

# TRIAL OF AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASE IPU worried at slow progress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) expressed deep concern over the slow progress in the trial of August 21 grenade attack on Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the assassination of Shah AMS Kibria in 12 years.

"More than 12 years after the attacks, none of the perpetrators has been held responsible in a court of law, reiterating that justice delayed is justice denied," said the IPU Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians in its report yesterday at the IPU Assembly in Dhaka.

The committee also "hopes that the

trial will proceed swiftly and that further progress will promptly be made towards ensuring full accountability for the serious crimes, in conformity with national and international standards of fair trial, including those regarding the application of capital punishment, and without any political interference."

It also calls for fair trial of the cases filed in connection with the attacks.

"Two cases [Kibria assassination and August 21 grenade attack] are sub judice matter and now before the judiciary authorities, so we want to let the judicial process run its course. We want to make sure the suspects and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with the Czech Republic delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly. The MPs called on Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday. The five-day IPU conference started in Dhaka April 1 for the 136th assembly of the union. PHOTO: STAR

# Indian cabinet okays 5 MoUs

*They are on waterways, judiciary, media*

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian cabinet yesterday approved five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), including one on development of waterways on Kushiara and Jamuna rivers, to be signed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit there on April 8.

A meeting of the cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cleared the MoU on fairway development of Ashuganj-Zakiganj stretch of the Kushiara river and Sirajganj-Daikhawa stretch of the Jamuna river in the Indo-Bangladesh protocol route by undertaking necessary dredging jointly by the two countries, an official statement said.

The MoU will considerably reduce the logistics cost of cargo movement to northeastern India and also the road traffic congestion through the Siliguri

Corridor or Chicken's Neck corridor connecting mainland India with its northeastern states.

The cabinet also gave its green signal to an MoU on passenger cruise services on the coastal routes between India and Bangladesh for starting regular movement of passengers and tourists in watercraft between the two countries.

"The operationalisation of this MoU will promote people-to-people contact and cooperation between the two countries in respect of economic, social and cultural advancement. It will also generate employment opportunities for the people of India and Bangladesh," the statement said.

A separate MoU between India and Bangladesh in the field of judicial sector cooperation was also okayed by the Indian cabinet. It is aimed at developing and strengthening mutual cooperation

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

# Save politics from power of money

FROM PAGE 1

in political and electoral finance is a timely resolution. If this is genuinely implemented, people in IPU countries can expect a long-cherished dream to be fulfilled, and their respective parliamentarians will deserve to be commended.

"Since IPU resolutions are non-binding, we would expect specific actions in IPU countries, including Bangladesh, to reform and reinforce legal, institutional and policy structures to truly and effectively translate this lofty commitment into practice," he said.

Expressing grave concern over the extreme political, social and economic inequalities prevalent in the world, the IPU called for immediate action to reverse this trend to promote democracy and human rights for all.

"It is clear to us that extreme inequalities come at a high cost to society, stalling economic growth, undermining the democratic process and social cohesion and increasing the risk of violence and insecurity," said the communiqué read out by Lyonpo Jigme Zangpo, speaker of the

Bhutanese Parliament.

Parliamentarians who joined the conference from 132 countries pledged to "place concern for all inequalities" -- social, economic and political -- at the heart of their work.

IPU President Saber Hossain Chowdhury said, "We cannot continue to view the gap between rich and poor as business as usual. This assembly is one of many steps that need to be taken to ensure that well-being and dignity of all are respected."

In the opinion of IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong, the 136th IPU assembly in Dhaka was very significant, as several important resolutions were adopted in the conference with MPs from all over the world discussing many issues extensively.

"MPs have expressed their determination that parliaments will not give in to terrorist threat, a recent global phenomenon," he said in his concluding remarks at a press conference.

Dhaka would be remembered in the days to come due to the significant outcome of the assembly, he mentioned.

The IPU secretary general hoped

that after returning to their respective countries, the MPs would work in line with the Dhaka declaration for establishing human rights and combating inequalities in various sectors.

Apart from other issues, the communiqué focused on strengthening legal frameworks to promote human rights.

"Parliaments should ensure that all laws and budgetary allocations promote human rights for all and uphold the rule of law," it noted.

It also mentioned that parliaments should enact laws and regulations to facilitate the participation of all citizens, including the most vulnerable and marginalised in the political process, as well as their access to elected office.

In the conference, the parliamentarians underscored, among other things, the need for improving international cooperation to redress inequality.

Touching on the issue, the communiqué said, "Parliaments should consider advocating for a fairer representation of the interests of developing countries in the institutions of global economic and financial governance."

The IPU members adopted a resolution for guaranteeing women's access to financial mechanisms, said a news release of the IPU yesterday.

