



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over awards to Ansar and VDP members for their significant contributions to the force. She gave the awards on the occasion of the 36th National Rally of Ansar and VDP at Ansar-VDP Academy in Shafipur of Gazipur. PHOTO: PID

# Govt failing to ensure human rights

## 'Khaleda tells visiting European Parliament team'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has failed to ensure people's welfare and human rights as it does not represent them, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia told the visiting European Parliament delegation yesterday.

"We told the European Parliament delegation that good governance and human rights cannot be ensured as there is no democracy in the country," BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan, quoting Khaleda, told reporters after the meeting.

"We also told them that without democracy, it's impossible to ensure sustainable development in the country," he said.

The visitors, led by Jean Lambert (Green Party), chair of the EP delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia, met the BNP chief at her Gulshan office.

Emerging from the one-hour meeting that began around 4:30pm, Moyeen told the reporters, "We mainly discussed the issues of Bangladesh about which the European Union is concerned."

He said they also had a discussion on the current political, economic and social issues along with the law and order situation of Bangladesh.

"We told them that the transfer of power is not possible in a proper way without a free, fair and impartial election," he added.

European Union Ambassador in Dhaka Pierre Mayaudon and other members of the delegation -- Richard Howitt (Labour Party), vice-chair, delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia; Ivan Štefane (Christian Democrats), member committee on the internal market and consumer protection and delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia; and Sajjad Karim (United Kingdom Conservative Party) of committee on international trade -- were also present at the meeting.

The delegation arrived in Dhaka on a three-day visit on February 10.

# Don't harass people on suspicion

## DMP boss asks policemen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia yesterday asked officers not to "unnecessarily harass people on suspicion" or "by showing them arrested in cases".

He was speaking at a monthly crime conference at the DMP headquarters with the officers-in-charge of 49 police stations and those ranked above them, said an official preferring anonymity.

The directive comes at a time when in a number of incidents some policemen reportedly extorted people by threatening to implicate them in cases.

Of the incidents, torturing a Bangladesh Bank official allegedly for Tk 5 lakh in the capital's Mohammadpur area on January 9 drew huge public outcry.

Asaduzzaman asked the policemen to watch their behaviour and be professional in discharging duties.

The senior officials have been asked to supervise their subordinates -- from the rank of constable to that of sub-inspector -- so that such untoward incidents don't happen, said an insider.

The commissioner also awarded 13 policemen for their performances in respective areas.

Of them, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Biplob Kumar Sarkar of Tejgaon Division became the best DC for the fifth consecutive time.

Besides, Constable Liton Sutar of DMP media wing, who found a Tk 57-lakh pay order abandoned on the street last month and handed it over to its owner, was also rewarded.

# IMF threatens to cut Ukraine aid over corruption

AFP, Washington

The International Monetary Fund threatened to cut crucial financial aid to cash-strapped Ukraine Wednesday because of the country's "slow progress" in fighting corruption.

"Without a substantial new effort to invigorate governance reforms and fight corruption, it is hard to see how the IMF-supported program can continue and be successful," Christine Lagarde, the IMF managing director, said in a strongly worded statement.

Lagarde's comments followed the shock resignation one week ago of Ukraine's reformist economy minister, Aivaras Abromavicius, in protest against alleged influence-peddling and state graft.

Lagarde last week said the reasons for his resignation were troubling, and she went much further Wednesday.

"I am concerned about Ukraine's slow progress in improving governance and fighting corruption, and reducing the influence of vested interests in policymaking," she said.

"It is vital that Ukraine's leadership acts now to put the country back on a promising path of reform."

# Fresh hope for 2 lakh expatriates

FROM PAGE 1

over the years. In recent years, there have been repeated calls in and outside Malaysian parliament for their deportation.

The move to legalise them means the workers will now get better pay, enjoy more rights and can travel home on vacation.

There are over four lakh legal Bangladeshi workers there who sent \$112.08 million in remittance last year, according to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training.

Recently, Malaysia has selected Bangladesh as the source country to hire 1.5 million fresh workers in the next three years under a new system called G2G Plus, through which both government and private agencies can recruit labour. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this end is expected to be signed between the two countries within a month.

Last Monday, Dhaka approved a draft deal to allow Bangladeshi private recruiting agents to send workers to Malaysia, after the government-to-government (G2G) hiring system failed.

Under the new G2G Plus system, migration cost per person would be Tk 37,000 at best, Cabinet Secretary M Shafiqul Alam had said after Monday's cabinet approval.

"As the Malaysian side also finalised the draft MoU, the deal will be signed very soon. We will fix a date for the signing within two or three days," said the Bangladesh envoy in Kuala Lumpur.

