

## Australians sick of being lectured by UN: Abbott

AFP, Sydney

Prime Minister Tony Abbott lashed out at criticism over Australia's treatment of asylum-seekers on Monday, saying the country was "sick of being lectured" by the United Nations.

Canberra sends asylum-seekers arriving by boat into detention on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island or the small Pacific state of Nauru and refuses them resettlement in Australia, policies which are condemned by refugee and rights advocates.

In a new report to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, the body's Special Rapporteur on Torture added to the criticism by finding that aspects of Australia's asylum-seeker policies violated the convention against torture.

"I really think Australians are sick of being lectured by the United Nations, particularly, given that we have stopped the boats, and by stopping the boats, we have ended the deaths at sea," Abbott told reporters when asked about the findings.

## Key accused

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body and sent it to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for an autopsy.

Abdur Razzak, superintendent of police in Rangpur, said Lablu was accused in 10 cases for his alleged involvement in violence and subversive activities, including the violence that erupted in the district following the pronouncement of death sentence to Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee by a war crimes tribunal in February 2013.

According to the autopsy report, Lablu died from drowning, added Razzak.

The Daily Star could reach Lablu's family members for their comment.

Four people, including a child, were burnt to death at Jaigirhat in Mithapukur on January 14 when alleged blockaders hurled a petrol bomb at a long-haul bus there. Two more died from burn injuries later.

At least 85 people were killed, mostly in mindless arson attacks, since the BNP-led alliance called a nationwide indefinite blockade on January 5. Of the victims, 68 had no link with politics.

Besides, at least 41 people were known to have been killed in "shoot-outs" with law enforcers across the country since then, according to The Daily Star reports. Of them, 18 were allegedly involved in arson attacks, claimed law enforcers.

Jamaat activist Mostafa Manjil, the prime accused in the Gaibandha arson which claimed the lives of eight bus passengers on February 6, was killed in a "shootout" with the Rapid Action Battalion on February 17.

Sahabuddin Patwari, president of Shibir's Chaudhagram upazila unit in Comilla, was killed in a "shootout" with police on February 6. He was accused in two cases in connection with the arson attack on a bus in the district on February 3 that left eight people dead.

## Focus on

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Following the premier's directive on February 16, the LGRD ministry sent a letter to the Election Commission for holding the Dhaka city polls.

The EC is now preparing to hold elections to the three city corporations.

The ruling AL and opposition Jatiya Party have already endorsed mayoral candidates for Dhaka city corporations.

A number of senior BNP leaders told this correspondent that the government is holding the elections at a time when most of the 20-party alliance men are either in jail or on the run. They are not in a position to take part in the battle of ballots.

A BNP leader, who is staying at the party chief's Gulshan office, said, "Dozens of cases have been filed against our potential candidates in connection with recent killings in arson attacks and incidents of violence. These BNP men are likely to be barred by courts from contesting any elections."

BNP Vice-Chairman Selima Rahman, however, said they were yet to decide on the issue of the city corporation polls.

"The government wants to hold the elections at its favourable time. It might think it can hold one-sided elections as the BNP-led alliance is now focusing on non-stop anti-government movement.

"But we want to say that the BNP will not let anything go unchallenged," she told The Daily Star.

The BNP had extended support to its leaders in the elections to Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet and Gazipur city corporations in June and July 2013. The mayoral candidates backed by the party swept to victory in all the elections.

Several BNP leaders said the situation is different this time, and it would be suicidal for them to suspend the ongoing movement for the city corporation polls.

## Cabinet okays youth welfare fund bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved the draft Youth Welfare Fund Bill, 2015, with the provision to provide financial support to youth organisations involved in cultural activities and sports.

The draft law is a revised version of the existing Youth Welfare Fund Ordinance-1985.

The approval was made at the regular cabinet meeting held at the Secretariat, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said the ordinance, promulgated in 1985 during the martial law period, was later cancelled following the annulment of the fifth and the seventh amendments to the constitution by the court.

Under the ordinance, the Youth Welfare Fund was created with Tk 15 crore seed money and since its inception, about Tk 12 crore was donated to around some 10,000 voluntary youth organisations.

The money is being used for imple-

mentation of various youth development activities including the development of education, science, arts and culture, and sports, the cabinet secretary said.

According to the draft law, the fund would be operated under a two-tier management system -- a selection committee would pick the qualified organisations while a managing board would give the final approval.

