

Trump returns

FROM PAGE 16
woman stated that she had information that individuals connected to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting Ms. Clinton," the statement said. Clinton was the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee.

"Her statements were vague, ambiguous and made no sense. No details or supporting information was provided or even offered. It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information."

Trump Jr said Veselnitskaya then turned the conversation to the adoption of Russian children and a US law blacklisting Russians linked to alleged human-rights abuses.

President Trump was "not aware of and did not attend" the meeting, Mark Corallo, a spokesman for Trump's legal team, said in an emailed statement.

Trump Jr said he was asked to attend the meeting "with an individual who I was told might have information helpful to the campaign" at the request of an acquaintance he knew from the 2013 Miss Universe pageant.

"I asked Jared and Paul to attend, but told them nothing of the substance," he said.

"The meeting lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes," he said. "As it ended, my acquaintance apologized for taking up our time. That was the end of it and there was no further contact or follow-up of any kind. My father knew nothing of the meeting or these events."

The New York Times report said Trump Jr was promised damaging information about Clinton before agreeing to meet with the lawyer. It cited three advisers to the White House briefed on the meeting and two others with knowledge of it.

The Times first reported on the meeting on Saturday, after which Trump Jr issued a statement confirming that it took place, but made no mention of the Clinton aspect.

Representatives for Manafort and Kushner did not respond to requests for comment.

Allegations of the Trump campaign's ties to Russia have cast a shadow over Donald Trump's first five months in office.

A federal special counsel and several congressional committees are investigating possible contacts between the campaign and Russian representatives as part of a larger probe into allegations that Moscow meddled in the election.

The June meeting was the first confirmed private meeting between members of the president's inner circle and a Russian national, the Times reported, citing confidential government records and interviews with people familiar with the documents.

The revelations come after President Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the allegations of election meddling during the summit of leaders from the Group of 20 major economies in Hamburg, Germany.

The Kremlin has denied US intelligence agencies' conclusion that Moscow tried to tilt the election in Trump's favour, using such means as hacking into the emails of senior Democrats.

Trump has repeatedly denied any collusion.

Iraqi troops

FROM PAGE 16
A senior commander said yesterday that Iraqi forces were engaged in "heavy" fighting with the remnants of jihadist forces, but that the battle was near its end.

Lieutenant General Sami al-Aridhi of the elite Counter-Terrorism Service said the jihadists had been reduced to an area of the Old City of about 200 by 100 metres (yards).

"They do not accept to surrender," Aridhi told AFP.

But "operations are in their final stages," and "it is likely that (the fighting) will end today", Aridhi said.

CIVILIANS TRAPPED

Aridhi said his forces had information that there were between 3,000 and 4,000 civilians in the area but that could not be independently confirmed.

Backed by the US-led coalition battling IS, Iraqi forces launched their campaign in October to retake Mosul, which was seized by the jihadists during the mid-2014 offensive that saw them take control of large parts of Iraq and neighbouring Syria.

Army, police and special forces, backed by waves of US-led air strikes, seized the eastern side of the city in January and launched the battle for its western part the next month.

The fight grew tougher when security forces entered the densely populated Old City on the western bank of the Tigris River, which divides the city, and intense street-to-street fighting followed.

The cost of victory has been enormous: much of Mosul in ruins, thousands dead and wounded and nearly half the city's population forced from their homes.

The United Nations has said 920,000 people fled their homes during the Mosul operation, and while some have returned the vast majority remain displaced.

FARHAD MAZHAR 'ABDUCTION'

'Ex-female employee of his NGO gives statement under 164'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A former female employee of Farhad Mazhar's NGO in a judicial statement yesterday said the writer contacted her several times on July 3, the day he reportedly went missing from outside his Adabar residence in the capital, court and police sources said.

She said the writer gave her Tk 15,000 through a mobile banking platform around 7:00pm that day.

Metropolitan Magistrate Sattyabrata Shikder recorded her statement after Mahbubul Alam, an inspector of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, had produced her before him.

According to her statement, the writer on July 3 called her five to six times and she phoned him two to three times.

Around 6:20am, Farhad told the woman that he was on his way to collect money for her.

"At around 11:00am, I phoned him

and wanted to know whether he had been abducted. He told me that he was alright."

She also said she joined Farhad's organisation UBINIG (Policy Research for Development Alternative) between 2006 and 2007. She got acquainted with the writer when she was posted in Cox's Bazar. She left the NGO in 2009.

