

Bangladesh new chair of LDCs

DIPLomatic CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been elected the new Chairman of the Global Coordination Bureau of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The new Chairman was ceremonially handed over the responsibility of leading the 49 LDCs at New York on Thursday, the Foreign Ministry said in a press release yesterday.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam formally took over the role from the Minister of MDGs and SDGs of Benin, the immediate past Chairman of the Group.

The meeting of LDC Ministers, where the new Chair is elected, takes place at the United Nations Headquarters every year on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called on the LDCs to invest efforts in implementing the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also assured the LDCs of full support from the UN system in the LDC initiatives to graduate from the Group.

The Bangladesh State Minister expressed thanks to the Least Developed Countries for reposing confidence in the leadership of Bangladesh by electing it unani-

mously as the next Chair of the Group.

He stated that since becoming a member of the LDCs back in 1974, Bangladesh has remained an active member, promoting and protecting the interests of the 48 member countries of the group.

Shahriar Alam highlighted Bangladesh's plans during its tenure as the Chairman of the Group of LDCs. He emphasised on the importance of maintaining harmony and coherence in the Group with its diverse membership.

He referred to the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA), the roadmap of graduation for the LDCs, and informed that Bangladesh would hold consultations soon to ensure that the mid-term review of IPoA, scheduled to be held in Turkey next year, is successful, and favorable to the LDCs.

The meeting was also attended by the Under-Secretary-General and United Nations High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and Foreign Ministers of Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Italy, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Tanzania, Turkey, Tuvalu, and representatives of Japan and the European Union.

A murder and an 'Alert'

FROM PAGE 1
Chowdhury in 2004).

In fact our tradition is to always accord a place of pride to an outsider. It is quite common to speak in English in a crowd of Bangladeshis simply because one foreigner is present. We hesitantly throw open our doors to foreign guests.

There are, at this very moment, thousands of foreigners working in Bangladesh, belonging to different nationalities, cultures and religion. Unlike in many other countries, they move around more or less freely all over without facing any hostility or any incidences, leave alone danger.

Howsoever unlikely it may seem, the sad fact is that a foreigner has been killed in our streets. What has made the situation more serious is that the murder of Cesare Tavella happened just about the time the Australian cricket authority raised concern about their team's safety during the tour, which has now been postponed. Frankly we were taken by surprise when the issue was raised in the first place. The "travel advisory" announced by some prominent Western countries including the US, UK, Italy, Australia and later joined by South Korea and Switzerland, following a still unproven "claim" by ISIS that it had carried out the murder, did serious damage to our reputation as a country.

While we fully appreciate that it is the duty of all countries to ensure the safety of their citizens wherever they are, a case can be made that a little more time could have been taken before such an "alert" was issued and that it may turn out to have been premature. After all, no evidence has yet been found about the "terrorist" link that triggered the alert save the report of "Site intelligence", which is known to have erred in the past. Its posting of a "screen shot" in Arabic supposed to be the ISIS claim remains to be verified. (See our report "Lone source with shadowy credentials" published on October 1, 2015).

Here a serious question needs to be raised about the role of our own intelligence agencies. So far all they have said is that no link has been found between the murder of Mr Tavella and ISIS. We feel that for our claim to be credible we should have provided proof and reasoning. Just a statement is not enough. Is the "screen shot" authentic? Does it match with the usual postings by ISIS? Has the text of the posting been analysed to ascertain its veracity? (We recall how, on numerous occasions, claims made in the name of Al Qaeda were rejected by US and western intelligence groups on the ground that the language structure of usual Al Qaeda online releases did not match with the one in question). There must be proof and knowledge within our intelligence agencies to do so to prove the authenticity of any website.

If the said ISIS posting has been found to be "not authentic" then we should make that public and go to town publicising it. If on the contrary we have found it to be real, then there is no use denying it. If the former is the case and if we are certain that there is actually no link with ISIS, then we should try and prove that the ISIS claim is false and opportunistic and made only to make them look bigger and more lethal than they actually are. There have been such instances in the past, where various terrorist bodies have been known to indulge in "claim

game" just to make themselves appear credible. Whatever the truth, it should be made public. Truth is our best weapon against terrorism and our security agencies need to clarify this post haste.

