

# Dhaka keeps doors open

Efforts on to solve through both bilateral and international means; Myanmar sending team next week

**STAR REPORT**  
A Myanmar team will arrive in Bangladesh next week to discuss the mass exodus of Rohingyas, an official said yesterday, amid huge diplomatic efforts to find a durable solution to the crisis.

The team is "coming early next week," Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque told AFP, saying they would be working on the Rohingya issue.

A senior foreign ministry official said the team was expected to be led by U Kyaw Tint Swe, union minister for Office of the State Counselor.

Dhaka had invited the minister for talks before the latest eruption of violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state triggered the world's worst refugee crisis in recent decades, writes AFP.

The bilateral talks come as Dhaka mounts a huge diplomatic effort to find a permanent solution to the Rohingya problem and make Myanmar take back all the refugees to their homeland in Rakhine.

Diplomatic sources told The Daily Star yesterday that Myanmar was sending Kyaw Tint Swe for a two-day visit likely from October 1 to discuss the repatriation of the Myanmar nationals who entered Bangladesh since August 25.

Last week, Myanmar's National Security Adviser U Thaung Tun met Foreign Minister A H Mahmood Ali on the sidelines of UNGA in New York and proposed a bilateral

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Rohingya refugees cutting hillocks to set up makeshift homes at Palongkhali in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar. Refugees fear activists have expressed concern over such destruction of hillocks saying that it will cause great harm to the local environment.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# Durga Puja starts with 'Bodhon'

Tight security in place; President, PM greet Hindus on the occasion

UNB, Dhaka

Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindus, began yesterday with the incarnation (Bodhon) of the Goddess Durga at temples across the country.

The five-day festival started with "Bodhon" marking Sashthi while the festival will come to an end with the immersion of the idols of the goddess in rivers and other water bodies on September 30.

Adequate security measures have been taken at all the puja pandals.

Draped in new dresses, a large number of devotees irrespective of ages thronged the city pandals, particularly the Dhakeshwari National Temple, and offered prayers before the Goddess Durga, seeking divine blessings for peace, prosperity and welfare of the country and its people.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate statements conveying greetings to the members of the country's Hindu community on this occasion.

# UNSC stepping up response

FROM PAGE 1

China, a supporter of Myanmar's former junta, backed a council statement earlier this month, calling for an end to the Rohingya war but the resolve has continued.

Rights groups, which have accused the council of dragging its feet on Myanmar, are calling for urgent action to address what they have denounced as crimes against humanity against the Rohingyas.

"The council urgently needs to consider an arms embargo against the Burmese military and targeted sanctions against those responsible for the criminal campaign against the Rohingyas," said Human Rights Watch's UN director Lou Chaouhennou.

"We hope the secretary-general will drive home the importance of urgent action now by the council," he said.

France, which takes over the council presidency in October, has invited former UN chief Kofi Annan to brief next week on his recent report which advocates citizenship for the Rohingyas.

Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, has disappointed human rights groups who had campaigned for her freedom during the Nobel Peace Prize winner's 15 years under house arrest by a military junta.

The council meeting will measure the level of support Suu Kyi still enjoys with Western allies after her nationwide visit last week failed to quell the outcry.

Tomorrow, the Security Council will also have a briefing from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the crisis, diplomats told news agencies.

The development comes following requests by seven countries — Sweden,

the United States, Britain, France, Egypt, Senegal, and Kazakhstan — of the 15-member body.

The Security Council has already met twice behind closed doors since the Rohingya crisis began and earlier this month. It issued an informal statement to the press condemning the situation and urging Myanmar authorities to end the violence, reports Reuters.

Diplomats say the Security Council could consider adopting a formal statement if the situation does not improve, but China and Russia are unlikely to agree to stronger action that would require the adoption of a resolution that could veto.

A Security Council resolution would need nine votes in favour and no vetoes by Russia, China, the United States, Britain and France.

Myanmar said earlier this month that it was negotiating with China and Russia to ensure that it is protected from any Security Council action.

In early September, Guterres took the rare step of sending a letter to the council to express concern about the "humanitarian catastrophe" unfolding, raising fears that it could have "implications for peace and security" beyond Myanmar's borders.

Rights groups are pushing the council to threaten sanctions against Myanmar's government and urging countries to review military cooperation.

Ahead of tomorrow's UNSC meeting, the Bangladesh foreign ministry will brief the ambassadors/high commissioners of nine UNSC member countries.

Ambassadors of Sweden, Japan, Italy and Egypt will attend the briefing to be

held this noon, in addition to the envoys of five permanent members — the US, the UK, Russia, France and China.

**REFUGEE FIGURE HIKED**  
The UN yesterday drastically increased the estimated number of Rohingyas who have fled violence in Myanmar to 4,80,000.

The number who have crossed the border since August 25 to escape the Myanmar military crackdown has increased by 45,000 in two days, reports AFP.

Between the new arrivals and some 3,00,000 Rohingyas who were already living in the area due to previous violence in Myanmar, there are now nearly 8,00,000 refugees in camps around the Bangladesh border town of Cox's Bazar that are bursting at the seams.

