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ICT, light engineering, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, frozen food, energy, handicrafts, ceramics, tourism and healthcare.

DiVanna also identified some actions through which Bangladesh can secure its future: job creation, rethinking commerce, mobilising youth human capital, and reducing lending risk.

ICT State Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak said Bangladesh can be a lucrative investment destination for the entrepreneurs who are looking for new investment opportunities, as there are political commitment, policy support, fiscal incentives, skilled human resources and necessary infrastructure in Bangladesh.

He also said ICT will be a billion dollar export earning sector by 2018. Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear, stressed the need for innovation and utilisation of the country's young population for the transformation of the economy by 2030.

He said per capita footwear use in Bangladesh last year was less than a pair, which indicates that the sector has huge potential.

Humayun Rashid, vice-president of DCCI, said the light engineering sector will grow significantly in the next 15 years.

Thousands of jobs will be created for skilled and semi-skilled people, he said.

He also said the export earnings from the light engineering sector stood at \$510 million in FY16, and the export target is \$9 billion by 2030 and \$15 billion by 2041.

Commerce Secretary Hedayetullah Al Mamoon said the government is creating opportunities for entrepreneurs so they can make investment.

Bangladesh economy is now growing at more than 7 percent and the government is taking various initiatives to make the growth sustainable, he said.

Industries Secretary Md Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said there are many sectors in Bangladesh such as ICT, light engineering, pharmaceuticals, leather and footwear that can bring billion dollar investment and export earnings.

Syed S Kaiser, chief executive officer of Renata, Md Shafiu Islam, first vice-president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Khurshed Alam, secretary of the foreign affairs ministry, made presentations on pharmaceuticals and active pharmaceutical ingredients, backward linkage of apparel and textile, and blue economy.

AL lawmaker

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Sub-inspector Ratan, court sources said.

SM Abul Hashem, a senior teacher of the college, lodged the case with the Cognisance Court-2 of Senior Judicial Magistrate Mahbubul Huq against the seven people, including lawmaker Muslem, who is also the president of Phulbaria Degree College governing body.

A judicial inquiry into the killings was demanded in the case statement, Hashem told The Daily Star.

The attack was carried out on the instructions of Muslem and his son. They are masterminds of the attack, Hashem said when he was asked why the case was filed against the two.

On November 27, chases and counter chases between the protesters and police broke out outside the college as police swooped on the demonstration by teachers, students and staff of the college.

Two people, including Abul Kalam Azad, assistant professor of botany department of the college, were killed and over 100 others injured in the incident.

The other victim is Safor Ali, 65, a day labourer, who was injured while crossing the college area during the clash. Doctors at Phulbaria Upazila Health Complex said he was brought dead there.

The 55-year-old teacher had complained of chest pain soon after he was beaten by police at the college. His colleagues called an ambulance, but it was not allowed to enter the college.

Azad was then taken to a three-wheeler stand on a rickshaw van. A CNG-run three-wheeler carried him to a private clinic, some 10 kilometres away from the college. He died there later, said a college teacher.

The court did not give any order regarding the case yesterday. An order would be passed today, said Nawjesh Ali Miah, court inspector of Mymensingh.

Saifunnahar, wife of late Azad, is also a teacher of the college. The couple has three children, family sources said.

Azad's eldest daughter Samiha Azad Shochi said they were very happy with filing of the case.

Since the killing of her father, they had been demanding filing of a case and a judicial inquiry into the killings, said Shochi.

As the accused are very influential and they have all power to influence trial of the case, necessary steps should be taken by the government so that the case can run its course, added Shochi.

Rohingyas continue to slip in, but number unknown

National Taskforce meeting told

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka is worried as arrival of Myanmar nationals continues in Bangladesh from the western state of Rakhine in the face of persecution since ethnic cleansing began on Rohingya Muslim minority in early October.

According to information received by the government from different authentic sources, security forces in the neighbouring country has taken up such extreme persecution that the Rohingyas are forced to seek protection in Bangladesh, say diplomatic sources.

The 11th meeting of the National Taskforce on Implementation of Strategy on Undocumented Myanmar Nationals (UMN) held yesterday at the foreign ministry discussed the Rohingya situation in Rakhine as well as thousands of newly arrived Myanmar nationals in the face of persecution.

The meeting with Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali in the chair took stock of the situation from the high officials from different ministries and security forces, border guards and other agencies concerned.

Uncounted numbers of Myanmar nationals have already entered Bangladesh and most of them have scattered in different parts of Bandarban and Cox's Bazar, the meeting was told.

“So far there has been no such initiative or mechanism in place to count the number of new arrivals. The law-enforcement agencies or local authorities have not yet been instructed to trace and count the newly arrived Myanmar nationals,” said a foreign ministry official attending the meeting.