According to the sources, the deal is expected to be inked by next week. A Bangladesh delegation, led by Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Nurul Islam, will be in Kuala Lumpur for the signing.

The issue of undocumented workers emerged every time moves were made for fresh recruitment. Organisations working on migration in both countries pressed for legalising the undocumented workers first.

Tenaganita, a reputed NGO in Kuala Lumpur, on Tuesday told a local newspaper that the Malaysian government should focus on legalising the undocumented Bangladeshi workers before bringing in another 1.5 million.

"We've already written to the government on this matter and we've suggested that they sort out things like having proper work permits for those who are already here," Tenaganita Director Aegile Fernandes told Malaysian English daily The Star.

She said the Malaysian government should also blacklist all agents who overcharged migrants, according to the report.

"Many of these migrants pay a lot of money to them [agents] to make a living here," Aegile Fernandes said, adding that Tenaganita had received complaints from many workers who had forked out between RM3,000 and 5,000 (Tk

60,000-90,000) for basic paperwork but were left jobless.

On the move to let Bangladeshi women work in Malaysia, she said it posed some risks.

"When Bangladeshi women are here, there is a possibility that they may be 'misused' sexually. Therefore, a lot needs to be done to ensure that they have a place to go and someone to care for them," she added.

Syed Saiful Haque, chairman at WARBE Development Foundation, an organisation working in the field of migration in Bangladesh, said if the Malaysian government failed to hire workers from Bangladesh legally, the illegal channels for migration and human trafficking could not be checked.

Bangladesh's labour relations with Malaysia had been stained with corruption, joblessness, low wage, non-payment and bad living conditions when private recruiting agents were involved in the business in 2007-08.

Involvement of too many middlemen and charging each worker around Tk 2 lakh for recruitment were cited as major reasons behind the problems then. This led to a ban on recruitments from Bangladesh in 2009.

Later in November 2012, Malaysia withdrew the ban and signed an agreement with Bangladesh for the hiring of workers under G2G system. Under the system, only about 10,000 Bangladeshi workers have so far been sent to Malaysia.

# STABBING SECURITY GUARD Israel charges Arab schoolgirls

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday charged two Arab Israeli schoolgirls with the attempted murder of a security guard last week, saying they expected to die in the attempt and become martyrs for Islam.

A police statement quoted the charge sheet as saying that the two girls were both aged 14, from the mixed Arab-Jewish town of Ramle, and had been influenced by a wave of Palestinian violence since October.

"On February 3, 2016, after a stabbing attack in which three terrorists were shot dead at Jerusalem's Damascus Gate and because of the wave of terror, the accused agreed to meet the next day, equipped with kitchen knives, to carry out a national stabbing attack," it said.

"They conspired to become 'martyrs' and die in the war for religion."

On February 4, "one of the accused suggested to the other that they go to school first and carry out the stabbing attack in the afternoon," it added.

"Nevertheless the other accused persuaded her that they should mount the attack in the morning instead of going to school."

# UP polls from Mar 22

FROM PAGE 1

The EC came up with the schedule around one and a half months after the municipality polls. A total of 234 municipalities went to polls on December 30 last year.

The UP election is set to generate heat in the political landscape, as the ruling Awami League and opposition BNP will formally step into the battle of ballots along with other parties.

For the first time, the parties will be able to pick their grassroots leaders to vie for UP chairman posts with the party's electoral symbol "boat" and "sheaf of paddy".

The new electoral code of conduct will offer some benefits to BNP leaders, as its Chief Khaleda Zia and all her party leaders will be able to participate in electoral activities and campaigns for party-nominated candidates.

But AL President Sheikh Hasina cannot do so, as being the prime minister she is enjoying government benefits. Like her, all the ministers and her party lawmakers are barred by the code of conduct from carrying out electoral activities for party nominated candidates.

UP POLLS	
First phase	752 UPs (March 22, 2016)
Second phase	710 UPs (March 31, 2016)
Third phase	711 UPs (April 23, 2016)
Fourth phase	728 UPs (May 7, 2016)
Fifth phase	714 UP (May 28, 2016)
Sixth phase	660 UPs (June 4, 2016)

According to the electoral code, individuals enjoying government benefits include the prime minister, the speaker, ministers, chief whip, whips, deputy speaker, deputy leader of the House, leader of the opposition, state ministers, deputy ministers, MPs and mayors of the city corporations.

A political party registered with the EC has to nominate a single candidate for the post of chairman in each UP. If any party nominates multiple candidates in one UP, candidacy of all aspirants nominated by that party in the UP will be cancelled, say the electoral laws.

Political parties willing to contest the polls will send letters to the ROs,

mentioning the names of party-authorized persons, who will pick the candidates within seven days of announcement of the polls schedule. Copies of the letters will have to be sent to the EC, according to the rules.

