



Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor shakes hands with Malaysia's acting minister for tourism and culture Mustapa Mohamed after signing an MoU on cultural, arts and heritage cooperation in the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Malaysian counterpart Najib Tun Razak in Putrajaya.

PHOTO: BSS

## KARACHI UNIVERSITY Prof Imtiaz barred from attending conference

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka University Prof Dr Imtiaz Ahmed yesterday expressed his displeasure at Karachi University's decision to bar him from attending a conference on the campus.

He termed the university move a "barrier to freedom of speech".

"I got surprised hearing the decision, but [there is] nothing to do," he told UNB over the phone.

The DU professor was supposed to present the keynote paper at the conference titled "Challenges of Transition in Social Sciences" yesterday organised by the Pakistani university's social sciences faculty.

"I was supposed to fly to Pakistan on December 1 but they have told me not to go," said Prof Imtiaz, a teacher of International Relations and also the director of Centre for Genocide Studies at DU.

Responding to a question, he said either Jamaat-e-Islami or any local organisation, probably raised questions about his writings on the Liberation War of 1971, and the university authorities apparently accepted their suggestion.

"It's very natural that an academic will keep on writing. I didn't write anything against the people of Pakistan. I wrote about the role of Pakistan in 1971 which is known to all," he said.

Many in the Pakistan have also expressed their dissatisfaction with the university decision, said the DU teacher.

The administration of Karachi University has stopped Bangladeshi scholar Prof Dr Imtiaz Ahmed from participating in a conference on the campus, reportedly giving in to pressure from a student organisation, The Dawn has reported.

Sources said that the university took the step following a meeting of the vice chancellor with representatives of a student organisation that was strongly against Prof Imtiaz's participation.

Their opposition, the sources added, had stemmed from the Bangladesh government's handling of Jamaat-e-Islami leaders.

Jamil Kazmi, president of Karachi University Teachers Society, said teachers in principle supported the freedom of speech, and no student organisation should be allowed to interfere in academic matters.

## JP lawmakers

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no increase in the foreign investments.

Chhatra League, the student body of the ruling Awami League, and Jubo League, the youth front of the AL, are engaged in factional clashes. Teachers are being killed. However, the government is not seen taking any steps in this regard, he alleged.

Stating the people are not living in peace, Ershad said people are in the extreme level of insecurity. That is why they want a change. They do not want AL or BNP in power anymore.

## Graft rising

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position with Guinea, Laos, Kenya and Papua New Guinea.

Followed by New Zealand and Finland, Denmark ranked the least corrupt country in the world while Somalia and North Korea jointly sit at the bottom of the list.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said Bangladesh's profile was overshadowed by the government's failure to fight corruption, curtailment of Anti-Corruption Commission's independence and lack of professionalism and moral courage of the ACC, and grabbing of land, rivers and wetlands.

Hall-Mark, Destiny and share market scams, Padma Bridge corruption conspiracy and graft over railway recruitment contributed to Bangladesh's poor ranking.

Besides, the Rana Plaza collapse and cases of loan defaulters having political links were among the deciding factors.

"The highest deposit of ill-gotten money with the Swiss Bank was from Bangladesh last year while the second highest number of buyers of 'second home scheme' in Malaysia is also from Bangladesh," he said, giving examples of the powerful quarters' wealth accumulation disproportionate to their known income.

This is just an outcome of corruption in a collective manner at political and administrative levels, he said.

TIB Chairperson Sultana Kamal said, "The government's sweeping denial of corruption and a culture of impunity and protection of those accused of corruption have contributed to Bangladesh's downfall."

Corruption in Bangladesh goes unchecked, as constitutional bodies like parliament and judiciary as well as statutory bodies such as the Human Rights Commission, the ACC and Information Commission cannot assert power and play due role for the executive branch's overriding influence everywhere, she said.

"We get the government's reaction to corruption perception but no response to prevent it," said Sultana Kamal, also a prominent human rights activist.

There is hardly any other country like Bangladesh where general people are so deeply affected as a consequence of corruption of the powerful quarters. Deaths in road crash, for example, are just a consequence of some kind of corruption, she said.

The survey findings suggested having a functional parliament, an effective and independent ACC, rule of law, freeing law enforcement agen-

cies from political influence, and coordination among the ACC, the agencies, the attorney general, the comptroller and auditor general, National Board of Revenue and Bangladesh Bank to overcome the dismal situation.

In his reaction, ACC Commissioner M Shahabuddin Chuppu said the report didn't reflect the actual situation.

The cases of Hall-Mark and Destiny scams, railway recruitment corruption and forgery of freedom fighter certificates were turned into success stories, as powerful people involved in the scams were brought to book, he said.

If considered from a practical perspective, the TI findings would not be acceptable, he said.

Bangladesh sat at the bottom of the global ranking for five consecutive years from 2001 to 2005. In the subsequent years till 2012, the country hovered between the third and the 13th position from the bottom of the list.