According to UNHCR and IOM, some 34,000 civilians have been forced to cross the border into Bangladesh in recent weeks and months.

However, Bangladesh officials have claimed the number would be much higher as the UN bodies have counted only the people who are now in make-shift settlements at Ukhia in Cox's Bazar.

Another foreign ministry official said the actual number of new arrivals might be one lakh since violence erupted in Myanmar.

The IOM and its partners working in the makeshift settlements and neighbouring host communities are providing various services to the most vulnerable of around 1 lakh unregistered Myanmar nationals, according to sources.

Bangladesh Ambassador in Yangon Mohammad Sufiur Rahman, who has been called out by the foreign ministry thrice this month, attended the Taskforce meeting and briefed it about the situation in Rakhine as well as steps taken to normalise the situation through diplomatic channels.

Sources say the meeting was informed that the Myanmar security forces have adopted a policy that might force more Rohingyas to cross the border and enter Bangladesh.

They add military forces are involved in perpetrating mass murder, looting and rape against the Rohingyas in Rakhine where the army went on a counterinsurgency offensive after an October 9 attack there on police outposts that killed nine officers.

Houses and other establishments were demolished in such a planned way that it is highly impossible for the poor Rohingyas to rebuild those and return to their dwelling places.

The meeting was further informed that the Myanmar forces have destroyed cropland in vast areas. People who are fully dependent on agriculture have become completely jobless and helpless and are forced to flee from Rakhine for shelter in Bangladesh.

People living in one village are not allowed to go to another village for shopping or buying essentials without “special pass” from local authorities. The authorities are not issuing any such pass to the Rohingyas. As a result, they are moving towards Bangladesh for shelter.

Meeting sources say the Myanmar authorities have created such an inhuman situation in Rakhine that the Rohingyas would never feel like going back to their homeland. They have left their homeland en masse for fear of persecution, killing, rape, arsons on houses and paddy fields, and destruction of houses and business establishments.

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an effective managing committee to run the administration and management of the orphanage and to protect, maintain and improve it and its properties.

The HC declared illegal the government's inaction to protect its property leased out to the orphanage and the transfer of the land to the developer under the influence of the president and secretary of the orphanage's managing committee.

The deeds and power of attorney given by the president and secretary to Concord Group in July 2003 and April 2004 are illegal, according to the full judgment.

The court asked the deputy commissioner of Dhaka to take action against the people who had committed forgery and cheating and purposefully acted beyond the interests of the orphanage and orphans living there.

“The land in question has been leased out to the orphanage by short terms lease vide five lease deeds by the government for the purpose of setting up the orphanage, which are not transferable according to the terms and conditions of the lease deeds,” it said.

An HC bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice AKM Zahirul Hoque delivered the judgment last year after hearing on a writ petition filed by four students of the orphanage seeking necessary orders to protect and preserve its properties.

Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh later on became a party to the petition. Writ petitioners' counsel Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar for the authorities to execute the HC directives if the Appellate Division does not stay the HC verdict. He, however, said Concord Group could challenge the HC verdict. Meanwhile, barrister Aneek R Haque, lawyer for superintendent and general members of the managing committee of the orphanage, said there is no legal bar to implementing the HC directives as the SC chamber passed an order voiding Concord's right to the building.

According to the writ petition, in 1909 the then Nawab of Dhaka established the orphanage. It was extended later through leasing of land and run by the successive governments.

President of the orphanage's managing committee Begum Shamsunnahar Ahsan Ullah and Secretary GA Khan leased out a portion of land to the developer in July 2003 and April 2004, in violation of the lease agreement between the orphanage and the government.

The agreement had a condition that the property could not be used for any other purpose except for the orphanage.

Despite that condition, the president and the secretary handed over the property to Concord Group illegally in exchange for financial benefits, the complainants said in the petition.

has now melted away.”

Ain Sefra, founded in 1881 as a French garrison town and known as “The Gateway to the Desert”, sees average high temperatures of more than 37C in summer and has notched record lows of -10.2C in winter, though the average hovers around freezing.

LiveScience notes that snow landing on the sand dunes is incredibly rare, adding it is a more common occurrence on Saharan mountain ranges.

“On February 18, 1979, low altitude areas of the Sahara desert recorded their first snowfall in living memory,” the site reports.

Mexico

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"almost all of them are impossible" to identify, Mexico state's governor Eruviel Avila told the Televisa television network.

At least 72 were wounded, the authorities said. The injured were transported to emergency rooms, and 21 have since been released.

Fire crews struggled for three hours before bringing the blaze under control.

