

Dhaka condemns Brussels attacks

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
Bangladesh has strongly condemned Tuesday's terrorist attacks at the Brussels Airport and Metro Station that took away so many innocent lives. "Bangladesh strongly condemns these acts of terror and stand in solidarity with the people and the government of the Kingdom of Belgium. I believe that terrorists are terrorists irrespective of their colour, creed or religion and have no place in any civilised society," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said. In a message to Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium Monsieur Charles Michel, she along with the people and the government of Bangladesh expressed deepest condolences. "Our thoughts, sympathies and prayers are with the families who have lost their dear and dear ones. May the departed souls rest in eternal peace," she added, according to a Foreign Ministry press release yesterday.

Brac's frugal forum doesn't want to waste human waste

Says it may help boost agri productivity, save environment, foreign currency; stresses importance of South Asian Learning Network for making region more resilient

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Bangladesh has made a remarkable progress in terms of sanitation with open defecation now only at one percent. But the question arises where are the human excreta going or can it be turned into something beneficial? Yes, Practical Action, an international NGO, has proved its multi-faceted benefits by turning the human excreta into natural compost in a treatment plant it established in Sathkira municipality in 2014. The compost has been found to enhance crop production as an alternative to chemical fertilisers and increase soil nutrients that are dwindling fast, said Hasin Jahan, country director of Practical Action, Bangladesh. "We're working to establish a

bigger plant in Faridpur," she told some 150 South Asian development practitioners and researchers at the Frugal Innovation Forum at Brac Centre for Development and Management in Savaryesterday. "What about the human excreta in Dhaka? Only one percent is treated and the rest gets to the canals and rivers, creating huge environmental pollution," she said. Bangladesh would not need to import chemical fertiliser if human excreta could be treated and turned into compost, she said, adding that it can save environment, enhance crop productivity and also save foreign currency. Practical Action's is one of the dozens of such innovative ideas and projects being discussed at the forum organised by Brac from March 22-24 with the theme, "Scaling Resilience".

The Daily Star is the engagement partner of the Forum. The issues discussed included climate change, disaster management, health, urbanisation, micro finance, gender, social entrepreneurs, regional partnership and technology. Asif Saleh, senior director (strategy, communications and empowerment) of Brac, said often western ideas were tried in the global south-eastern countries, which seldom worked. "So, this is a global south forum to discuss solutions that come from the communities, relevant and can be replicated," he told this correspondent. Saleh said climate change, disasters like flood and cyclones, drought, salinity intrusion, food security, unplanned urbanisation are some of the major issues. Sharing and perfecting the solu-

tions that are simple and low-cost, and the policy changes that have far-reaching impacts, can be a strong tool for scaling up, Saleh added. "Participants are building partnerships, learning new lessons to take back home," he said, adding that they have already established a South Asian Learning Network that helps them to know how they can make the region resilient. For example, Hasina Kharbhih, founder of Impulso NGO Network of Indian state of Meghalaya, said they are going to start a joint collaboration with a Bangladeshi NGO to prevent women trafficking to India. "We have developed software and are training the Bangladeshi NGO to use it for women-trafficking prevention and a swift rehabilitation of the survivors," she told this correspondent.

Cops see reshuffle

UNB, Dhaka
Sixteen deputy inspectors general (DIG) and 32 additional DIGs have been transferred, according to a home ministry circulation on Wednesday. Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Abdul Jalil Mandal has been sent to Rab as additional director general while additional DG of Rab Dr Aftab Uddin Ahmed to Special Branch (SB) as DIG. DIG (Rangpur Range) Md Iqbal Bahar replaced Md Abdul Jalil Mondal while DIG of PBI Barrister Mahbab Alam has been transferred to Police Headquarters (PHQ). Additional DIG of SB Md Mazharul Islam has been made DIG of SB while DMP Additional Commissioner Mohammad Ibrahim Fatemi DIG of Police Staff College. DMP Additional Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruque has been posted to Rangpur Range as DIG, DMP Joint Commissioner Jamil Ahmed made DMP additional commissioner, Additional DIG of PHQ M Khurshed Hossain DIG of Rajshahi Range, CMP additional commissioner AKM Shahidur Rahman DIG of PHQ, Additional DIG of Rajshahi Range Md Abdullah Al Mahmud DIG of Bangladesh Police Academy, Additional DIG of Dhaka Range Md Shafiqul Islam DMP additional commissioner, DMP Joint Commissioner Banaj Kumar Muzumder DIG of PBI, Additional DIG of PHQ Golam Kibria DIG of PHQ, DMP Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam DMP additional commissioner, and additional DIG of Rangpur Range has been posted at PHQ as DIG.