The Corruption Perception Index, which defines corruption as abuse of public office for private and political gains, is prepared on the basis of data collected from multiple globally-credible sources, said Iftekharuzzaman.

Bangladesh's rating in corruption perception this year is based on findings gathered from seven globally-reputable survey sources against a minimum requirement of three, he said.

No data generated by any of TI's local chapter was considered for the analysis or global rating.

The surveys, used for rating Bangladesh, included Economist Intelligence Unit-Country Risk Assessment, Global Insight Country Risk Ratings, International Country Risk Guide, World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey, World Justice Project-Rule of Law Index and Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index.

The analysis was based on data collected over a period of three and a half years between 2011 and 2014.

In an instant reaction, BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan said the TIB report proved that corruption rose in the country.

"Graft is rising day by day as there is no transparency in the administration and the government," the BNP leader said at a discussion at Jatiya Press Club.

Corruption has always gone up during the tenure of Awami League government, he claimed.

the river a few days later.

With Nuruzzaman, 11 out of 15 arrested Rab men have so far given confessional statements in connection with the gruesome killings, for which Commanding Officer of Rab-11 Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander SM Masud Rana were sacked from their forces and put behind bars.

Nur Hossain, who allegedly paid Tk 6 crore to the Rab men for killing Nazrul over political rivalry, is in an Indian jail for illegal entry into the country.

## Dhaka, KL

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year to meet the shortfall of 62,000 workers in the plantation sector.

"If they can fit in well, we can consider bringing in more Bangladeshi workers in future," he added.

About 299,000 Bangladeshi workers were gainfully and legally employed in the country's construction and manufacturing sectors, mentioned Najib.

Bangladesh officials said the protocol on the employment of workers will pave the way for sending workers to Sarawak province, outside mainland Malaysia, for working in the plantation sector.

As per the previous deal of 2012, a worker's minimum remuneration including all other allowances, incentives and benefits was RM (Malaysian ringgit) 900. However, the salary of a worker in Sarawak will be RM 800 (1 RM= Tk 22.52) as per the law of the province.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon and Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor signed the deals on behalf of the Bangladesh government.

## Mamata agrees with Delhi on Indo-Bangla enclave swap

*She might announce her new stand at Cooch Behar today*

UNB, Dhaka

The Trinamool Congress government of West Bengal has decided to withdraw its objection to the long-pending land-swap deal between India and Bangladesh.

Chief Secretary Sanjay Mitra informed the Indian Union Home Ministry last week that the state government wanted to settle the enclave issue which is being dragged for over six decades now, reports Kolkata-based daily Anandabazaar Patrika.

However, the state government wants the Indian central government to take up the issue of developing the land area that will be added to West Bengal, in terms of administration and infrastructure, the report said yesterday.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee might announce the new stand of her government at a rally in Cooch Behar today. The venue of the chief minister's rally is very close to the Bangladeshi enclave, which suggests that the reports about her making a big announcement today could be true.

Mamata had hinted at her party's changing role on the enclave issue before the Lok Sabha election in March. When the draft of the land boundary agreement was made during a parliamentary panel meeting last week, the representatives of the TMC agreed to it.

The new stance is a marked departure from what it had said earlier on the issue. Mamata had stalled talks between India and Bangladesh over the Teesta water-sharing and also pulled out of the Bangladesh-bound entourage of former prime minister Manmohan Singh.

## Jabbar's war trial ends

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delivered anytime.

Earlier, prosecutor Zahid Imam sought capital punishment for the former Jatiya Party lawmaker for his alleged involvement in the war crimes committed in Pirojpur during the 1971 Liberation War. On the other hand, state-appointed defence counsel Mohammad Abul Hasan prayed to the tribunal to exonerate Jabbar of all the charges.

The alleged chairman of Mathbaria Thana unit of Peace Committee, an auxiliary force to the Pakistani occupation army, is facing five charges of crimes against humanity and genocide committed in May and October of 1971.

The charges include killing 36, forcefully converting 200 Hindus to Islam, looting and torching 500 houses in several villages of the district.

"Considering the gravity of his crimes and his propensity for committing those, we want his capital punishment," Zahid told the court, adding that, many civilians of Mathbaria were killed by Razakars on Jabbar's direction.

"The accused himself shot many people dead and instigated Razakars to kill another 22 of Angulkata village in 1971", he added.

The prosecutor said no when the tribunal chairman asked him whether any "mitigating circumstance" would be applicable to Jabbar.

Meanwhile, the defence lawyer during yesterday's hearing raised a question over the weapon the war crimes accused had allegedly used to shot one Shokhanath Khorati dead.

One of the witnesses said Jabbar used a pistol but another said it was

a rifle, argued Mohammad Abul Hasan.

