

BGB vows

FROM PAGE 16

Meanwhile, Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh at a joint conference in Delhi on Saturday said smuggling of cattle into Bangladesh had been reduced significantly with the help of BSF, reports our Kolkata Correspondent.

Praising the Maharashtra government for banning cow slaughter, he said that even the Mughals knew they would not be able to rule over the hearts of Indians by supporting cow slaughter, a fact that British could not realise.

Following the BGB-BSF conference on August 6, BSF Director General Devendra Pathak said the number of cows smuggled from India to Bangladesh had come down drastically after his force had taken stern action against it. "The BSF wants to stop it totally."

Larger SC

FROM PAGE 3

involved with the integrity of the judges and judiciary.

Other three judges of the bench were Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

The SC rejected a petition jointly filed by Atiqullah and Swadesh urging Justice SK Sinha to reconstitute its bench for hearing the rule.

It also asked Salahuddin Dolon, a lawyer for Janakantha, to submit all the articles, which were published by the daily after July 29 and involved this court, before it today.

Atiqullah and Swadesh appeared before the SC yesterday morning as per its earlier order and they will have to appear before the same court today, said Attorney General Mahubub Alam.

The Appellate Division has now a total of seven judges including Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, Justice Md Imman Ali and Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury.

Police

FROM PAGE 3

using taxes from people but they totally failed to stop the countryside killing of bloggers and children.

Referring to the incident where police refused to take a general diary of Niloy, actor Mamunur Rashid said a culture of injustice existed in the country and the militants took that opportunity.

Human rights activist Khushi Kabir said those who killed Niladri at the time of Jumma prayers could not be Muslim. She said they would kill freethinkers but not freethinking.

The faction of the Gonojagoron Mancha, a youth-led anti-war criminal platform, also threatened tougher movement if no visible progress is made to bring the killers to book by Friday.

Earlier a portrait of Niloy was set up at Shahbagh where different social and student organisations including Sammiliti Sangkritik Jote, Nijera Kori, Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Ghoshthi, and Bangladesher Shamajtantrik Dal paid last tributes by offering wreaths.

The Mancha will bring out a mass procession from Shahbagh at 4:00pm tomorrow and hold a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar at 3:00pm on Friday, which will be observed countrywide as "Black Day".

Earlier Progotishil Chhatra Jote, an alliance of left-leaning student organisations, brought out a protest procession and held a rally on Dhaka University campus.

They demanded quick arrest of Niloy's killers.

Magura BCL

FROM PAGE 3

Hospital, while Nazma and her bullet-hit daughter miraculously survived after a two hour caesarean section at the hospital.

Now the newborn, Suraiya, and her mother are under treatment in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) separately, and doctors said they were improving.

The baby was shifted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of DMCH on July 26 and her mother on July 30 to feed her breast milk. Nazma is being treated in the gynaecology ward.

Dr Kaniz Hasina, assistant professor of paediatric surgery at DMC, said, "We are thinking to shift the baby to her mother at the general ward after the end of the neonatal period (28 days)."

Otherwise it would be risky for the newborn, she added.

Meanwhile, Bacchu Bhuiyan, husband of Nazma, expressed dissatisfaction at the "sluggishness" of police in arresting the shooters, Azibor and Mohammad Ali, both Jubo League activists.

"We are worried as the main accused are still at large," he told The Daily Star.

Eight people including Sumon were arrested so far, said police.



The mobile column from the Singapore Armed Forces takes part in a parade during Singapore's 50th National day anniversary celebration at the Padang in Singapore yesterday. Singapore celebrated 50 years of independence with a grand parade, hailing a remarkable transformation from colonial backwater to regional powerhouse, for the first time without its revered founding leader Kee Kuan Yew.

PHOTO: AFP

Jihadists suspected in deadly Mali hotel siege

AFP, Bamako

A jihadist group is strongly suspected of carrying out the hotel siege in Mali that ended with the deaths of at least 12 people including five UN workers, a security source said yesterday.

No one has claimed responsibility for the assault in the central town of Sèvre, which coincided with a surge in jihadist attacks spreading through the region in recent months.

"At this stage there is no formal proof that it was the Macina Liberation Front (FLM), but strong suspicions point to this group that has been seeking notoriety at all costs," the source said.

Since it first appeared earlier this year the FLM has claimed responsibility for several attacks, including some targeting security forces in central Mali.

FLM is considered to be linked to Ansar Dine -- Arabic for Defenders of Faith -- which is one of the groups that took control of Mali's vast semi-arid north in April 2012.