RELOCATION OF DHAKA TANNERIES 10 owners summoned by High Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The High Court yesterday summoned 10 tannery owners before it on April 10 for not implementing its 2001 judgment on relocation of tannery industries from the capital's Hazaribagh area to Savar. An HC bench passed the order following a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, a non-governmental organisation. The owners have to appear before the HC bench by 10:30am to explain as to why they had not relocated the tanneries to Savar despite its directives, petitioner's counsel Manzill Murshid said. The owners are Arefin Shamsul Al Amin, managing director of Rana Leather Industries Ltd; Sayedul Haque Master, proprietor of M/S Jullet Enterprise; Mahbubur Rahman Panna, proprietor of M/S Pubali Tanneries; Giasuddin Ahmed Pathan, managing director of Rumi Leather Industries Ltd; Abdus Salam, proprietor of M/S Salam Tannery; Rezaul Karim Ansary, proprietor of Karim Leather Ltd; Abdul Wadud Mia, proprietor of M/S Mahin Tannery; Abdul Wahab, proprietor of M/S Nabipur Tannery; Mafiz Mia, proprietor of M/S Asia Tannery; and Akbar Hossain, managing director of M/S Paramount Tannery, he said adding that following a contempt petition moved by the HRPB, the HC on August 11 last year had issued a contempt of court rule against them. The HC had ordered the government and tannery owners to relocate several times. The government had set up a central effluent treatment plant at a cost of Tk 600 crore at Savar for their relocation. The tannery owners should be punished for violating the HC directives, he claimed. In 2001, the HC gave the directive to save the Buriganga River from pollution. As the government did not implement the HC directives, the HRPB filed a petition in June 2009. On June 23 that year, the HC asked the government to execute its orders by February 28, 2010. The court later extended the deadline by six months. On October 30, 2010, the HC gave tannery owners six more months to relocate their factories to Savar. But the owners did not shift their factories till now, which was an obstruction to implementing the HC verdict, said Manzill. He said the industries secretary in August last year informed the HC that the government issued notices to all tannery owners for relocation. The secretary told the court that they did not make any preparations to shift to Savar, and also gave the HC the names of the owners, he added.

Govt pry headmasters want 10th grade in new pay scale

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Headmasters of government primary schools yesterday demanded promoting both trained and non-trained head teachers to the 10th grade of the 8th National Pay Scale. Bangladesh Government Primary School Head Teachers' Association organised a press conference in the capital's Jatiya Press Club demanding a gazette notification, declaring primary school headmasters as second-class gazetted officials. Its leaders sought the prime minister's interference to meet their demand before April 20. "If our demands are not met by April 20, we'll form a human chain in front of the press clubs at every district and submit memorandum to the prime minister through the respective deputy commissioners the next day," said Reaz Parvez, convener of the central committee of the association. The trained headmasters are getting their pay in the 11th grade while the non-trained headmasters in the 12th grade, he said. The convener said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had announced promotion of the government primary school headmasters to second-class gazetted officials on March 9 last year. The primary and mass education ministry issued an order the same day, but the order is not implemented yet, he added. Reaz alleged that the ministry is dillydallying to implement the status and grade of around 50,000 headmasters. Nazrul Islam, senior convener of the central committee of the association, said withdrawal of time scale and selection grade in the 8th Pay Scale was discriminatory for them. He demanded retention of time scale and selection grade in the pay scale.



Women smear each other with coloured powder at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Dhaka University in the capital yesterday celebrating Dol Purnima, or Holi, as it is referred to in some places, while taking part in a Hindu festival honouring Lord Krishna.