However, she said Farhad used to give her Tk 10,000 – Tk 12,000 a month depending on her need and that in April, she asked the writer to give her money.

On July 4, Farhad in a judicial statement before another magistrate said several unidentified men forced him into a microbus and blindfolded him minutes after he came out of his Adabor house to buy medicines in the early hours of July 3.

Law enforcers found him on a bus in Jessore's Noapara around 11:30pm on the same day.

Keep helping Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1
education and their livelihoods easily.

"These people deserve a better future than the present conditions of extreme poverty, deprivation and isolation. We need to move from survival to real life with opportunities," said the UN high commissioner.

"A crucial first step is to pursue freedom of movement and access to services and livelihoods for all. Accelerated pathways to citizenship are also part of the solution as are efforts to tackle exclusion and poverty," he added.

Earlier in the day, the UN refugee chief visited the registered Rohingya refugee camp at Kutupalong in Cox's Bazaar and talked to them, especially with young men and women.

"I spoke to people, especially young people in Kutupalong camp. They didn't tell me I want more food, more blankets and more medicines. They told me -- give us a future. That's the message to both leaders [Sheikh Hasina and Aung San Suu Kyi]," Grandi told the press.

Speaking about his meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday, he said he thanked the government and the people of Bangladesh for hosting the refugees for more than three decades and for providing humanitarian assistances to them.

Replying to a question on the plan to relocate them to an island, the UNHCR chief said this is just a plan and the focus needs to be given on voluntary relocation instead of imposing force.

On the repatriation process, he laid stress on creating a conducive and peaceful environment in Rakhine State of Myanmar to make their return sustainable.

He said the process will not be sustainable if the refugees do not feel like going back home.

Grandi also met the home minister and foreign minister and discussed the refugee situation.

In Myanmar, he travelled to Yangon

and Naypyitaw as well as Sittwe and Maungdaw in Rakhine State. He met Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Min Myat Aye, Minister of Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe and Minister of Border Affairs Lt Gen Ye Aung.

He said he is very "impressed" for being able to meet both Hasina and Suu Kyi, and described them "strong and clear minded visionary women".

Recalling that both of their fathers were killed, the UNCHR chief said the two leaders are very committed to a very good future of their respective countries.

He said recent political change in Myanmar and efforts being made so far "should make us little bit of hopeful that we have not been in the past".

About the Myanmar government-formed commission led by former UN secretary general Kofi Annan, the UNHCR boss said the commission has already given its preliminary report and is expected to release the final report next month.

The preliminary report talked about the necessity to implement the citizenship project. It recommended relaxing some of the crucial constraints such as freedom of movement.

Oh his meeting with Suu Kyi, he said that he had a "very constructive and useful" meeting with the Myanmar state counsellor.

"Suu Kyi told me that she also agrees and she will do whatever possible to implement those," he said and added that Myanmar government wants "verification" to give the Rohingyas citizenship.

Referring to his visit to Myanmar, he said he had seen the living conditions of those stateless people.

The human rights situation of the Muslim minorities there is "very dire". They do not have citizenship, freedom of movement, association and congregation. This in turn generates poverty, he added.

Remove stairs

FROM PAGE 16
of Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover for the benefit of the people.

However, experts said there should not be stairs in the flyovers as they can cause various difficulties in vehicular movement.

Earlier on May 31, the HC in a suo moto move directed the relevant authorities to take necessary steps to remove all the stairs from Mayor Mohammad Hanif flyover. It also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to remove the stairs from the flyover.

Following a stay petition filed by Orion Infrastructure Limited, the SC chamber judge on June 9 issued status quo on the removal of stairs set up on the flyover for entry and exit.

Additional Attorney General Murad Reza and Deputy Attorney General SM Moniruzzaman stood for the state.

As the authorities concerned of the flyover set up two stairs at Jatrabari from where vehicles enter the flyover, they pose a huge risk. Furthermore, bus stoppages have been created at the points centering the stairs.

Everyday thousands of passengers use the stand from where they board various buses especially local services like to Gulistan-Demra, Motijheel-Madonpur, Gazipur to Signboard and Gulistan to Madonpur routes. Many passengers who want to get down at Jatrabari also use these points and the passengers go below using those stairs.