The United States placed Ansar Dine on its terror blacklist in 2013, accusing it of close links with Al-Qaeda and of torturing and killing opponents

in the north.

The private Mauritanian news agency Al-Akhbar, which regularly publishes jihadist statements, also said yesterday that the FLM "could be behind the attack in Sèvre."

The deadly siege began early Friday when gunmen burst into the Hotel Byblos, frequented by expatriates.

The Malian army -- along with foreign special forces, according to a Malian military source -- stormed the building, bringing the siege to an end nearly 24 hours later.

Reports vary on the numbers and identities of those killed.

The UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA) said two Ukrainians, a Nepalese and a South African were killed during the siege and subsequent military operation, as well as a Malian driver working for a company contracted by the mission.

An army officer said "five terrorists" were killed in the operation as well as five soldiers and "two whites".

Four of the soldiers were buried in Sèvre on Saturday, with the rural development and security ministers, Boukary Treta and Sada Samake, in attendance, a witness said.

Both the army and MINUSMA said the death toll could rise.

JS bodies failing

FROM PAGE 16

shipping, jute and textile and Chittagong Hill Tracts ministries and the committee on public accounts.

The study shows that at least 19 MPs in these JS bodies have conflict of interest with their committees.

There are allegations that these MPs have influenced the committee decision to serve their personal and business interests, the TIB said.

According to the House rules of procedure, "No member shall be appointed to a committee who has a personal, pecuniary or direct interest in any matter which may be considered by that committee."

The study says as it is not mandatory for the ministries to implement the committee recommendations, most of their suggestions go unimplemented. "The ministries concerned do not give importance to the suggestions of the parliamentary bodies."

Sometimes ministers, who are members of the committees on their ministries, interfere in the activities of the parliamentary watchdogs. Worse, some ministers have been made chiefs of the committees on their ministries.

In India and the UK, ministers are not included in any JS committees at all, the TIB said.

On holding meetings, the TIB said only three standing committees held meetings as per the rules of procedure (at least one meeting every month).

Until April this year, the JS bodies on petition, special privilege and rules of procedure did not hold a single meeting in the ninth and the 10th parliament.

On the positive initiative of the 10th parliament, the TIB said representation of opposition MPs in the JS body increased by four percent compared with the last parliament.

The TIB made an eleven-point recommendation, including empowering the JS bodies with legal power to ensure presence of any individual before them to testify.

The other suggestions include making 50 percent of the chiefs of JS committees from the opposition bench, drop lawmakers from JS bodies that have conflict of interest with those committees and live telecast of the JS

committee meetings except those on national security.

Contacted, Suranjit Sengupta, chief of the parliamentary standing committee on law justice and parliamentary affairs, said some laws should be made as soon as possible to make the parliamentary committees more effective.

He, however, would not comment on the conflict of interest of some lawmakers in the committees.

Parliament Chief Whip ASM Feroz said there might be some cases of conflict of interest in one or two parliamentary committees. "But I don't believe that any lawmaker will deliberately influence the committee decisions for his own interest as claimed by the TIB."

He also claimed that TIB's aim was to defame politicians and this should not be encouraged by anyone.

'Chemical gardens'

FROM PAGE 16

geothermally heated water bubbles out.

It is thought that the structure of these chimneys, made of various porous minerals, can emulate processes critical to life that generate energy and organic compounds.

Thin membranes within them can establish electrical gradients that cause electrons to jump between them, the basis of electricity.

"These chimneys can act like electrical wires on the seafloor," said Laurie Barge, lead author of a new paper on the findings.

"We're harnessing energy as the first life on Earth might have."

The findings demonstrate that underwater structures may indeed have been the source of electricity for early life.

While the story of the start of life on Earth is far from complete, the experiment adds weight to the theory that life sprang from warm vents on the ocean floor.

"Life doesn't want to get electrocuted, but needs just the right amount of electricity," said Michael Russell of JPL, a co-author of the study.

"This new experiment confirms what that amount of electricity is -- just under a volt," he added.

Zafrullah

FROM PAGE 16

charges for criticising a verdict of the tribunal on Bangladesh-based UK journalist David Bergman last December. He was sentenced to one-hour imprisonment in the courtroom and fined Tk 5,000 that day for the offence.

He challenged the tribunal order before the Supreme Court and the apex court on July 28 cleared Zafrullah from the contempt charges after he offered unconditional apologies.

But earlier on June 10, after coming from the courtroom, Zafrullah made some remarks that allegedly demeaned the dignity of the tribunal and its judges.