PHOTO: STAR

Fund scarcity gnawing away at TB programme

FROM PAGE 3
Brac, a principal recipient of the Global Fund money. "Due to fund crisis, the NGOs had to lay off some 750 staff in the last two years," Dr Shayla Islam, programme head of Brac's TB Control Programme, told The Daily Star on the eve of World TB Day today. The disease causes harm to lungs, and can be fatal if not treated properly. Salim said 70 percent of the TB patients detected were aged between 24 and 45 years, adding, "Morbidity or mortality of adults causes families and the national economy a huge loss." Given worrying trends in tuberculosis worldwide, the United Nations has set a target to reduce TB deaths by 95 percent and cut new cases by 90 percent between 2015 and 2035, and to ensure that no family is burdened

with catastrophic medical expenses due to TB. "If such fund shortage continues, meeting the UN target will be impossible," said the official. Those who have so far been detected with TB are provided drugs and support through NGOs free of charge under the supervision of National TB Control Programme (NTP). A normal TB patient needs full six months of medication, while multidrug resistance tuberculosis (MDR-TB) patients need a 24-month medication. If the detection and treatment is not prompt and proper, higher number of people will be infected by TB and MDR-TB, increasing the number of deaths. Shayla said the scarcity of fund forced the NGOs working with Brac TB

Control Programme to hire volunteers from the community level with low-pays. Some 1,000 are detected with MDR-TB each year, but 750 patients receive drugs from the Global Fund, she added. As per the Global Fund's criteria, as Bangladesh is now a low middle income country, it will have to contribute 20 percent of the total fund for the 2017-19 TB programme. But Bangladesh now contributes less than 1 percent to the total fund, said Salim and suggested significant increase of fund for TB programme. Dr Mojibur Rahman, NTP consultant, said the fund shortage would utterly affect quality of care and support to the patients. "We are trying our best to utilise the available fund effectively," he added.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The qulkhwani of Maj (retd) Akhtar Ahmed Bir Protik will be held tomorrow at Banani DOHS Community Centre after the Asr prayers. He died in Dhaka on Tuesday. He was one of the pioneers of Bangladesh Hospital in Matinagar of Agartala during the Liberation War, while also participating in battles.

Violence against ethnic minorities increasing

FROM PAGE 3
minority people in CHT and 22 in the plains last year compared to five in CHT in 2014. It also mentioned seven cases of extra-judicial killings in CHT regions and three in the plains in 2015 compared to two and six respectively in 2014. In 2015, destruction and looting of houses and properties of ethnic minority people were 84 in the plains, while 15 such incidents took place in 2014 in CHT and 10 in plain land. Violence over land mostly took place among plain land ethnic minority communities in 2015, according to the report, which mentioned eviction of 45 families, and one person getting killed.

The incidents cited in the report were from different parts of the country including Rajshahi, Naogaon, Gaibandha, Natore, Gazipur, Moulvibazar, Mymensingh, Rangamati, Khagrachhari, Bandarban and Teknaf. Calling everyone to unite to fight for the rights of the marginalised, chief guest of the ceremony, human rights activists Sultana Kamal said the Liberation War was fought not for the freedom of a few but for the rights of all. "Why did the indigenous people suddenly become ethnic minority?" questioned Ayesha Khanam, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, noting that a certain kind of political mindset

perhaps worked behind the sudden change. Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Council, noted that the fate of religious and ethnic minority communities did not change in independent Bangladesh. Rabindranath Soren, chairperson of Kapaeng Foundation, pointed out the divisiveness even among the ethnic minority people and how Santals because of their dark skin often faced racial hatred from other locals. MB Akhter, programme director of Oxfam, Nirupa Dewan, member of National Human Rights Commission, and Sanjib Drong, a noted columnist also spoke.

Int'l confce on genocide, mass violence begins at DU today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A three-day international conference on "Genocide and Mass Violence: Theories, Traumas, Trials and Testimonies" will begin in the special conference hall of the senate building at Dhaka University today. DU Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique will preside over the inaugural ceremony in which Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor will be chief guest, says a press release. Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain will deliver the key speeches. The Center for Genocide Studies of DU is organising the conference which is divided into four parts -- theories, traumas, trials and testimonies. Representatives from Serbia, Sri Lanka, Australia and India will participate in the event.

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