



Queen Máxima of the Netherlands talks to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the sidelines of a conference at the United Nations headquarters on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PID

## Count of Bangladeshis killed may rise

### Fears ambassador to Saudi Arabia over Mina stampede

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Golam Moshi, Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia, fears that the number of Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrims killed in the September 24 stampede in Mina may rise.

"The death toll has been 28 so far and it will possibly go up," he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

A private Hajj agent in Bangladesh, wishing not to be named, claimed that the toll could reach 50.

"The authorities concerned, to some extent, are unwilling to announce the exact number," he alleged.

Golam Moshi said 66 Bangladeshis, who were victims of the stampede or fell sick during the Hajj rituals, were being treated at different hospitals in Saudi Arabia.

AKM Shahidul Karim, consul general of the Bangladesh consulate in Jeddah, on Tuesday said 138 other Bangladeshi pilgrims have been missing since the incident in Mina.

The Saudi authorities officially put the death figure at 769 and the number of those injured at 934. But some diplomats of foreign countries there claimed that the death toll would exceed 1,000.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Borhan Uddin, joint secretary of Bangladesh's religious affairs ministry, yesterday said the tenure of the country's temporary Hajj mission in Saudi Arabia had been increased by 45 days.

"We extended the period so that the Hajj mission officials there can help complete the burial of the dead Bangladeshis, take care of the injured and help find out the missing," he told reporters at the ministry.

The Arab News, a local newspaper of Saudi Arabia, yesterday reported that the Makkah Secretariat was preparing 74,700 graves across six graveyards which could accommodate some of the martyrs of the stampede in Mina among others.

The graveyards include the Maalaa Cemetery, which has space for 30,000 graves, Al-Adl Cemetery, which can take another 2,000 graves, Al-Sharea Cemetery, which has place for 22,000 graves, and Al-Haram Martyrs' Cemetery, which has enough space for another 20,000 graves.

The authorities will finalise the burial procedures upon approval of family members, while the bodies and all relevant assistance will be delivered to family members wishing to bury the

## PM urges global unity against terrorism

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in building regional cooperation processes such as Saarc, Bimstec and BCIM-EC. "We've also taken initiatives to develop infrastructure to enhance trade and people-to-people contact among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN)."

The prime minister had recently said the world has been witnessing unprecedented migration and human mobility reshaping history and geography, as migration has been recognised as a key enabler of development in the 2030 Development Agenda.

"Cooperation is essential among our countries to harness the full potential of migration. With this objective in mind, we've decided to lead the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2016," she said.

She said Bangladesh would like to lead by example the implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh like it had done during the MDG era. In this regard, she said Bangladesh is currently developing the next Five Year Plan for 2016-2020, giving due importance to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework.

"Given the ambition reflected on the SDGs, we surely need to scale up

mobilisation of resources -- public and private, domestic and international. It's essential for the developed countries to fulfil their ODA [official development assistance] commitment of 0.7 percent of their GNI [gross national income] to developing countries, and 0.2 percent to the LDCs," she said.

The prime minister went on to say, "We also need to address the challenges faced by developing countries in accessing environmentally sound technologies. Without transfer of such technologies and capacity-building, I'm afraid, many development goals and targets will remain unachieved."

She also noted that her government is determined to ensure that no one is left behind in their aspiration to build a resilient, peaceful and prosperous society. "We believe sustainable development can't be achieved in the absence of durable peace and security. We remain committed as ever to upholding peace and rule of law and ending a culture of impunity."

In this spirit, Hasina said her government was pursuing the trial of culprits of war crimes, crimes against humanity, rape and genocide, committed during the 1971 Liberation War. "Our govern-

ment has attached utmost importance to preserving religious harmony and tolerance that have nurtured our social fabric through ages."

Talking about the UN peacekeeping missions, she said over the years, the UN peacekeeping and peace building have emerged as its flagship activity. Bangladesh is proud of being associated with these endeavours as a leading troop contributor.

Hasina said the country's valiant peacekeepers have made their mark in 54 peacekeeping missions in 40 countries so far. "We've the distinction of having the highest number of female police in UN peacekeeping missions. Our contribution to UN peace operations has made us a reliable partner in UN's peace initiatives."

Highlighting various successes of her government in different socio-economic sectors, she said Bangladesh is widely recognised as a role model for the developing world.

"Bangladesh has graduated from the UNDP's low human development category to medium, and also the World Bank's lower-income country status to lower-middle income one."

The prime minister said Bangladesh's lead role in the UN in

promoting the rights and wellbeing of people affected by Autism and other neuro-developmental disabilities emanates from the government's efforts to build an inclusive society.

"Let's commit our will and wealth for our present and future. In our journey, no one will be left behind as we aspire to build a just, progressive, peaceful and prosperous Bangladesh," she told a high-level event at the UN headquarters on Tuesday.

Bangladesh organised the programme titled "MDGs to SDGs - A Way Forward".

Termining this year's UNGA-adopted SDGs-2030 a collective journey, she said the international community has to deliver on the means of implementation.