"Today's contempt of court verdict is a proof of mental illness of the three judges ... Ensuring justice is not possible if the judges can't take criticism. When they can't stand criticism and lack rationality, they hide themselves under the cover of law," he had told reports on June 10.

For that comment, five people -- three freedom fighters and two organisers of Gonojagoron Mancha -- filed a petition seeking contempt proceedings against Zafrullah and the tribunal initiated proceedings against him on July 12.

The tribunal also ordered Zafrullah to show cause as to why he should not be punished for "scandalising" the tribunal. Taking time twice to respond, Zafrullah yesterday made the unconditional apologies.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 16

connection with embezzlement of over Tk 8.2 crore. The ACC said the money was misappropriated abusing power and by forming the trust that exists only on paper.

On August 3, the special court in presence of Khaleda had set August 10 for the hearings.

Khaleda has been irregular at court. She did not show up on 56 out of the 63 scheduled dates for hearings.

Identities

FROM PAGE 16

suicide bomber detonated an explosives-packed vest at a mosque inside a Saudi Special Forces headquarters, killing 15 people.

Three of the deceased were identified as Afaz Uddin, son of Nur Nabi of Laxmipur, Mohammad Zibon, son of Abdul Halim of Comilla, and Mainul Mridha, son of Mannan Mridah of Barisal. They were working at Al-Yasra Company as cleaners, while the detail of another deceased, Belal Hossain, is yet to be confirmed.

Of the injured, three are Asaduzzaman, son of Zahir Uddin of Tangail; Nurul Islam, son of Suruj Miah of Brahmanbaria; and Khokon Miah, son of Abdur Rashid of Comilla. But the embassy is yet to confirm the details of another injured, Chand Miah.

Chand was critically injured and is being treated at the Central Military Hospital in Riyadh, the release said. Other injured are undergoing treatment at the Al-Aseer Central Hospital and they are out of danger.

The foreign ministry said representatives from Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah visited the area immediately after the incident, met the victims and contacted their family members and employers as well as other Saudi authorities concerned.

The bodies of the victims would be sent back to Bangladesh or would be buried in KSA as per the desire of the victims' families, the release added.

Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh and Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah are constantly monitoring the situation and coordinating with all concerned with the highest priority.

Iran ex-president's son begins 10-year jail term

AFP, Tehran

The son of Iran's former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani began a 10-year prison term for financial and security crimes yesterday, insisting his conviction was politically motivated.

Mehdi Hashemi was in March handed prison sentences totalling 25 years after being convicted on three charges in separate cases involving national security, fraud and embezzlement.

The 45-year-old was also ordered to pay undisclosed fines and financial penalties, and was barred from holding public office. He lost an appeal.

The trial was held behind closed doors and details of the evidence and specific crimes has not been released.

He was sentenced to two terms of 10 years in prison and one of five years,

and in line with Iranian law will serve the longest of the three sentences.

Iranian media said he had arrived at Evin Prison in Tehran where he read a statement to reporters demanding that recordings of his trial be released.

Hashemi said he saw "political purposes as the main element" of the case against him.

He said his conviction was "neither fair nor legal" but he hoped "to protect and defend the integrity of my honourable and oppressed father".

"I demand once again that state television broadcast my court hearings fully," he said.

"I firmly believe that this measure will prevent abuses by radicals from harming one of the important pillars of the Islamic republic," he added, in an apparent reference to the judiciary.

Worry hangs over hope

FROM PAGE 16

later," the official said.

A Malaysian business delegation also arrived in Dhaka on Saturday to discuss its online recruitment system with the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), said a leader of Baira.

As the discussions are about to begin, the question is how the two countries are going to have a mechanism that would be foolproof. The private sector engagement in manpower export in 2007-08 had caused massive labour exploitations.

Additional migration cost, surplus labour recruitment due to the involvement of too many agents, and the introduction of outsourcing companies had resulted in a ban on labour migration to Malaysia in early 2009.

More than four lakh Bangladeshi workers were recruited during that time, but many had remained jobless, coerced into working without wage or were given low wages and many were deported penniless.

After four years of the freeze, Malaysia introduced recruitment through state management (G2G), but employed only 10,000 workers in its plantation sector in more than two years.

In late June, Malaysia's Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said his country would recruit 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers in the next three years through private sector (B2B). He also said a similar number of irregular or undocumented workers already in Malaysia would be deported.

ONLINE RACE

Malaysia plans to introduce an online system for the management of workers' recruitment, visa processing, medical checkups and the monitoring of workers, officials at the expatriates' welfare ministry and Baira said.

