

Killings, forced disappearance, won't be accepted

Says Dr Kamal

UNB, Dhaka

Taking a swipe at the government, eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said people have said no to abduction, forced disappearance and killings in the country.

"Forced disappearance, killings and abduction will no longer be accepted on the soil of this country. People of Bangladesh have rejected all these. People of the country can't be cowed down any longer by such forced disappearance and killings," he said.

Dr Kamal, also the president of Gano Forum, made the remarks while addressing a discussion organised by Oikyabaddha Chhatra Samaj at Jatiyo Press Club yesterday evening.

Criticising the arbitrary ban by a group on the entry of some eminent persons of the country in the Central Shaheed Minar, Dr Kamal asked who are declaring ban against whom? Who gave them such power and right?

He said, "If the government didn't have a hand in this, they must speak up and take action."

Recalling the glorious past of student politics in the country and its achievement, Dr Kamal said Bangladesh had never bowed down its head to any evil force in the past

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



A group of fishermen at Shibpur in Tangail returning home yesterday with smiles after fishing in a local waterbody. Fishes are now available in low-lying areas as floods caused by heavy rains washed them away from ponds and lakes into low-lying land.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

Mosharraf

FROM PAGE 16 and defamed her at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club on December 31, 2012.

Siddique quoted Mosharraf as saying, "If the present [AL-led] government wants to stay in power by organising the national election under a partisan government, Hasina will have to face similar consequences her family did in 1975."

Mosharraf pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ataul Haque read out the charges to him.

The BNP leader is now in police custody in a money laundering case.

CASE AGAINST FAKHRUL
The same court yesterday adjourned till January 1 next year the hearing of the charge framing against BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and 45 others in an arson case.

The case was filed on April 29, 2012 against them in connection with the torching of a vehicle in front of the Prime Minister's Office during a countrywide hartal enforced by the BNP-led alliance.

The court passed the order in response to a petition seeking adjournment of the hearing.

BNP leaders MK Anwar, Fakhrul, ASM Hannan Shah, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Mahbub Uddin Khokon and 33 others were present in the court while Mirza Abbas, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Oli Ahmed and five others remained absent.

Bodi gets bail

FROM PAGE 16

The ACC filed the case with Ramna Police Station in the capital on August 21, accusing the legislator from Cox's Bazar-4 constituency of amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement.

His lawyer Abdul Matin Khasru told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar to his client's release from prison following the HC order since he is not accused in any other cases.

Meanwhile, Khurshid Alam Khan, counsel for the anti-graft body, said the commission would move an appeal before the Supreme Court for staying the HC's bail order.

On October 12, Bodi ended up in jail after a Dhaka court rejected his bail petition in the corruption case. He had surrendered before the court on expiry of his four-week bail granted by the HC.

Saving a wild

FROM PAGE 16

The forest officials immediately brought a boat and tied the elephant to it. They slowly tugged the animal ashore.

"It was a risky effort as the elephant was wild and we did not know how it would react to our approach," Azam said. "But as soon as we dragged it ashore, the animal could stand on its feet."

But hearts sank as the elephant has not eaten anything since then. It is weak and can hardly move.

A three-member vet team from the Chittagong veterinary university is now treating the elephant. Antibiotics and vitamins are being administered.

But forest officials dread that it might be a losing game as the wounds are quite deep and may be badly infected.

Azam said Dhaka forest office has been contacted to get experts on treating this kind of injured animals.

There are only about 250 elephants in the wild in Bangladesh in addition to about 100 vagrant and 100 domestic ones, Dr Monirul H Khan of Jahangirnagar University said. In Bangladesh, elephants are critically endangered.

"But human-elephant conflict is severe as grazing grounds are overtaken by humans," said Dr Monirul.

Truly Down

FROM PAGE 16

They discovered volcanic rocks from Vanuatu contained tiny crystals of zircon, carried up in magma from the depths by the volcanic plumbing systems.

Using radiometric dating techniques, the crystals were dated at up to three billion years old.

The range of ages of the zircon crystals closely matches the age of the rocks that make up northern Australia.

Carl Spandler, one of the study's authors, says the zircon "shouldn't be there" and its presence has major implications for how scientists understand continents are made.

"There is nothing else like it in the south-west Pacific," Spandler said in a statement.

"Just because island chains or land masses may be far removed from each other today, doesn't mean that they always were. This calls for a rethink of how we calculate the rates and processes of generating new crust on Earth," he said.

The fragment of Australian crust now under Vanuatu is thought to have separated from the mainland prior to the Cenozoic era, around 100m years ago.

Gas hope for winter

FROM PAGE 1

great degree. Presently, Bibiyana is pumping out 50 mmcf of new gas.