ENTIRE MARKET BLOWN UP

The head of the civil protection service, Luis Felipe Puente, said crews had to wait for all the fireworks to finish exploding before they could extinguish the flames.

"The entire market is gone," he said. It had 300 stands.

Several of the injured were in "delicate condition," he added, saying searches were under way for more casualties in the scorched area that looked like a scene from a post-apocalyptic film, with little left standing in the smouldering ruins.

Homes and vehicles nearby were also severely damaged. In some areas, emergency workers were gently probing for survivors under heaps of charred and twisted roofing material.

LDP for enactment

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among the political parties. A commission without backbone, Kazi Rakibuddin [chief election commissioner]-led EC allowed voting even at night. The president in reply said he was not aware of that," the LDP chief added.

Highly praising the president, Oli said he is acceptable to all people and is in the best position to address reconstitution of the EC.

The LDP chairman said, "He is our old friend. There is no controversy about him. So we urged him to overcome the present situation."

"Besides, he had been in politics and the Speaker for many years. Now he is the country's president. Nobody is in a better position than he is to carry out the work," he told journalists.

The LDP, a component of the BNP-led 20-party alliance, submitted a list of names of probable search committee members to the president. Oli, however, refused to disclose the names.

The party's many other proposals were similar to those of the BNP's.

The president later held another meeting with a 12-member delegation of Janata League.

Emerging from the meeting party President Abdul Kader Siddique said they opposed the idea of enacting a law on formation of the EC.

The party urged the president to exercise his power to form the EC.

"The president has the power to decide how he would constitute the Election Commission. We will support whatever decision he makes," Kader said.

Janata League submitted an eight-point proposal for reconstitution of the EC.

The tenure of the current EC will expire in February next year.

The president on Sunday began talks with registered political parties. The BNP was the first party to meet the president.

Hamid on Tuesday held a dialogue with Jatiya Party.

Coordination

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To address the impacts, the government developed the national adaption programme of action (NAPA) in 2005, she said, adding that the government prepared an adapted Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) in 2009.

"This plan includes action to increase resilience of vulnerable groups including women and children to scaling up community level adaption, livelihood diversification, better access to basic services and social protection," she said.

It will also support activities such as development and implementation of climate change resilient cropping and fisheries and livestock farming system to ensure food security at households and the national level, she added.

She said considering the importance of vulnerabilities in coastal region, the government prepared a master plan for agricultural development in the southern region in Bangladesh in 2013 with the technical assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The government has prepared Bangladesh Country Investment Plan (CIP), the roadmap toward investment in agriculture, food security and nutrition, she said.

The sixth five-year plan was successful in achieving self-sufficiency in food production, she said, adding that the seventh five-year plan was formulated to reach food security while agriculture sector has to grow by four to five percent per year to support high GDP growth and increasing demand for food.

She said they were giving higher investment in agriculture and farming top priority.

BIISS Board of Governors Chairman Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad and BIISS Director General Maj Gen AKM Abdur Rahman also spoke.

5 more RMG factories

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workers' organisation made any demand to the government or the authorities concerned."

Different intelligence agencies have been trying to find out "the reasons" and the persons behind the unrest, he said, adding that someone definitely misguided the workers to go for demonstrations.

Asked, the minister said they were still unsure how to resolve the crisis.

"Let's see," he told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said, "We have been informed that more and more factories are being shut every day because of the unrest."

He further said they were trying to find out "the reasons" and the people involved in the unrest that began on December 12 at seven RMG factories in Ashulia.

"We are also looking into whether there is any ulterior motive behind it."

Asked about the solution to the crisis, he said this also depends on the relationship between the owners and the workers of the factories.

"We will ensure law and order at the RMG factories and also protection of public property."

Mostafizur Rahman, director of Dhaka Industrial Police, said at least 59 RMG factories were closed in Ashulia till yesterday afternoon.

Around 9:00am, a group of agitating workers tried to block Dhaka-Tangail highway in Narasinghapur area, but police foiled the bid, he said.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said he would soon sit with the BGMEA leaders to discuss the workers unrest.

Shajahan, also convener of Garment Workers' Coordination Council, was speaking at a meeting with the representatives of Ashulia garment workers at the capital's Segunbagicha.

Urging them to foil conspiracies at home and abroad to destroy the sector, he asked the agitating workers to go back to work and place their demands before the government and the owners following due procedures.

On Monday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the ministries concerned to find out the causes of the labour unrest and take effective measures to end it.

The directive came during an

Big opportunities

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importing hydroelectricity from Nepal and Bhutan. He also criticised the Rampal coal-fired power plant.

Attaching importance to technology and ICT training, Sachs said Bangladesh needs to invest more in the science education.