"Key to achieving gender equality is promotion and respect for the rights of girls. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians called for greater empowerment of girls, and legal measures to end gender-based violence," said the IPU.

About the significance of hosting the IPU conference in Dhaka, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said Bangladesh's image reached a new height, as MPs from all over the world witnessed firsthand the country's advancement in democracy and success in various sectors.

Founded in 1889, the IPU has been working for strengthening parliaments and democracy. Now, national parliaments of more than 170 countries are its members.

The five-day conference, jointly organised by the IPU and Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, began in Dhaka on April 1. More than 700 MPs from 132 countries attended it.

# Beware of traffic disruption today

FROM PAGE 1

The English first paper test is at 10:00am today.

The street between Shahbagh and Matsya Bhaban and the one between Shahbagh and Doel Chatter via TSC would be closed from 10:30am.

From noon, police will divert traffic at Bijoy Sarani, Khamarbari, Bangla Motor, Moghbazar, Paribagh, Sakura Gali, Police Bhaban, Sabji Bagan, Mintu Road (east), Officers' Club, Kakrail Church, Shilpakala, ACC Office, Matshya Bhaban, Kadam Foara, High Court, Shahidullah Hall, Bakshibazar, Palashi, Nilkhet, Ruman Chatter, Kantaban, Shahbagh and Aziz Super Market.

Examinees and their guardians fear that they would have to suffer a lot today. They questioned why the rally was not being held during the weekend or after the exams had ended.

Around two lakh HSC examinees are sitting for the exam in more than 100 centres in the capital. Most students have at least one guardian accompanying them to the centres.

"If the major streets are blocked, how can we reach the exam centre? Is it possible to reach there walking from a long distance?" questioned Rina Jobaida Hossain, mother of an examinee.

"What would be the fate of those examinees and guardians who come from Savar, Dhamrai and Narayanganj?"

Hasan Sayeed, another guardian, said usually the traffic situation deter-

## ROAD BLOCKED

**POSSIBLE TIME 10:30AM**

1. Matshya Bhaban to Shahbagh intersection
2. Shahbagh intersection to Doyel Chatter via TSC

TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT DMP

orates during any public exams. "If such a huge rally is planned on an exam day, we can't imagine what is waiting for us."

"Usually, examinees are tensed ahead of tests. This will make them

more nervous which may affect their performance," he said, adding that they would leave for the exam centre a lot earlier.

Contacted, Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Mahabubur Rahman said he did not know about the rally.

He, however, expressed optimism that the examinees would not face any problems as they usually show up way ahead of time.

"The parents in Dhaka are aware of their children's examinations and the traffic system," he said.

The BIF is holding the grand rally, with an expected crowd of 2 lakh, to mark its 42nd anniversary. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would inaugurate the rally and be the chief guest.

The BIF usually celebrates its anniversaries on March 22 and holds the programme indoors, but this year they have gone big, outdoors and on a later date. Last year, the programme was held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Asked why such a large gathering, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, a BIF governing body member and the convener of the programme, told The Daily Star that they were holding the programme this way "to dispel rumours that the Awami League government and Bangabandhu are anti-religion".

Asked why today, Abdullah, also the religious affairs secretary of the AL, said they tried to hold the rally on other days but, among other things, it was difficult to find a slot in the PM's

schedule and there were issues with guests' arrivals. Six guests are coming from Saudi Arabia, including the imam of Haram Sharif.

**DMP BRIEFING**

DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia at a press briefing at its media centre yesterday said they have taken up a multi-layer security system in around one kilometre area of the venue.

Intelligence agency officials, DMP's bomb disposal unit and Special Weapon and Tactic Team (SWAT) would be on standby while the entire venue would be monitored in real time via CCTV, said the DMP boss.

"We are also requesting you all [citizens] not to bring out your cars on the streets near the venue tomorrow [today] unless absolutely necessary because there will be 3,000 additional vehicles carrying the participants of the rally," he said.

The participants were asked to park their vehicles at designated spots after entering the capital and reach the venue on foot, he said.

The parking spots are in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon Taltola, southern end of Hatirjheel, Aftabnagar, AGB Colony, Gulistan, Dainik Bangla intersection, Baninagar, Khilgaon, Sanir Akhra and Doyaganj areas.

The restrictions on vehicular movements would be withdrawn as soon as the rally ends, he said.

Responding to a question whether there were any specific threats, the DMP commissioner replied in the negative.

# Heavy rain

FROM PAGE 1

Many city dwellers had to wait for hours at bus stops.

Though traffic situation at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue was smooth before the rain, the road had severe traffic congestion after it went under ankle to knee-deep water.