Gas supply situation worsens every winter as low temperature freezes a natural gas by-product "condensate" in the transmission pipeline, narrowing gas flow. However, the outlook this winter appears better because of increased production, and also launching of two new gas compressor stations in the national grid. The compressor stations are supposed to stabilise gas flow pressure.

The officials noted that they expect an overall improvement at consumer level -- from home users to commercial users -- this winter.

This also makes Bibiyana a monster gas producer, accounting for almost half of the country's gas production (around 1,100 mmcf). In contrast, the country's oldest and large Titas field produces around 520 mmcf. Many experts criticise such high volume of production saying it would damage the gas structure of Bibiyana field, leading to its untimely death.

"This is not true. Chevron has found more gas by drilling in new areas in Bibiyana," said a well-placed Petrobangla official.

A few months ago, Petrobangla certified Bibiyana to have one trillion

cubic feet (tcf) more recoverable gas than the previously certified 4.2 tcf. As per Petrobangla's analysis Bibiyana's gas flow pressure was expected to decline from 2023 unless more new gas was found, he noted.

"I wonder how much these critics really know about Bibiyana," says Chevron Bangladesh chief Geoff Strong. "Bibiyana is a large gas field, with the capacity to safely deliver more energy to the nation. Protecting the reservoir is very important to us. It is done not only by following international good practices but also Chevron's high standards."

Strong noted, "The Bibiyana Expansion project was approved by Petrobangla and it is consistent with our Gas Sales Agreement."

Discovered in late nineties, the Bibiyana field started gas production from 2007. Its expansion project began in mid-2011.

"Despite many problems we faced in the last three years, the expansion progressed as per the plan. We have had good safety performance. We also supported the local community with jobs and business opportunities. We hired rice farmers and turned them into expert scaffolding workers," the Chevron chief added.

Under the expansion scheme

Chevron has drilled 14 new wells. Once the expansion is completed, not only Bibiyana would produce a staggering 1,100 mmcf of gas but also an additional 4,000 barrels of condensate (a liquid fuel) as a gas by-product worth \$175 million a year. It already produces similar quantity of condensate that is processed into petrol, diesel and kerosene for the country's consumption.

The government has meanwhile installed a new pipeline from Bibiyana to Dhanua to transmit this additional gas to the national grid.

Chevron is also working on increasing production from its Jalalabad field from late next year or early 2016 by drilling and producing gas from three new wells. This will increase gas production by 70 to 90 mmcf.

"I have never worked in a place that has made me so proud to be a part of a nation's wellbeing. We produce around half of Bangladesh's total natural gas, and this gas is approximately 80% less expensive than imported diesel fuel, fuel oil or LNG. This low-cost energy is driving economic progress and positively impacting the livelihood of millions of people," notes Strong, who lauded Chevron's high standard of operation in Bangladesh.

India names 3 top

FROM PAGE 16

The government filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court yesterday naming Pradip Burman, a former executive director of the Dabur food group, billion trader Pankaj Chimanlal Lodhiya and mine operator Radha Timbola as among those under scrutiny.

The government said in its affidavit it was "committed to disclose the names of persons holding illegal money... following due process of law, and in all cases where tax evasion is established".

The government was under pressure to file the affidavit following petitions including from activist Subramanian Swamy, who has waged an aggressive campaign to prosecute wealthy people with undeclared funds offshore.

Sambit Patra, a BJP spokesman, called disclosure of the names "a historic day in the black money case".

"The process of disclosure of names has started," Patra told reporters, referring to a list that local media says contains hundreds of names.

Still knotted

FROM PAGE 1

tourism sectors. About reopening of the UAE labour market for Bangladeshis, the foreign secretary said, "There's a hurdle which is known to all and there was no detailed discussion on the issue."

The United Arab Emirates PM noted that some UAE airlines like the Emirates and Ethihad have been doing good business in Bangladesh. He thanked the Bangladesh premier to this end.

Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan and State Minister for Labour Mujibul Haque Chunnun were present at the meeting.

About the two deals -- The Agreement on Security Cooperation between the Government of the

United Arab Emirates and the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh; and The Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners -- signed between the two countries yesterday, Additional Home Secretary Kamal Uddin Ahmed said the deals would play an important role in building confidence between the two nations.

"The two deals were inked to boost cooperation in containing terrorism, arms and drug trade as well as human trafficking," he added.

The UAE, the second largest manpower destination for Bangladesh after Saudi Arabia, has restricted its labour market for the Bangladeshis. At present, more than one million Bangladeshis are working in the Gulf state.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, media adviser to the PM; and AKM Shameem Chowdhury, press secretary to the PM, were present at the briefing.

Three deals signed

FROM PAGE 1

Sheikh Hasina and Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE vice-president, prime minister, and ruler of Dubai, at Zabeel Palace in Abu Dhabi.