In yesterday's meeting, 35 ministries and divisions signed Annual Performance Agreements with the government under the newly introduced Government Performance Management System.

The agreements were signed to evaluate the performance of government officials on an annual basis, Musharraf told reporters.

Earlier, 10 ministries and divisions signed the same agreements.

Under the agreements, the government would also monitor the execution of the development projects, programmes and activities of the ministries concerned and if necessary, would give guidelines for full implementation of the plans.

## British envoy slates violence

UNB, Dhaka

Voicing concern over the impact of violence on young people, British High Commissioner in Dhaka Robert W Gibson yesterday said the future generations of Bangladesh should not be sacrificed by short-term "political quarrelling".

"I unequivocally condemn this violence. Political leaders of all parties have a special responsibility not only to protect the most vulnerable in society but also to allow them an opportunity to flourish," he told a function in the city marking the Commonwealth Day 2015.

Gibson said the violence that occurred over the past two months has had a particular impact on young people in Bangladesh.

"Children have been killed and horrifically injured in indiscriminate arson attacks. Over a million children-

- the voters of tomorrow -- have had essential SSC examinations cancelled or moved," he added.

Much of the political debate in Bangladesh over the last four years has been focused on elections, he noted. "But democracy is not solely, or even mainly, about elections."

It is, he thought, about what happens in between elections and it is about participation in decisions that shape futures. "It is about election pledges being kept and delivered. It is about leaders being held to account for their actions on behalf of all of the people of their country -- whether or not they voted, or indeed were able to vote."

Brac founder and Chairman Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, Ambassador Selina Mohsin, Commonwealth Society of Bangladesh Secretary General AJM Enamul Islam and Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly also spoke on the occasion.

## Greece 'wasting time' in EU bailout talks

AFP, Brussels

European finance ministers urged Greece on Monday to stop wasting time in talks on its crucial bailout as debt-stricken Athens warned of a possible referendum if its reform plans are rejected.

Jeroen Dijsselbloem, head of the Eurogroup of ministers from the 19 countries that use the single currency, said Greece had to make concrete progress if it wants financial aid to be further extended through the summer.

Greek Finance Minister Yannis Varoufakis was presenting Athens's latest plans for reforms at the meeting with its eurozone partners in Brussels.

## Hartal makes little impact

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The arson attack happened when the employee guarding the Agro Service Centre office went to sleep around 3:00am, said Sonjoy Ranjan Howlader, deputy assistant director of the centre, adding that the van was kept in the garage store.

In Chandpur, alleged pickets torched a pick-up van in the Truck road area of the town around 2:00am.

Driver of the van, Abdus Sobhan, said he parked the vehicle in front of his house. As he went inside, it was set on fire within a few minutes.

In Gaibandha, police recovered four crude bombs from the main gate of Ahmeduddin Shah Sishu Niketon, a kindergarten school, in the district town early yesterday. The recovery created panic among the guardians barring them from sending their kids to school.

In Jamalpur, Detective Branch of Police recovered a locally made pistol, a pipe gun and five bullets from the home of a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader in Madarganj upazila.

Shubhra Shaha, assistant sub-inspector of Jamalpur DB, said they raided the house of JCD leader Mukhlesur Rahman following his statement and made the recovery around 3:30am.

A pro-BNP lawyer was arrested from Bagerhat yesterday. Police said lawyer Qazi Shahidullah was arrested from Khardar area of the district town for his alleged involvement in an attack on the cops on Sunday midnight.

In Bogra, police in overnight raids

Among other steps the plans include using tourists as amateur sleuths to crack down on tax dodgers.

The euro dived to a new 11.5-year low against the dollar and Europe's main stock markets slumped as concerns about Greece outweighed the impact of the European Central Bank's launching on Monday its 1.1-trillion-euro (\$1.2-trillion) bond-buying programme aimed at boosting the eurozone economy.

"We have lost over two weeks in which very little progress has been made -- we have to stop wasting time and start talks seriously," Dijsselbloem, who is also the Dutch finance minister, told reporters.

arrested nine people accused in different cases including arson and vandalism.

In Chittagong, police caught red-handed two BNP activists when they were attempting to hurl petrol bombs in the port city's Pahartali area on Sunday night. A case was filed in this connection.

Police also arrested seven BNP men and a Shibir activist from Chandpur, four BNP-Jamaat men from Narayanganj, five men including a Khelafat Majlish leader from Khulna on charges of involvement in subversive activities.