Top 100

FROM PAGE 1
Saleh Carpet Mills Ltd and SK Steel and Chowdhury Knitwear.

On June 20, the finance minister told the parliament that a total of 202,623 persons and companies, which had borrowed money from 55 state and private commercial banks, defaulted on their loans as of March 2017.

Muhiith also said the National Board of Revenue has seized around 4,490 kilograms of gold in the last seven years from the airports and different other checkpoints.

There were 2,928,093 individual taxpayers in the country in 2016-17, which was expected to reach 30 lakh at the end of the fiscal year, he said.

"Some nine lakh new taxpayers were registered in the first nine months of 2016-17." Over four lakh new taxpayers submitted their returns in the same fiscal year, he said.

The government has taken various steps to bring more people under the tax net and to increase revenue collection from income tax to 50 percent from the existing 37 percent by 2020-21.

Open help desks

FROM PAGE 16
issued by the ministry.

A control room on public health emergency operation centre [chikungunya disease control room] was launched on July 3 at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). A workgroup has also been formed to work 24 hours a day under the IEDCR, informs the release.

A round-the-clock hotline for answering people and doctors on chikungunya has also been set up. The hotline numbers are 01937110011 and 01937000011.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Zahid Maleque has meanwhile claimed chikungunya has not spread in an epidemic form and is limited to Dhaka city.

"People outside Dhaka are not infected by chikungunya as of now... So, it has not reached epidemic proportions," he told a press conference at the conference room of the ministry yesterday.

Zahid claims they took adequate measures to create mass awareness to prevent the disease. He added the doctors had been given training to that end.

He further said the city corporations should gear up their activities to destroy aedes mosquitoes to check chikungunya outbreak.

Symptoms of the disease are visible in four to seven days after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito. Chikungunya is characterised by an abrupt onset of high fever frequently accompanied by joint pain.

Other common signs and symptoms of the disease include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. The joint pain is often very debilitating, but usually lasts for a few days or may prolong for weeks.

The Dhaka South City Corporation yesterday chalked out elaborate programmes to make people aware of chikungunya. Officials of the DSCC held a views exchange meeting with students of five education institutions to make them aware, said a press release.

An information centre has been opened at the DSCC with a hotline number 9563507 to get information regarding chikungunya, it read.

SC scraps

FROM PAGE 16
On May 22, a Cox's Bazar court sent Ruhul Amin to jail as he surrendered before the court, seeking bail. At the time, he was posted to the Economic Relations Division as deputy secretary.

The HC granted bail to the duo as they filed bail petitions.

Final decision

FROM PAGE 1
World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in Poland.

The draft decision was uploaded on the Unesco website.

"Some amendments to the draft decision have been made in the discussion session at the committee meeting. For example, reference to a possible inscription of the Sundarbans World Heritage site into the List of World Heritage in Danger in absence of substantial progress [in conserving the Sundarbans] has been revised," said Beatrice.

Another amendment was the timeline of reporting about the progress made by the government to the WHC. The original deadline was February 1, 2018, she said.

The new deadline has been set in December 2018. It means that the state of conservation of the Sundarbans World Heritage site will again be discussed in the 43th session of the WHC in 2019.

The government promised to conduct a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) in the South West region of Bangladesh.

However, the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring mission and the decision of the WHC address a variety of issues, not only the SEA, but integrated management of the Sundarbans, or ensuring flow of fresh water in the forest.

All decisions in the meeting including the ones about the Sundarbans will be adopted on July 12, the last day of the committee meeting.

The Unesco representative said, once a property of a country is announced as a 'World Heritage Site', the country is responsible to follow certain criteria and guidelines under the convention to protect the outstanding universal value (OUV) of that property.

Asked how the Unesco would be monitoring whether the government carried out SEA properly, the country representative said, "The draft decision had a reference to IUCN guidelines for environmental assessments, but certainly, Unesco would support the government as required."

It is the duty of the particular state party to protect their heritage site fulfilling the requirements as outlined in the convention, she said.

A world heritage site is of outstanding universal value, she said, adding that the international heritage community may sometimes require more efforts or stronger approaches than outlined in the national rules and regulations of a country.

Kaldun pointed out that following

the standard procedures of the convention, any major intervention at or close to a World Heritage site should be reported to the World Heritage Committee (through the World Heritage Centre) prior of any interventions. This procedure and opportunity was missed in the case of the Sundarbans.