Under the security cooperation, Bangladesh and UAE would work together to combat terrorism, halt smuggling of arms and drug, and human trafficking.

Bangladesh and the UAE would also share information on various crime, criminals' background and stop malpractices in the recruitment process of manpower.

The transfer of jailed prisoners is aimed at facilitating social rehabilitation of convicts in their own countries and

giving them the opportunity to serve out their sentences in jails at home.

If a Bangladeshi was sentenced by a court in the UAE, he or she might be transferred to serve the sentence in Bangladesh. However, death-row inmates would not have this opportunity.

As many as 1,000 Bangladeshi convicts are now in jails of the UAE.

Once transferred, the convicts would be able to have visits by their families and relatives. Under the deal, repatriation costs could be shared between the two countries.

The government has already allocated a plot of land in the diplomatic enclave of Gulshan in the capital for

construction of the UAE embassy.

Dhaka hopes the UAE would allocate a similar piece of land for the embassy of Bangladesh in Abu Dhabi and Consulate General of Bangladesh in Dubai.

The "Agreement on Security Cooperation" and the "Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners" were signed by State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and UAE Interior Minister Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The agreement on the piece of land was signed by Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and his UAE counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

A chance to bridge gap

FROM PAGE 1

calling for a fresh election, as well as US reservations about governance issues in Bangladesh.

Dhaka that has been giving the US the cold shoulder over the issues of Grameen Bank and its founder Prof Muhammad Yunus since 2011 is now making all-out efforts to strengthen its ties with Washington by overcoming the past hostility.

Meanwhile, ahead of the Bangladesh-US Partnership Dialogue, Dhaka has turned down a US proposal to join its coalition in the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), saying Bangladesh will not join any alliance formed to fight the Islamic State.

Dhaka, however, informed that Bangladesh was ready to join UN-led initiatives, if there was any, to extend "humanitarian support" to the affected people in Iraq and Syria and that Bangladesh believes in independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and Syria.

Issues related to labour, regional connectivity, climate change, counter terrorism and food security will also

come up in the discussion, foreign ministry sources said.

Dhaka will ask the US to be considerate during the next review of restoration of GSP (Generalised System of Preferences) facilities for Bangladesh, as the country has already implemented most of the preconditions set by the US in the "Bangladesh Action Plan 2013" following the Rana Plaza collapse last year.

It will also stress the importance of duty-free, quota-free access for Bangladeshi products to the US market.

Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque will lead a 10-member delegation at the discussion with his counterpart Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the United States Wendy R Sherman.

Haque is also scheduled to meet US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Nisha Desai Biswal on Wednesday.

A joint declaration on "Bangladesh-US Partnership Dialogue" was signed on May 5, 2012 during former US secretary of state Hillary Clinton's visit to Bangladesh.

'JMB brought in bombs

FROM PAGE 16

The NIA, which is probing the October 2 explosion, has already found that all accused in the case and their associates are members of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh.

However, there has been no official confirmation, as of yesterday, from New Delhi on media reports that the JMB was planning to kill Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and BNP chief Khaleda Zia, in efforts to throw Bangladesh in total chaos.

An Indian home ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told our New Delhi correspondent that there was no information as yet about any killing plot.

After an hour-long meeting Mamata, Indian Home Ministry Special Secretary Prakash Mishra told reporters, "We discussed the issue with the chief minister. The chief minister assured us to extend all cooperation and work together with the Centre to fight terrorism."

Apart from Doval and Mishra, National Security Guard Director General Jayanta Narayan Chowdhury and two senior intelligence officers attended the meeting.

They were later joined by West Bengal Chief Secretary Sanjay Mitra, Home Secretary Basudeb Banerjee, the state's top police officer GMP Reddy and Kolkata Police Commissioner Surajit Kar Purakayastha.

Mamata had initially resisted a probe into the blast by the NIA, saying the West Bengal police were competent enough for the job.

But she came under fire for her opposition.

The fact that so many top officials of Indian security establishment visited Burdwan and met Mamata showed the anxiety in New Delhi over the rising

network of JMB in West Bengal, especially in Murshidabad, Nadia and other districts bordering Bangladesh.

The persons arrested in connection with the blast allegedly told the police about another house where more bomb makers were hiding, a kilometer away from the blast site.

Eight days after the state police searched and sealed the house, the National Investigation Agency found 39 improvised explosive devices in one of its toilets.

First coarse

FROM PAGE 16

Asked about the rice-import despite the surplus, Qamrul said some high-quality rice, especially aromatic rice like Basmati, is usually imported on commercial basis.

Besides, some of the rice may have been imported as fodder, he added.

The food minister also said a decision to import 2.5 lakh tonnes of wheat from Ukraine was taken recently.

Wheat would also be imported from Russia and the discussions are underway, Qamrul said.