Anwar Hossain, an employee of a private firm at Farmgate, said he took a detour to avoid water on the way to Farmgate from Star Kabab at Karwan Bazar. The usual 10-minute walking distance took him 30 minutes.

Raihanul Islam, another job holder, said he could not keep balance while manoeuvring into the water and so he fell along with his motorcycle.

An official of the Dhaka Met office said it might continue raining with temporary gusty wind and thunder at many places in Sylhet and Mymensingh and few areas in Dhaka, Barisal and Khulna.

It may also rain in one or two places in Rangpur, Rajshahi and Khulna.

# No deal

FROM PAGE 1

BNP threatened that it would not accept the deal if it was signed only for two or five years. "But we had inked the deal for 30 years."

On BNP leaders' remarks about her upcoming India visit, she said they didn't have the capability to do anything good for the country. "But when others would want to do something for the country, they would lay down conditions and won't do anything," she added.

About the Indira-Mujib treaty, Hasina said a vested quarter had criticised it as a "slavery agreement", but Bangladesh received more territory when enclaves were exchanged between the two countries under the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA).

She also came down hard on BNP founder Ziaur Rahman and former PM Khaleda Zia for not taking any initiative to implement the LBA.

The PM said her government settled the maritime boundary disputes with India and Myanmar through an international court and got its due share maintaining friendly relations with the neighbours.

Hasina highly praised the law enforcement agencies, including police and Rapid Action Battalion, for successfully handling social menaces like militancy and terrorism.

Even in developed countries, police could not apprehend criminals before they unleashed a terrorist activity, but Bangladesh's law enforcement agencies were successfully nabbing militants and terrorists beforehand, she said.

Mentioning that her two successive governments recruited 41,000 police members in the last eight years, the PM said the present government would hire 10,000 more.

She underscored the need for taking up housing projects for government employees at divisional and district levels.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque expressed gratitude to the PM for implementing their dream project and said the scheme became a reality only because of her cooperation.

Principal Secretary to the PM Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, PMO Secretary Suraiya Begum and senior police officials were present.

# Bangladesh 3-notch up

FROM PAGE 1

According to HDR 2016, life expectancy at birth in Bangladesh stood at 72 years. Its gross national income per capita based on PPP (purchasing power parity) was \$3,341 in 2015. It was \$5,663 in India and \$5,031 in Pakistan.

During the same period, unemployment rate in Bangladesh was 4.4 percent, while it was 3.5 percent in India and 5.4 percent in Pakistan.

Supplementary indicators about perceptions of well-being showed that majority of people in the country were satisfied with healthcare, education quality and social security and standard of living, and had trust in the national government, according to the report.

The UNDP publishes the annual assessment based on three broad elements -- a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

"Bangladesh has shown tremendous progress in human development over the last two decades. Our average annual growth of HDI is better than any other countries in South Asia,"

Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said at the launching of the report at the NEC Conference Room of planning ministry.

"Our social indicators show that we are doing better in health, education, life expectancy at birth while our per capita income is increasing," he said.

While presenting key findings of the report, Selim Jahan, director of the Human Development Report Office of the UN and the lead author of HDR 2016, cautioned against paying too much attention to national averages.

"In order to further advance, we need to examine more closely not just what has been achieved, but also who has been excluded and why," he said.

Selim, however, said the progress of Bangladesh in the HDI was remarkable with the country's index value increasing in the last few years.

The average life expectancy in Bangladesh is 72 years. Besides, Bangladesh is well ahead of India and Pakistan in the case of under 5 mortality rate and gender equality, he said.

Bangladesh has been most successful in translating its income into

human development. But, he said, many African countries could not do that although their per capita income is higher than Bangladesh.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam said Bangladesh has become a role model among developing countries as its progress in recent years has impressed the world.

"We have to continue our development march for providing benefits to the people, especially the marginalised and excluded ones," he said.

Principal Coordinator for SDG Affairs at Prime Minister's Office Abul Kalam Azad said, "Bangladesh has done tremendous jobs in achieving MDGs and we are taking all-out preparation to successfully implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also."

Chairing the launching session, Shamsul Alam, member, GED, Planning Commission, said, "Bangladesh is marching forward unabated both in economic and social fronts. We are graduating from a least developed country to a newly developing nation."

# AL men

FROM PAGE 16

Hossain of Kaliganj High School in Durgapur upazila.

Later, armed AL activists went to the school and attacked the headmaster in his room around 12:00pm.

When other teachers rushed to his aid, an assistant teacher Saiful Islam was also beaten up.

Mokbul and Saiful were both admitted into a local hospital.

Officer-in-Charge Ruhul Alam of Durgapur Police Station told The Daily Star, "Some local AL men allegedly beat up two teachers of the school but the situation is now under control and extra police have been deployed there."