Meanwhile, locals of Akkelpur upazila in Joypurhat caught Jamaat-Islami ameer SM Rashedul Alam, who was on the run, and handed him over to police.

Two cops were injured as criminals hurled crude bombs in the city's Paltan intersection around 7:00pm.

The injured policemen Abdul Mannan Azad and Amrito Pal were admitted to Central Police Hospital at Rajarbagh, said Rajib Kumar Sarkar, sub-inspector of Paltan Police Station.

Alleged pickets torched two buses at Mirpur and Gulistan in Dhaka yesterday evening, a source at Fire Service and Civil Defence headquarters told The Daily Star.

No one was hurt in the arson attack. Fire fighters doused the flames of both the buses later, the source added.

In Comilla, two covered-vans were set afire near Comilla Cantonment around 12:30am, fire service officials said.

## Slaughtered birds, venison recovered from launch

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Bangladesh Coast Guard yesterday seized around five maunds of venison and 77 slaughtered migratory birds, raiding a launch at Pagla Ghat in the district.

However, no one was arrested.

Acting on a tip-off, a coast guard team raided the Dhaka-bound "Rajhanga-8", early yesterday, said Sub-lieutenant Hasanur Rahman, commander of coast guard's Pagla station.

At one point, they found a large basket in which the venison and birds were packed in polythene bags, hidden under jatka (hilsa fry less than 10 inches long) fishes, he added.

The launch was coming from Hijla upazila of Barisal.

Forest department official Ashim Mallik said the seized meat of deer and slaughtered birds would be tested at a laboratory.

The items would be used to feed the tigers and lions at Bangabandhu Safari Park in Gazipur if those remain edible, he added.

It is believed that the deer were hunted at Nijhum Dwip in Noakhali and a gang was trying to smuggle the venison and slaughtered birds into the capital.

Dr Tapan Kumar Dey, forest conservator at wildlife and nature conservation circle, in a press release said members of a rifle club in Dhaka had killed the deer and birds.

Efforts were underway to identify the criminals, he added.

## Putin awards medal to chief suspect in Litvinenko murder

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday awarded a medal of honour to the chief suspect in the murder of former Russian security agent Alexander Litvinenko for "services to the fatherland".

The Kremlin released an honours list including Andrei Lugovoi, a lawmaker in a nationalist party who is wanted by Britain over the poisoning of Litvinenko in 2006.

## 12-hr break

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Bangladesh secured a berth in the World Cup quarterfinals by knocking out England.

In a press release, BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said the shutdown would resume at 6:00pm today and continue till 6:00am Friday.

The opposition combine on Saturday called the 72-hour shutdown from 6:00am Sunday.

It has been enforcing hartal on all working days since February 1 on top of its countrywide indefinite blockade from January 6, demanding a fresh election under a nonparty administration.

The party announced holding victory processions across the country to celebrate the victory but did not give any time.

Despite the announcement, today's scheduled SSC exam, which was postponed, will not take place. The new date will be announced later, said Subodh Chandra Dhali, senior information officer of the education ministry.

## Solar plane

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Before taking off, Borschberg told BBC News: "I am confident we have a very special aeroplane, and it will have to be to get us across the big oceans."

"We may have to fly for five days and five nights to do that, and it will be a challenge."

"But we have the next two months, as we fly the legs to China, to train and prepare ourselves."

Yesterday's leg to Oman will cover about 400km and take an estimated 12 hours. Details of the journey are being relayed on the internet.

It's a deep-breath moment in the history of technology as Solar Impulse soars to the skies.

Because, pinch yourself, solar power is predicted to become the dominant source of electricity globally by 2050.

The Solar Impulse project has already set a number of world records for solar-powered flight, including making a high-profile transit of the US in 2013.

But the round-the-world venture is altogether more dramatic and daunting, and has required the construction of an even bigger plane than the prototype, Solar Impulse-1.

This new model has a wingspan of 72m, which is wider than a 747 jumbo jet. And yet, it weighs only 2.3 tonnes.

## Evidence might be sent to FBI lab if court permits

### Detectives say on Avijit killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators are likely to seek court's permission to test evidences of the murder of writer-blogger Avijit Roy at FBI laboratory in the USA.

Joint Commissioner of Detective Branch of Police Monirul Islam made the announcement while briefing reporters at Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Media Centre yesterday.

"Depending on the permission of the learned court, we might send the evidences to FBI labs for having it tested," Monirul said.