Meanwhile, several hours after announcing the schedule, the EC issued letters to all the 40 registered political parties, asking them to comply with the rules.

In the last municipality polls, AL Chief Sheikh Hasina attested the party-nominated mayoral aspirants, while BNP Joint Secretary General Mohammad Shajahan did the job on behalf of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Talking to reporters, Shah Nawaz said the commission would take all necessary steps to hold the elections in a free and fair manner.

He said action would be taken against polls officials and law enforcers if found guilty of negligence in carrying out duties.

The commissioner also said journalists would be allowed to enter polling stations but they cannot stay inside the stations for a long time at a stretch.

had tarnished the image of Sheikh Hasina.

After recording his statement, Senior Judicial Magistrate Arun Kanti Pal ordered the OC of Cox's Bazar Sadar Model Police Station to investigate the matter and submit the report "as soon as possible".

In Gopalganj, Shariful Islam Munnah, organising secretary of the BCL's Gopalganj district chapter, lodged a Tk 10-crore defamation suit against the Star editor.

Accepting the case, Judicial Magistrate Nusrat Jabin Nimmi ordered the OC of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station to investigate the allegation and submit the report on March 30.



The original file of a building plan, left, which was seized from the building owner during an eviction drive by a mobile court of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) in the city's Green Road area yesterday. The file was supposed to be preserved by Rajuk. The court also seized a forged plan, right, of the building. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Rajuk file kept by building owner

FROM PAGE 20

asked building owner Anjoli how come she had the Rajuk's official records, she said, "We don't know, we just do not understand how it all happened, we are confused."

Rajuk Authorised Officer AZ Shafiqul Hannan said, "They [the building owner] mistakenly produced the Rajuk's office document in their possession."

This is just one random incident of countless original building files going missing from the Rajuk's record room.

The court also fined two more building owners Tk 2 lakh each for using their car parks for other purposes.

Another Rajuk mobile court in Gulshan fined four building owners Tk 12 lakh for deviating from the Rajuk approved building plan and using car parks for other purposes.

A building owner there was fined Tk 1 lakh for having a restaurant in the building's basement. The court gave the owner a week's time to either revise their plan and get it approved or

remove the restaurant, said Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, executive magistrate leading the mobile court.

A Rajuk taskforce launched the eviction drive simultaneously in Gulshan, Dhanmondi, and Uttara on January 18 to recover car park spaces and remove illegal access ramps built occupying footpaths and streets.

The Uttara team could not carry out the drive yesterday, as the relevant authorised officer had to make a court appearance.

# Lawyer seeks to sue Star editor

FROM PAGE 1

General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) following the 1/11 political changeover in 2007.

Yesterday, Assistant Public Prosecutor Mostafizur Rahman Dulal of Dhaka Special Judge's Court-9 placed an application before Metropolitan Magistrate Snigdha Rani Chakrobarty for filing a sedition case against Mahfuz Anam.

A few hours into recording the complaint, the court ordered the officer-in-charge (OC) of Kotwali Police Station to assign an inspector-level officer to seek permission from the government for probing the allegation before taking necessary legal steps.

The OC has been directed to submit the report to the court by March 28.

Government's prior permission was required for taking the charges into cognisance, the judge said.

During a talk show aired live on a private TV channel on February 3, Mahfuz Anam made an introspective comment about a lapse in his editorial judgement in publishing a few reports that the newspaper could not independently verify during the last caretaker government's tenure.

MORE LIBEL SUITS

Ishtiaq Ahmed Joy, president of Cox's Bazar district BCL, filed a Tk 50-crore defamation case against Mahfuz Anam, alleging the "DGFI-fed reports"

# HC upholds death for 3 Huji men

FROM PAGE 1

The court also upheld the life imprisonment of Muhibullah alias Muhibur Rahman alias Ovi and Mufti Main Uddin alias Abu Zandal, also Huji members.

Former UK high commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury along with around 70 others was hurt and three were killed in the attack at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) in Sylhet.

The Bangladesh-born envoy, barely 18 days into his new assignment, suffered minor leg injuries in the grenade attack after Juma prayers.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Amir Hossain handed down the verdict after accepting the death reference of the case and dismissing the appeals filed by the convicts seeking acquittal of the charges.

If they did not do so, there would be no legal bar to executing the sentences, he told journalists after the HC verdict.

No counsels of the convicts were present in the courtroom when the HC judgment was handed down.

On December 23, 2008, the Sylhet Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal sentenced Mufti Hannan, Bipul and Ripon to death, and Ovi and Abu Zandal to life imprisonment for the grenade attack and the killings.

All five convicts, who are now in jail, filed separate appeals with the HC in 2009, seeking acquittal.