On the issue of global coverage of the incident, we are rather disappointed by the international media's, unquestioned acceptance of "one source" claim of ISIS link to the Cesare Tavella killing. They appear to be too willing to accept that Bangladesh may be, or is, becoming a centre of international terrorist activities.

This is happening, in our view, due to failure on both sides.

First, the international media are not being sufficiently diligent in reporting on something as serious and vital as rise of terrorism in a country which is trying most sincerely to fight it. While we accept their concerns to be well placed, neither their methods nor the time spent on researching such stories is commensurate with it. There appears to be tendency to believe the worst about us with undue haste and by highlighting the "one source" or speculative "terror" stories they may be, unwittingly and unknowingly, creating grounds for a "self fulfilling prophecy" of the most dangerous kind. We think time has come for the international media for introspection on how their coverage of "terrorism" has affected its containment or spread. Are there lessons to be learnt, if any?

Second, which is internal to us, our regrettable failure to act faster in the investigations of killings of the five bloggers has created an image that terrorist gangs have become so widespread and so well entrenched in Bangladesh that they act with impunity and defy our security agencies at will.

This image has been created over time through various other incidents that have been attributed to terrorist groups with possible international links.

There have been at least four claimed or suspected HuJI attacks inside Bangladesh, including the 2004 grenade attack on our current prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The 2014, Burdwan blast was attributed to JMB militants allegedly from Bangladesh.

The August 17 Bangkok shrine blast suspected mastermind's entry and two week sojourn at Dhaka also reflected negatively on our intelligence agencies' alertness.

The long record of extra-judicial killings and "disappearances" and the "impunity" of security forces have also deepened the suspicion that Bangladesh is a country where justice is available only if you are on the right side, where governance is arbitrary and whose inevitable consequences will be rise of "lawlessness."

We echo our prime minister's call for a global alliance to fight terrorism but as we can see from the disarray of the global community in fighting ISIS in Syria, such an alliance will be a while in coming. Meanwhile we have to improve our own law and order situation and fight terrorism more effectively ourselves. However to begin it all, we have to uproot the culture of impunity from the law enforcement agencies of our country.

Let the rule of law reign supreme. Nothing has proven to fight terrorism more effectively than a "genuine" rule of law that enjoys widespread public confidence.



Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus receives the Lifetime Achievement Award from Give2Asia Foundation Chairman Ta Lin Hsu during a ceremony in San Francisco on Wednesday. The day was officially declared Yunus Day by Ed Lee, the mayor of the city and county of San Francisco.

PHOTO: YUNUS CENTRE

Dengue cases hit 9-yr high

FROM PAGE 1
temperature starts falling in November."

There are four serotypes of the virus -- DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3 and DEN-4. If one serotype infects a person, he becomes immune to it. But if he is infected by any other serotype for the second time, the infection might be fatal, he said.

In 2000-2003, the DEN-2 serotype was dominant. And people gradually developed immunity to DEN-2.

"However, we found the presence of DEN-1 in some patients last year and this year. If anyone gets infected with DEN-1, it could be fatal," he said.

Not only Bangladesh, neighbouring India has also seen a rise in dengue cases this year.

According to Indian media reports, 37 people have died of the viral disease and 25,000 dengue cases have been reported so far in India this year.

Experts say it's essential to keep households and the surroundings clean, and dispose of waste and empty bottles and containers to prevent spread of the disease.

They think the authorities have been lax in taking preventive measures and carrying out mass awareness campaigns to tackle dengue.

As there was a rise in dengue cases, especially in the capital, since early last

DENGUE		
YEAR	CASES	DEATHS
2000	5,551	93
2001	2,430	44
2002	6,232	58
2003	476	10
2004	3,434	13
2005	1,048	04
2006	2,200	11
2007	466	0
2008	1,153	0
2009	474	0
2010	409	0
2011	1,359	6
2012	671	1
2013	1,749	2
2014	375	1
2015	1,930	4

month, Health Minister Mohammad Nasim at a meeting on September 20 asked officials of the DGHS and Dhaka city corporations to engage NGOs and community organisations in creating mass awareness about dengue.

