources also said all election posters

of Wahid and his panel were printed from the LGED's printing press at Agargaon in Dhaka.

Asked about engineers' participation in the election campaign, Wahid said it was not unusual. "I am the chief engineer and so engineers campaigned for me."

Moshiur Rahman Ranga, state minister for Local Government and Rural Development and Cooperatives, said his ministry was yet to receive any such allegation.

"If we get specific allegations that engineers personally campaigned for any individual, we will take initiatives to cancel the polls results of that specific district."

Talking to The Daily Star, several freedom fighters and district commanders admitted to getting money and phone calls from local engineers to support Wahid. But none of them agreed to make comments on the record.

Major (ret'd) Zia Uddin alleged that Wahid had stigmatised the Muktiyoddha Sangsad election by using "illegal" money. "He [Wahidur Rahman] also violated the electoral code of conduct through using his power as a government official."

On top of that, Wahid is not a freedom fighter, said Zia Uddin.

Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, ex-chairman of the central command council, alleged Wahid had stuffed the ballot box with the help of engineers in districts and upazilas.

He alleged that some Tk 5-10 lakh were distributed among the district commanders and freedom fighters to

buy votes and support.

Both Zia and Ahad demanded a fresh election.

Ahad has already sent a letter to the chief election commissioner as well as the cabinet secretary demanding cancellation of the gazette on the election results.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is probing an allegation of illegal accumulation of wealth by Wahidur Rahman.

Contacted, Monirul Hoque, secretary general (administration) candidate of Maj (ret'd) Zia Uddin's panel, said that there were irregularities in the election. GH Morshed Khan's panel had bought votes in almost all areas.

Shafiqul Bahar Majumder Tipu, secretary general (finance and planning) candidate of Ahad Chowdhury panel, claimed some upazila chairmen, municipal mayors and in some places MPs had captured vote centres and stuffed ballot papers.

He said it was very unfortunate that persons like Asaduzzaman Arju, who celebrated Bangabandhu's assassination by distributing sweets; Shah Alam, bodyguard of collaborator Shah Moazzem, razakar Babul Chisty, corrupt official Wahidur Rahman and fake freedom fighter Mortuza had become Muktiyoddha Sangsad leaders.

Ahad Chowdhury has announced that a commander-level conference would be held at the Institution of Engineers today. Sources say that from the conference, he will make a call for a grand rally of freedom fighters in the capital.

Contacts with several leaders reveal that aggrieved freedom fighters are now considering floating a separate organisation.

Najmul Hassan Pakhi, who was a candidate for secretary general (relief and rehabilitation), told this correspondent that those who had used money for winning the election would never work in freedom fighters' interest.

He said a vested quarter had grabbed the Muktiyoddha Sangsad by luring freedom fighters with money. "Those who did this will definitely use the organisation in their own interest, not for the freedom fighters."

Pakhi, who fought for the nation's freedom in the Chittagong Hill Tracts under the leadership of Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni, regretted that real freedom fighters had sold themselves to power and money.

"My heart is bleeding...I am frustrated," said the war hero in an emotion-choked voice.

Khaleda terms Hasina mother of all godfathers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina is the "mother of all godfathers in the country," Khaleda Zia said last night.

She spoke to family members of Laxmipur BNP leaders, who had been killed or had fallen victim to forced disappearances in the last eight months.

"People cannot get anything good from those who patronise and shelter criminals," the BNP chief said, referring to the premier's recent announcement in parliament that she would take responsibility of the Osman family in Narayanganj.

Seventeen opposition activists have been killed and six others have been subjected to forced disappearances in Laxmipur since October last year at the hands of the Rapid Action Battalion, police and Awami League cadres, according to BNP statistics.

Human rights are being violated every day, as there is no rule of law in the country, Khaleda said.

The former premier demanded that the government arrest Rab Additional Director General Col Ziaul Ahsan immediately and bring him to book, SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

AL's Afroz wins Barisal by-polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Ruling Awami League - nominated candidate Jebunnesa Afroz won the by-election to Barisal-5 constituency yesterday, which raised allegations of low turnout and vote rigging.

She bagged 1,83,629 votes while her rival Bangladesh Nationalist Front (BNF)-nominated Saiful Islam Liton got 6,136 votes.

Election officials claimed that 55 percent of the voters had exercised their franchise but according to local journalists and polls observers, the actual turnout was very low.

Huge fake votes were cast, they said.

The Daily Star correspondent saw a handful of voters during his visit to at least 15 polling stations.

Whenever journalists went to a centre, law enforcers alerted supporters and polling agents of the AL candidate by blowing whistles. Some people immediately lined up purporting to be voters before the media.

Only 5-10 percent voters cast their ballots, said Enayet Hossain Chowdhury, secretary of the Fair Election Monitoring Alliance and former secretary of Barisal Nagarik Parishad.

Vote rigging took place as agents of BNF candidate Saiful were absent from the polling stations and so no one was there to challenge casting of fake votes, he said.

The correspondent went to cast his

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Jobs for 19 lakh

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calculation method based on GDP (gross domestic product), Shamsul Alam, a member of the General Economics Division of the planning ministry, said one percentage point of GDP growth represents employment generation for around 2.5 lakh people.

"If we take the 7 percent GDP growth for the next fiscal year, employment generation will be for 17.5 lakh people, while another 2-2.5 lakh people will go abroad for jobs," he said, adding that 95-96 lakh people were employed in the last five years.

The planning minister cited the ICT sector as a major area for employment generation, especially for the educated young generation. "We have taken many projects for the unemployed but educated youth. "Learning and earning" is one of them, and through this 50-55 thousand young people can be self-employed," he added.

Higher employment generation is possible in the ICT sector with comparatively less investment, he said, adding: "A Tk 200 crore spinning mill can generate direct employment to only 650 people, but if the same amount is invested in the ICT sector, at least 5,000 people will get new jobs."

Replying to queries, the minister said there were some parameters to achieve before Bangladesh could turn into a mid-income country.

The parameters are maintaining certain per capita income for three years, developing a human index, a usual economic advancement and economic resilience during economic pressure or downturn.

"We are on the right track considering all the parameters to be a mid-income country," he observed.