She also mentioned that following the Reactive Monitoring Mission's visit in March 2016, Bangladesh government became very proactive and interacted with UNESCO and IUCN closely.

"Also, the Bangladesh delegation put their efforts in Krakow and showed a dedication about the Sundarbans which is now an excellent opportunity to build upon with all necessary stakeholders at international, national and local levels to ensure the safeguarding and sustainable integrated development of the World Heritage site," she said.

Allow

FROM PAGE 16
the order and rule after hearing a writ petition filed by Tahsina challenging legality of the obstruction put on her.

Her lawyer Advocate Sagir Hossain Leon told The Daily Star that his client was scheduled to go to London with her two other children on a Biman Bangladesh flight on Sunday, but the immigration officers at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport obstructed her without any reason.

The constitution of the country guarantees free movement of its citizens, he said citing from the petition.

Earlier on Sunday, Tahsina was stopped by the immigration police when she went to the airport.

Tahsina, who is a deputy registrar at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star that she went to the airport with all necessary documents.

"I got my boarding pass and was scheduled to leave Dhaka on a flight of Bangladesh Biman at 10:00pm. But the police stopped me at the immigration point." They kept her waiting for one and a half hours and finally informed her that she was not allowed to fly on ground of "state security," she added.

"I asked them to give me the reason in writing, but they did not provide it although there was no criminal case or allegation against me," she said.

BNP Organising Secretary Ilias Ali, also a former lawmaker from Sylhet, along with his driver, went missing from the capital's Banani area around midnight on April 17, 2012.

His party claims the government agencies had a hand behind his disappearance.

EGYPTIAN MIGRANTS

19 bodies found in Libya desert

AFP, Benghazi

The decomposed bodies of 19 Egyptian migrants were found in the Libyan desert overnight after the truck in which they were smuggled into the country overturned, the Red Crescent said Sunday.

The bodies were buried in a cemetery near the Libyan border town of Tobruk, the organisation said.

It was unclear when the Egyptians died but their bodies were in a state of decomposition when found in a desert area near Tobruk in Libya's remote east.

Meanwhile a security official in Tobruk said a search was underway for a group of 29 other Egyptians reported missing by authorities in their country.

Since the 2011 overthrow of

Moamer Gaddafi, Libya has been riven by chaos, making it the main gateway for African migrants heading for Europe on dangerous Mediterranean crossings.

Human traffickers have exploited the instability to boost their lucrative but deadly trade.

Egyptians have travelled to Libya for decades, to look for jobs in the oil-rich North African country or to use it as a transit route to Europe.

Since January 100,000 migrants have made the perilous sea journey to Europe, around 85,000 of them arriving in Italy from Libya, according to the International Organization for Migration.

The United Nations says more than 2,200 migrants have died this year attempting to make the crossing.

Turkey detains 42 over alleged Gulen links

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey detained 42 staff of two Istanbul universities including a prominent academic as part of an investigation into the group blamed for last year's failed coup, state media reported yesterday.

Authorities issued a total of 72 arrest warrants for people suspected of links to the group of US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, state-run news agency Anadolu reported.

One of those detained was academic Koray Caliskan, main opposition People's Republican Party (CHP) lawmaker Oguz Kaan Salici said on Twitter.

Ankara accuses Gulen of ordering the failed plot to oust President Recep Tayyip Erdogan but Gulen strongly denies the charges.

The staff from Bogazici and Medeniyet universities are accused of using the encrypted messaging app, ByLock, which Ankara claims was especially created for Gulen supporters, Anadolu reported.

The authorities issued detention warrants for eight staff from Bogazici

University and 64 staff from Medeniyet University including 19 of its professors from the medical school, Dogan news agency said.

Meanwhile, the Ankara chief public prosecutor issued arrest warrants for 43 people including six staff currently working at the prime minister's office and related institutions, Anadolu reported yesterday.

The agency said "some" had been detained during an operation after it was suspected they used Bylock, which authorities have frequently cited by as "evidence" of alleged links to Gulen.

Over 50,000 people have been arrested in connection with the failed putsch while more than 100,000 people have been dismissed from the public sector including teachers, judges, police and soldiers under the state of emergency imposed after the coup bid.

Although activists and Western governments have criticised the crackdown, the government insists it is necessary to tackle the threat they say is posed by the Gulen movement.