Bangladesh-born British MP Rushanara Ali said that as the UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Bangladesh, she would create a warm relationship between Bangladesh and the UK for more business.

She said Bangladesh was riddled with poverty, flood and political unrest when she left the country at the age of seven. But the situation has improved a lot.

Bangladesh is very resilient and determined to develop. "That is the character of this nation," Rushanara said.

Climate change is a major challenge for the country, she noted.

"I'm delighted to see the country's increased focus on investment in infrastructure. Bangladesh has good business with the UK."

The relationship between the two countries is very strong, she said.

Rushnara was present at an MoU signing ceremony between Bangladesh Railway and British company DP Rail

EU for strong

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expression and of the media, freedom of association, the situation of the Rohingya, the death penalty and the depleting space for civil society.

Other issues discussed in the meeting included the rule of law, and law enforcement, human rights cooperation in the UN, rights of minorities, freedom of assembly, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, rights of women, children and people with disabilities, fundamental labour rights, trade union registration and fair labour practices.

The EU called on Bangladesh to ensure that trade union registration processes are carried out in a transparent and expeditious manner, and that the labour law, the implementing regulation, and the draft law on Export Processing Zones comply with the ILO convention on freedom of association.

These issues will be further discussed at the EU-Bangladesh Joint Commission to be held in Brussels next year.

The EU recognised the long-standing solidarity of Bangladesh with those fleeing violence in Myanmar, and urged Bangladesh not to deport them or turn them back until the situation stabilises for their safe return to their homeland.

The EU encouraged Bangladesh to

unscheduled discussion at the weekly cabinet meeting.

The PM wondered why labour unrest occurs in the RMG sector at this period of time every year. She mentioned that her government had already increased wages of garment workers, according to meeting sources.

BGMEA WORRIED

Siddiqur Rahman, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the factory owners are incurring a loss of Tk 100 crore a day.

"This is direct production loss. The indirect loss would be bigger," he said.

The garment makers would have to pay for expensive air shipment to meet the deadline for sending apparel items to retailers. They may have to give discounts to retailers and even face cancellation of work orders, he said.

According to industry insiders, expensive air shipment increases the export costs substantially. For example, if clothes weighing a kilogram are sent to a destination in Europe by sea, it would cost less than three cents. But if the products are sent to the same destination by air, the shipment cost would be around \$2.

"We want to reopen our factories. We want to sit with the government in this regard. But the agitating workers are not keeping their promise to return to work," Rahman said.

Meanwhile, the management of Windy Apparels Ltd suspended 121 workers from job over their alleged involvement in the labour unrest.

With a list of the workers and their photographs, a notice was hung at the factory gate in Ashulia's Jamgora area.

Yesterday morning, many of the workers of the closed factories went to their workplaces but found the main gates shut.

EXTRA SECURITY IN ASHULIA

A large number of Rab, BGB and police personnel had been deployed in the industrial belt since morning to ward off any untoward incident, said Shah Mizan Shafiur Rahman, superintendent of police in Dhaka district.

Fazlur Rahman, assistant director of 48 Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh, said

15 BGB platoons have been deployed in the area.

Ltd on Tuesday for setting up a 240-kilometre rail line between Dhaka and Payra seaport in Patuakhali's Kuakata.

"I know the worries about Brexit. We have commitment to continue trade and investment with Bangladesh. This is our commitment. We have a long history and relationship. About half a million Bangladeshis are living in the UK. They are the ambassadors of Bangladesh," she said.

Daan Roosegaarde, an artist and innovator from the Netherlands, delivered an inspirational speech at the conference.

"If we had not used technologies, we would have drowned." With the help of technology, the Netherlands addressed water-related issues and developed the country, he said.

Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman said about 60-65 percent investment is made by banks and the rest comes from equity investment.

He said if equity investment does not come, foreign investment will come. "We need transparent policy in this regard. Despite global economic downturn, Bangladesh grew through increasing productivity."

Mahbubur Rahman, president of the International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh, moderated the session.

issue a standing invitation to UN Special Procedure mandate holders to visit Bangladesh and to ratify international convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance; protocol to the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; optional protocols to the conventions on torture; rights of children and persons with disabilities; international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; and the second optional protocol to the international covenant on civil and political rights.

During the meeting, Bangladesh welcomed Principal Adviser for Gender Issues and UNSCR 1325 Mara Marinaki's offer of support on developing Bangladesh's action plan on women, peace and security.

The EU delegation was led by Veronica Cody, head of Division Regional Affairs for India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan in the European External Action Service (EEAS). Mohammad Shahidul Haque, secretary to Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division of law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry, led the Bangladesh delegation that included representatives from various ministries.