Over this "contradiction", Zahid argued that the incident took place 42 years ago and therefore the defence would not get any benefit from such "discrepancy" between the two statements.

Later, Justice Jahangir Hossain, a member of the tribunal, asked the prosecution to clarify why all the allegations of crimes brought against Jabbar were committed either in May or October, even though the war started in March and ended in December of 1971.

In reply, the prosecution said it was not possible for them to find out what Jabbar was doing during the other months of the war. The answer apparently did not satisfy the tribunal.

A total of 24 witnesses have testified against the war crimes accused while none was brought in favour of him by the defence.

**SUBHAN TRIAL**  
Meanwhile, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday fixed today for hearing prosecution's rebuttal against defence counsels' arguments in the war crimes case against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdus Subhan.

Earlier, the three-member tribunal led by Justice Obaidul Hassan had fixed yesterday for the hearing. The new date was set after Prosecutor Zead Al Malum sought time, citing the illness of another prosecutor, who will place the rebuttal.

Subhan, a nayeb-e-ameer of Jamaat, faces nine charges of war crimes, including genocide committed in Pabna during the Liberation War in 1971. Subhan, however, has pleaded not guilty.

## No terror finance

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M Veerappa Moily attacked the BJP president saying he should have understood the sensitivity of the issue as it dealt with a close neighbour.

"He should not forget he is admitting that Indian money is being used to finance terror activities. It is a very damaging statement. Either he is irresponsible or he is making political statements to malign some political parties in West Bengal," he said and demanded an apology from Amit Shah to the country and people of West Bengal.

Moily said, "Is the government working at cross-purposes? Everyone knows that Amit Shah is the right hand man of [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi. That means any statement made by the BJP government or ministers, it has to be taken with a pinch of salt."

Trinamool Congress leader Sudip Bando Padhyay said, "Amit Shah is basically an uninformed person. He has no knowledge of the subject nor any idea of what he has to say in a public meeting."

CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury found the minister's statement "strange and contradictory" to what Shah had claimed in the public meeting in Kolkata that there was a link that has been established and that was why the National Investigation Agency was there.

"Now for the minister of state to

give a statement in the House clearly indicates that there is some deal between Trinamool and BJP because BJP requires Trinamool's support to get out of Rajya Sabha stalemate," he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has meanwhile said, "Some people think they can say anything they want."

"I never speak without evidence. I know my limits. Some people think they can say anything they want just because a section of the media is supporting them," Mamata said yesterday in an apparent reference to Shah's claim that Sardha chit fund money was used in the Burdwan blast.

"Catch me if you can... The surge of development will continue. I am a fighter. I will keep fighting. Counter me politically if you can," she said.

"Amake chamkale ami gorjai. Amake dhankale ami borsai [if I am threatened, I thunder. If somebody tries to browbeat me, I pour out]" she said.

Hitting out at a section of the media, which, she alleged was constantly spreading canards to put her government in bad light, Mamata said at a rally in Jalpaiguri that "Just like you should never eat adulterated food, you should also avoid adulterated news."

"Some shops sell bad food. Some shops sell good food. Similarly, some sections of the media sell bad news," she said.

## Target free trade deal

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The meeting, added the foreign secretary, discussed various issues of mutual interest, especially the trade and commerce, migrant workers and investment.

Both the countries agreed to take active measures to reduce the current trade imbalance which is now disproportionately in favour of Malaysia.

On signing of an FTA between the two countries, Shahidul said the Malaysian premier has agreed to initiate negotiation to this end.

Both the leaders agreed on duty-free and quota-free access of Bangladeshi products to Malaysian market, especially pharmaceuticals goods, cement, jute and jute products, ceramics and footwear.

Malaysia imported only \$136 million worth of goods from Bangladesh against the export of around \$ 2.1 billion. Razak attributed the trade imbalance to the rising import of palm oil from Malaysia.

The foreign secretary said initially some 12,000 Bangladeshi workers would work in Sarawak state of Malaysia under the protocol on amending the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the employment of workers.

The workers will be selected from the database and would be given

proper training. If things proceeded successfully, the number would rise to 60,000, he added.

About the Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, Razak said there are some 299,000 legal Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia mainly in the services, plantation, and construction sectors and the number could be raised.

Hasina proposed forming a Bangladesh-Malaysia Investment Forum. The issue will be discussed in the next joint commission meeting in Malaysia next year.

She requested her Malaysian counterpart to support Bangladesh in becoming a dialogue partner of the Asean. Malaysia is the next chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

The Malaysian leader assured Hasina of continuing its support in technical and higher education.

She invited Razak to visit Bangladesh at a convenient time. Razak had been in Dhaka last year.

Md Abul Kalam Azad, senior secretary of Prime Minister's Office; Senior Home Secretary Mozammel Haque Khan, and PM's Press Secretary AKM Shamim Chowdhuri were present at the briefing.

The PM is expected to return home today.