A couple of days before the Eid-ul-Azha, Raushan Alam Khan Chowdhury, deputy director of Communicable Disease Control Unit of the DGHS, said they would involve Dhaka mayors, ward councillors and citizens in holding public rallies and

concerts in all city wards shortly after the Eid.

But no such programme was held until yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star on Thursday, Imdadul Haque, health officer of

Dhaka North City Corporation, said they decided to hold a public rally in the capital on October 14 to create awareness about dengue.

The two city mayors, ward councillors and government officials are expected to attend the rally.

He said the city corporations spray mosquito repellent in every ward in the capital at least once a week.

If it rains, the repellent loses its effectiveness, as rainwater washes away the chemical, he added.

Prof Mahmudur Rahman, director at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), said the authorities should vigorously conduct drives all year round to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds.

Community mobilisation is very important in tackling dengue. If people keep their houses and surroundings clean, spread of the disease can be prevented, he said.

Buildings should be built in such a way that water doesn't get trapped in sunshades or any part of the structures, added Mahmudur.

Boy shot 'by MP'

FROM PAGE 1
Shahjahan said.

Two bullets tore through Sourav's right leg and one through the left.

Sourav was initially rushed to Sundarganj Upazila Health Complex. He was later shifted to the RMCH as his condition deteriorated.

Sourav's father Saju Mia alleged that the MP also tried to prevent them from taking his critically wounded son to the RMCH.

"On our way to Rangpur, we saw a car on the road in Bamandanga. We saw the MP sitting in the car and his men signalled our ambulance to pull over."

Liton pulled the driver out of the ambulance at gun point and fired some blank shots, warning them against going to Rangpur, he claimed.

"I had to lie our way out of the situation and come to Rangpur," Saju added.

Lying in the hospital bed, Sourav, a fourth-grader of Gopalcharan Govt Primary School, said: "I did not say or do anything. He [MP Liton] just shot me."

His mother Selina Akter said when she came to the spot hearing gunshots, she saw Sourav lying on the road and bleeding profusely.

"Have we voted for the MP so that he can kill my child? ... I want justice," she said.

Liton, also president of the AL's Sundarganj upazila chapter, refuted this. "It is a blatantly false allegation" is all he said when local journalists approached him.

Babul Kumar Saha, an RMCH doctor of Ward-18 where Sourav was being treated, said the boy was now out of danger.

Superintendent Ashraf Islam of Gaibandha police visited the boy at the

RMCH. There, he told journalists that the police were investigating the incident.

Meanwhile, locals brought out processions and blocked the road in Sundarganj, protesting the shooting. They also formed a human chain demanding punishment of the lawmaker.

They alleged that MP Liton often roams around different areas of the upazila at night with guns in an inebriated state, causing panic among the locals.

Rights body Ain o Salish Kendra condemned the incident.

In a statement, it demanded a fair probe into the incident and "stringent action" against those responsible.

It also urged the government to take effective steps to prevent such incidents in future and to ensure proper treatment of Sourav.

REVIEW PETITION

Lawyers meet Mojaheed in jail today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five lawyers of condemned war criminal Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed will meet him at Dhaka Central Jail today "to discuss the recently released full verdict and the grounds of the review petition".

The lawyers are scheduled to visit the Jamaat-e-Islami leader around 10:30am, according to a text message sent yesterday to this correspondent by Shishir Manir, one of the attorneys of Mojaheed.

Other solicitors are Nazrul Islam, Moshui Alam, Motiur Rahman Akand and Gazi MH Tamim.

It will be the first meeting between Mojaheed and his lawyers since the Supreme Court released its full verdict on September 30, upholding the death penalty for Mojaheed.

On July 17, 2013, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 found the Jamaat secretary general guilty of five out of seven charges brought against him. The tribunal sentenced Mojaheed to death on three charges, jailed him for life in one and sentenced him to five years in prison on another charge.