However, Malaysia suspended a similar online system on January 26 two weeks after its introduction following allegations from Indonesia and Nepal that their workers were being charged higher fees.

These countries had also threatened to stop sending workers to Malaysia if Foreign Workers Centralised Management System (FWCMS) was used and biometric health checks were done.

Malaysia had outsourced the services to Bestinet, which is owned, among others, by Tan Sri Azmi Khalid, a leader of the Malaysian ruling party, and Bangladeshi Aminul Islam, who has permanent resident status in Malaysia.

Aminul Islam, who went to Malaysia as a worker over a decade ago, got PR status marrying a Malaysian and had made a fortune through manpower business over the years, sources said.

Some agents in Malaysia said Bestinet was now trying to introduce its system for recruiting Bangladeshi workers.

Another IT company, Real Time Networking Sdn Bhd, registered in Malaysia on March 5 this year, was also trying to have a contract with the Malaysian home ministry for an online system on recruitment and monitoring of Bangladeshi workers, a Baira source said.

The owners of Real Time Networking include Dato Raja Azahar bin Abdul Manap, Dato Abdul Hakim bin Hamidi, Dato Md Abu Hanif bin Abul Kashem (a Bangladeshi with Malaysian PR status), Datin Nur Firzanah, Abbas Ali and Rosli Ab Ghani.

The Baira official said one shareholder of Real Time was a close relative of a powerful Malaysian minister and others were connected to the ruling party one way or the other.

Involvement of politically backed people in the migration of Bangladeshi workers could result in problems, the official said.

THAT MANY WORKERS?

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) Executive Director Datuk Hj Shamsuddin Bardan said they were focusing on local labour instead of foreign workers.

"Outlook of our economy is not that encouraging. Ringgit is depreciating and petroleum price is going

down. The demand for services and product is declining," he told The Daily Star over the phone on July 27.

Malaysia's state-owned oil firm Petronas reported in late May a net profit of 11.4 billion ringgit for the January-March period, which was 7.3 billion ringgit lower than that of the same period in 2014, according to Reuters.

These factors led to about 10,000 job cuts in Malaysia as of July this year, Malaysian newspaper Daily Express quoted Shamsuddin as saying in a report on July 23.

"Also, the government has decided not to employ new staff, save for critical or sensitive posts," said Shamsuddin, adding that this would affect about 10 percent of the job market and leads to an economic slowdown.

Against this backdrop, MEF had requested the government to review its decision to recruit 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers. The MEF has not received any response from the Malaysian government yet, he said.

4.6M IRREGULAR WORKERS

Malaysia said it would deport 1.5 million illegal migrants in phases as it recruits the same number.

Malaysian Trade Union Congress Secretary General N Gopal Kishnam said the country had some 2.4 million documented and 4.6 million undocumented migrant workers.

Of an estimated six lakh Bangladeshis there, 3 lakh are irregular.

"The government has to address the issue of the undocumented migrant workers first and then, if needed, recruit fresh workers," he told The Daily Star.

Regularising the irregular migrants would help Malaysian economy as they were already skilled and know the local language, he said.

Contacted, Bangladesh High Commissioner in Malaysia Shahidul Islam said creating job opportunities abroad was important for Bangladesh, but it must be at low cost.

"For this to happen, we are discussing various options, including online system. Nothing is finalised yet," he told The Daily Star at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur recently.

Malaysia now has a shortage of 57 lakh workers, and if Bangladeshis do not take the opportunity, others will, he said.

On regularising undocumented workers, Shahidul said it was a security issue for Malaysia, especially those coming to Malaysia through the sea.

Call for rights

FROM PAGE 16

The mindset of the political leadership needs a change to turn Bangladesh into a truly multi-ethnic country, Menon said at a programme organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF).

Shamim Imam, director of MJF, Adivasi leader Rabindranath Saren, among others, also spoke.

Earlier in the morning, BIPF organised a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar where it raised a nine-point demand.

The demands include constitutional recognition, full implementation of the CHT Peace Accord and declaring a road map for it, forming a land commission for the plain land indigenous people, enacting an indigenous rights act, stopping land grabbing of the Khasias in Jhimai Punji of Moulvibazar and official observing of August 9 as indigenous peoples' day.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Sadeka Halim, Mujahidul Islam Selim, among others, addressed the programme.

Rights activist advocate Sultana Kamal in a programme in Cox's Bazar said indigenous people in the district are facing abuses from the political leaders and called upon people to be sensitive towards the indigenous communities.