Officials probing the murder said the move in this regard would come in a couple of days.

Members of Criminal Investigation Department collected blood samples, blood-stained machetes and a bag, among others, from the crime scene,

according to media reports.

Law enforcement agencies had so far arrested Shafiqur Rahman Farabi in connection with the murder that took place on February 26 near TSC on Dhaka University campus after Avijit along with his wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya came out of the Ekushey book fair.

Avijit laid face down on the pavement bleeding profusely as passers-by only watched until photojournalists, happened to be present around the spot, came and took Avijit to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Testimony of one of the journalists, Jibon Ahmed, working for a photo agency, was taken yesterday. Detectives also collected several photographs which Jibon had taken on that day, sources at the DB office said.

## MH370 was flown off course and the culprit got help

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Whoever was at the controls of MH370 when it disappeared a year ago wanted to evade detection. The interim report into the loss of the Boeing 777 and its 239 occupants shows the culprit was inadvertently helped by mistakes in the airline's duty office.

The Malaysia transport ministry released the report on the anniversary of the disappearance of the scheduled flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

A damning transcript of conversations in the hours after the plane vanished shows that, long after contact was lost, Malaysia Airlines insisted that the aircraft was flying over Cambodia - a story that was later changed to suggest it was east of Vietnam's coast.

The transcript with air-traffic controllers in Kuala Lumpur is an appendix to the interim report into the loss of MH370 with its 227 passengers and 12 crew. The transcript reveals how the events unfolded through the early hours of March 8 last year, after the captain signed off from Malaysian air-traffic controllers with the words "Goodnight Malaysian Three Seven Zero" at 1.19am local time.

## Cricket fever

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catch to relieve Woakes. England needed just 16 runs off 12 balls to win. Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Miah, who chaired the session, cautioned the lawmakers that they cannot pay attention to anything else other than parliamentary affairs during a session as per the rules of procedure of parliament.

When Rubel Hossain disturbed the off stump of Stuart Broad at the start of the 49th over and bowled Jimmy Anderson two balls later to end England's woeful World Cup campaign in the first round, the land minister in a cheering voice greeted the

Tigers. Legislators started clapping and thumping the table to congratulate the Bangladesh cricket team.

The deputy speaker did not miss out on the chance to greet the Tigers. "Congratulations to them on behalf of parliament."

Later, several ministers and MPs thanked the Bangladesh team for its historic victory. "Bangladesh has created a history. By winning the match against England, the team has improved the country's image. People are proud of our Tigers," said State Minister for Sports Biren Sikder.

## Kamaruzzaman gets time

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Mahbub Hossain could not appear before it due to "personal difficulties".

But Attorney General Mahbub Alam said Khandker Mahbub is running for president of the Supreme Court Bar Association. The election is slated for March 15-16.

Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik, a judge of the SC bench, observed that courts across the world don't adjourn the proceeding of a case due to a lawyer's personal difficulties.

The SC has given the prosecution and defence 15 days for filing a review petition, and the parliament has passed a bill by amending a relevant law for hearing and disposing of an appeal in a case of crimes against humanity within 60 days from its filing, he said.

Although the 60-day time limit is not binding on the SC, the parliament has expressed its desire that appeals related to cases of crimes against humanity should be disposed of quickly, added Justice Manik.

Opposing the petition, the attorney general said there is a provision for a speedy hearing of review petitions.

The SC in its verdict on Abdul Quader Mollah's review petition had said review petitions should be heard and disposed of on a priority basis.

Khandker Mahbub might have

some difficulties in attending the hearing, but senior defence lawyer SM Shahjahan is present, Mahbub Alam told the court.

Chief Justice SK Sinha said Khandker Mahbub Hossain has been assigned as the principal counsel for Kamaruzzaman for moving his review petition.

The two other judges of the SC bench are Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah and Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

Sixty-three-year-old Kamaruzzaman filed the review petition with the apex court on March 5, praying for the reversal of his conviction and acquittal in the case, said the defence.

On Sunday, Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, the chamber judge of the SC, sent the review petition to the full bench.

Earlier, the prison authorities on February 19 read out the death warrant to Kamaruzzaman after the International Crimes Tribunal-2 had issued it the same day. The SC released the full text of its verdict the previous day.

On November 3 last year, the SC upheld the death penalty handed to Kamaruzzaman by the tribunal on May 9, 2013 for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.