Meanwhile, lawyers of another convicted war criminal Salauddin Quader Chowdhury have planned to meet him at the jail within a few days for consulting about seeking review of the SC judgment that upheld his death penalty.

"We will apply to the authorities concerned of Kashimpur Jail-1 in Gazipur tomorrow [today] for permission to meet Salauddin Quader Chowdhury. On permission, at least three lawyers will meet the BNP leader at the jail," Huzzataul Islam, a counsel for Salauddin, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said his client received a copy of the SC verdict, and he [Salauddin] was expected to come up with instructions for the lawyers about mentioning grounds in the petition seeking review of the judgment.

On September 30, the SC released its full judgment affirming the ICT-1 verdict that sentenced Salauddin, a former BNP lawmaker, to death for his crimes against humanity and genocide during the Liberation War in 1971.

Both Mojaheed and Salauddin have to file review petitions with the SC against its judgments on them within 15 days from the date of their receiving the verdicts.

Two beaten to death in Jessore, Feni

STAR REPORT

A BNP activist was beaten to death in Chowgachha upazila of Jessore and another youth was killed in a similar way in Sonagazi upazila of Feni Thursday night.

Maruf Hossain, 35, son of Jahangir Hossain of Chowgachha, was involved in the politics of BNP, police said.

Locals said criminals attacked him around 10:30pm Thursday after he went to another BNP activist Mominur Rahman's house in the area.

Later, locals rescued Maruf in a critical condition and sent him to Jessore Medical College Hospital where he died yesterday afternoon.

Tobibur, younger brother of the deceased, claimed that local Awami League men killed his brother for political reasons. Jahirul Islam, president of Chowgachha upazila BNP, alleged that it was a planned murder.

However, Chowgachha Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shahidul Islam told The Daily Star that they heard Maruf had an extra-marital affair with Mominur's wife and that some locals beat up Maruf for that reason.

The victim's father filed a murder case, accusing eight people, with the police station, the OC added.

In Feni, Gias Uddin, 32, son of Abul Kashem of Madhom Char Chandi village, was killed following an altercation between him and a shopkeeper over cigarettes on credit.

Around 10:00pm Thursday, Gias went to get cigarettes on credit from Shafi Ullah. But the shopkeeper did not give him cigarettes as Gias had not paid his debts. An altercation between them broke out. Later, Gias returned home.

Around 1:00am yesterday, Shafi's sons Mohammad Volon, Main Uddin and Noyon along with their friends Abu Toyeb Selim and Fazlul Karim Rana went to Gias' house and asked him to come with them, Gias' family members said.

They took Gias to a nearby cyclone shelter and beat him up mercilessly.

Locals rescued Gias and took him to Sonagazi Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

On information, police raided the houses of the alleged criminals and arrested Abu Toyeb and Fazlul Karim, said Harun-ar-Rashid, officer-in-charge of Sonagazi Police Station.

Shafi and his sons were on the run.

The body was sent to Feni Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

'I couldn't save my mother'

FROM PAGE 1
In the morning of the incident, Shamim and his mother said their Fajr prayers before they started from Mujdalifa for Jamarat to perform the stoning ritual.

It was around 7:00am that they, lost in a sea of crowd, were shuffling towards the site of stoning. But all of a sudden, the crowds stopped moving, Shamim said.

As they were pushed by those coming in their thousands behind them, they got trapped in a crush, falling

down and being trampled. It was too late by the time Shamim tried to protect his mother.

"My mother cried and said, baba, if we are to die here, let us recite Kalema in the name of Allah," Shamim said.

In less than half an hour, his mother died.

"I shouted for help but none came forward. I could not take mother out of the crowd," he said.

Then Shamim fainted. When he regained his consciousness, he found himself in a safe place. He rushed back

to the scene to see what happened to his mother's body.

"Some people came and took my mother's body away. Since then I do not know where her body was kept," Shamim said.

He has searched for her body in 10 to 15 hospitals so far, but all in vain. Neither the Bangladesh Hajj Mission officials nor the Saudi authorities could give him any clue.

The man had to return home on Wednesday leaving his mother's body behind as his visa expired.