"We'll need scaled-up resources from all sources -- public and private, domestic and international. We also need critical support in technology and capacity building areas. We need adaptive and environmentally sound technologies."

Hasina said Bangladesh is now known as a development surprise as the country has already achieved or is on track to meet almost all the MDGs. "We've proved many myths wrong."

## Bangladesh 2 notches up

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the ranking on behalf of the Geneva-based body in a press conference at Dhaka's Brac Inn yesterday.

Bangladesh's progress is primarily because of better performance in macroeconomic environment, health, education and infrastructure, said KG Moazzem, additional research director at the CPD.

The country scored 3.8 on a scale of 1 to 7, he said. Last year, the score was 3.7.

"This is not the kind of jump we expect," said Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of CPD, while speaking from Switzerland through video-conferencing.

"We are walking whereas we need to run."

The economist said Bangladesh could not make major breakthrough in the ranking because of lack of desired reforms in financial, capital and labour markets.

"There are serious shortcomings in the areas of good governance and rules of law which are keys to boosting competitiveness. Besides, Bangladesh will have to give more importance to innovation in order to become a middle income country."

Prof Mustafiz said the government has taken many steps to enhance the efficiency of the institutions. "But it is not enough. We have to allow the Anti-Corruption Commission to work independently."

"The government has given financial incentives for the public administration. At the same time, reforms in the administration have to be sped up. Many infrastructure projects have been taken up. We have to ensure that they are implemented timely."

KG Moazzem said many countries have leapfrogged in the ranking whereas Bangladesh has moved up a bit.

For example, India moved up to 55th place from last year's 71, whereas Sri Lanka was ranked 68th in 2015-16 from last year's 73rd.

Both Nepal and Bhutan were ahead of Bangladesh as they were ranked at 100th and 105th respectively.

Only one country in South Asia was ranked below Bangladesh: Pakistan was ranked at 126th, while the Maldives was not included in the

ranking.

Bangladesh's macroeconomic stability has improved to 49th from 72nd while improvement in infrastructure saw ranking moved up to 123 from 127 last year.

The WEF said Bangladesh's weakness includes institutions, financial market sophistication and goods market efficiency.

Negative changes occurred in the areas of health and primary education, technological readiness and business sophistication, said Moazzem.

"Governance and institutions are still in weak state and are cause for growing concern for businesses in medium to long term," he said during his presentation.

Switzerland and Singapore held onto the two top places in the rankings and the US stayed in third place.

On the basis of the questionnaire developed by the WEF, an executive opinion survey was conducted in Bangladesh between February and May this year while reference period was January to December of 2014.

The sample size was 56, with most of the companies locally-owned and mostly based in Dhaka. The CPD had sent the questionnaire to about 300 companies.

The WEF assesses the world's economies in 114 indicators in 12 pillars: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation.

The report issued a warning about the health of the global economy, saying "a 'new normal' of suppressed economic and productivity growth and persistently high unemployment is damaging resilience and leaving the world vulnerable to another protracted slump".

It called on countries to "step up their efforts to re-accelerate economic growth".

The WEF report was simultaneously launched in 140 countries. The CPD has been partnering with the WEF in preparing the report since 2001.

## Two more countries issue alerts

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to diplomatic sources, are discouraging fresh entry of their citizens to Bangladesh, citing security concerns.

A number of expatriates' clubs, including the American Embassy Employees' Association, remain closed since Monday, the day Tavella was gunned down by unidentified assailants on Road-90 in Gulshan.

Despite the alerts, a good number of diplomats met at a programme hosted by the Chinese ambassador in Dhaka last night.

In another development, Italian Ambassador in Dhaka Mario Palma met Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday and discussed Tavella's murder. He urged the minister to ensure adequate security for the Italians in Bangladesh.

The Swiss Embassy in an updated alert late Tuesday said, "The Embassy has been informed that there is reliable information regarding a general threat from terrorism in Bangladesh. Militants may be planning to target Western interests in Bangladesh. Attacks can't be ruled out and could target places frequented by foreigners."

The embassy considers that the situation in Bangladesh for foreign nationals has changed from "moderate risk" to "elevated risk", and suggests that the Swiss citizens living in Bangladesh keep low profile as much as they can, refrain from walking and using rickshaws, avoid movement after dark, limit exposure to crowded places even inside the diplomatic zone, avoid attending events where Westerners

may gather.

The South Korean Embassy in Dhaka in a notice advised all Koreans to take precautionary measures and avoid places and events attended by "many foreigners". It also asked the Korean nationals to remain alert regarding their personal security and keep their situational awareness levels high.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry has tightened security measures for its offices following Monday's attack.

**DIPLOMATS GATHER DESPITE ALERTS**

Though several countries have asked their nationals to limit their attendance at events where Westerners may be targeted for attacks, a number of diplomats met at a reception hosted by Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh

Ma Mingqiang yesterday.

The programme to mark the Chinese National Day was attended by US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, British High Commissioner Robert Gibson, EU Ambassador Pierre Mayaudon, French Ambassador Sophie Aubert, Russian Ambassador Alexander A Nikolaev, and diplomats from South Korea, North Korea, Switzerland, Germany, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Indonesia, Myanmar and Japan.

Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad, Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu and some senior BNP leaders were also present there.

## Lone source with shadowy credentials

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for paid subscribers.

But the SITE itself has had several controversies in the past and this casts doubt on the authenticity of the IS snapshot and claim.

Iraqi Jewish Rita Katz with Josh Devon founded the SITE Institute in 2002 to track online activity of terrorist organisations. In 2008, the Institute dissolved and its staff formed the SITE Intelligence group - a for-profit entity, to continue some of its activities, according to www.sourcewatch.org.

Rita was raised in Israel where she served in the Israel Defence Force before beginning to work for the Middle Eastern Research Institute in 1997.

Critics of Katz claim she is giving terrorists a larger platform than they would otherwise have, and is too eager to find plots where they don't exist. Some people also do not think a private group with limited resources can do as good a job as government agencies can. Katz maintains professionals missed many signals about al-Qaeda before 9/11, and she is simply filling a gap.

announced that Osama bin Laden would release a video message on the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Bloomberg News also reported that IntelCenter, another web monitoring service, noted that al-Qaeda's media production group as-Sahab flagged the video in an online media statement.

While Bloomberg only reported that the video would be released, the Associated Press stated that "the 30-minute video was obtained by the SITE Institute" and had provided a copy to the AP. The report stated that "American officials said the U.S. government had obtained a copy even though the video had not been posted yet by al-Qaeda." AP noted that "during the video, bin Laden's image moves for only a total of about 3 1/2 minutes in two segments, staying frozen the rest of the time while his remarks continue." An anonymous US intelligence official told the AP it may have been a technical glitch that occurred during production. While the video was intercepted by US intelligence agencies, how SITE Institute got its

hands on it was never explained. It may have been a boon to the small group, which made it available on its website only to subscribers. However, Fox News released a transcript of the tape.

A little over a month later, the Washington Post reported that SITE had given the video to two senior officials "on the condition that the officials not reveal they had it until the al-Qaeda release." SITE's Rita Katz complained to reporter Joby Warrick that within 20 minutes of providing access to it on the group's website, several government agencies began downloading it. "By mid-afternoon that day, the video and a transcript of its audio track had been leaked from within the Bush administration to cable television news and broadcast worldwide," Joby Warrick wrote. "Techniques that took years to develop are now ineffective and worthless," Katz said.

"Ms Katz's institute, which relies on government contracts and corporate clients, may be the most influential of those groups, and she is among the most controversial of the cyberspace monitors. While

some experts praise her research as solid, some of her targets view her as a vigilante. Several Islamic groups and charities, for example, sued for defamation after she claimed they were terrorist fronts, even though they were not charged with a crime," said the New York Times on September 23, 2004.

The Daily Telegraph on May 30, 2008 published an online article reporting that SITE had attributed footage from the post-apocalyptic computer game Fallout 3 as being created by terrorists considering a nuclear attack against the West. According to the article, SITE found the Fallout 3 images in a video called Nuclear Jihad: The Ultimate Terror, posted on two possibly al-Qaeda affiliated and password protected websites, where it also gleaned chat logs from users discussing nuclear attacks on the West.

This prompted the SITE to release a statement to clarify its position, stating that it never claimed the images were produced by terrorists, although it didn't admit to knowing from the start that they were video game images.



**Sadden demise of Ratnagarbha Badrunnesa Abdullah**

Ratnagarbha Badrunnesa Abdullah, mother of Additional Managing Director of United Commercial Bank Limited Mr. Mirza Mahmud Rafiqur Rahman has passed away. (Innallahi.....raziun)

She took the last breath at 12 midnight at Holy Family Hospital, Dhaka on 26 September 2015, Saturday. She was 84 years old at the time of her sudden demise. She left behind 9 daughters, 3 sons and many grandchildren. The funeral of the departed soul took place after ASAR prayers at the Jhiltuli Ambika Maidan, Faridpur. Then, she was buried beside the grave of her husband at Alipur graveyard.

Prominent Islamic scholar and former information officer of Govt. of Bangladesh Late Mirza Md. Abdullah was the husband of Badrunnesa Abdullah. Mahbuba Nasreen, one of her daughters is the director of Disaster Management Institute of University of Dhaka. One of her sons, Mirza Mustafizur Rahman is residing in Canada. Her younger son Dr. Mirza Arifur Rahman is the dental surgeon and registrar of Dental Unit of Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital of Dhaka. He is also joint secretary of Bangladesh Dental Society. Moreover, her other children are famous and well established in their own arenas.

This is to be mentioned that there is a Trust in Dhaka University named "Mirza Md. Abdullah-Badrunnesa Abdullah Trust" providing educational assistance to the meritorious and poor students. Moreover, there is an institution in Canada after the name of her husband "Abdullah Islamic Academy". This institution provides free education through English to emigrant Bangladeshis. Badrunnesa Abdullah was awarded with "Ratnagarbha award 2005" organized by Azad Products. Special dowah mahfil will be organized in Dhaka for the salvation of her departed soul on next Saturday after ASAR prayers.