The situation has forced new arrivals into makeshift shelters in grim conditions, and sparked warnings that epidemics, including cholera, could easily spread.

A report by UN agencies and international charities said the higher number was due largely to an estimated 35,000 Rohingyas, not previously accounted for, moving into two refugee camps.

It also said numbers crossing the border had started to rise again.

After reporting a significant fall in arrivals last week, the new report said hundreds had been crossing the border daily in recent days.

UN Refugee Agency has called for redoubling of the international humanitarian response in Bangladesh, with concerns that conditions of the refugees could deteriorate.

In a statement, UNHCR spokesper-

son Adrian Edwards said despite every effort by those on the ground, the massive influx of people seeking safety has been outpacing capacities to respond, and the situation for these refugees has still not stabilised.

**SUU KYI ASKED TO MEET ROHINGYAS**  
UNHCR said it flew in its fourth humanitarian airlift of 100 metric tonnes of aid yesterday. Two more aid flights are being scheduled.

**SUU KYI ASKED TO MEET ROHINGYAS**  
Seven UN special rapporteurs have called on Myanmar authorities to stop all violence against Rohingyas and halt the ongoing persecution and serious human rights violations, according to a statement issued by the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner yesterday.

They also called on Myanmar State Counsellor Suu Kyi to meet the Rohingyas personally in Rakhine and in Cox's Bazar.

"We call on Aung San Suu Kyi to meet the Rohingyas personally in Rakhine State as well as in Cox's Bazar to talk to those who have fled, as well as those who have stayed," she says the Myanmar Government is interested in doing.

The experts asked UN members to go beyond statements and start taking concrete action to stop the military and security forces from accomplishing their so-called "unfinished business of getting rid of the Rohingya minority from Rakhine".

"There have been credible allegations of serious human rights violations and abuses committed against the Rohingyas, including extrajudicial killings, excessive use of force, torture and ill-

treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, and forced displacement, as well as the burning and destruction of over 200 Rohingyas villages and tens of thousands of homes," said the statement.

They also called on Myanmar to provide humanitarian access to international organisations to assist tens of thousands of internally displaced people in Rakhine and ensure full access of human rights monitors for independent assessment of the situation there on the ground.

The special rapporteurs are Yanghee Lee, on human rights in Myanmar; Agnes Callamard, an extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Fernand de Varennes, on minority issues; Leilani Farha on adequate housing and right to non-discrimination; Cecilia Jimenez-Damary on human rights of internally displaced persons; Mutuma Ruteere on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and Ahmed Shaheed on freedom of religion or belief.

In another development, Fortify Rights, an organisation working in Southeast Asia, demanded that Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha urgently engage Myanmar's civilian and military leadership to end ongoing attacks on Rohingyas.

In an open letter to the Thai Prime minister, it also recommended that Thailand directly assist refugees in line with international law, according to a statement.

# Rash driving claims one life in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rickshaw puller was killed as a bus ran a red light and rammed the rickshaw near Bangla Motor intersection in the capital last night.

In protest, an angry mob set fire to the bus.

Witnesses said the incident happened around 9:45pm when a Gabtoli-bound bus, which came from Shohid Sarani, hit two rickshaws and a CNC-run auto-rickshaw heading towards Moghbaraz.

The rickshaw puller, aged around 40, died on the spot.

The bus then smashed the entrance to a nearby building and stopped, they said.

An angry mob beat up the driver and handed him over to the police. It also set the bus on fire, said Rafiqul Islam, a security guard of the building.

Fire fighters were called in to douse the flames.

Two other people were injured, but their identities could not be known immediately, police said.

Abul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Shabbag Police Station, told The Daily Star that the bus had run a red light.

"We seized the bus and detained a man," he said, adding, they were yet to be sure whether the detainee was the driver.

Traffic in the area came to a halt for nearly an hour after the incident.

# 'Embezzling Tk 30.6CR' ACC arrests businessman in four cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday arrested a businessman in connection with four separate cases filed over misappropriation of around Tk 30.6 crore from state-run Janata Bank.

The ACC arrested Tanvir Chowdhury, managing director of Chittagong Textile Industries, on Central Road in the capital.

According to the case statement, Tanvir in connivance with the branch Branch's Ramna Corporate

Janab produced fake documents of 21 transactions carried out between "Embezzling" Towel Enterprise, which exists on papers only.

He misappropriated Tk 8.3 crore from the bank.

He also withdrew Tk 22.31 crore from the same branch producing 66 fake checks back to the bank.

All the cases were filed against him on February 6, 2017. The ACC arrested Sirajul Islam Mir, "director of Mir Enterprise", for his alleged involvement in the misappropriation the same day.

The commission yesterday filed a case against three people including former assistant general manager of Daulatpur branch of Sonali Bank.

Nazrul Islam, bank's warehouse keeper Motiar Rahman and Sanjit Kumar Das for misappropriating Tk 4.6 crore from the bank.

# No safety in custody

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The darkest fact is that nearly 800 have perished in the custody of law enforcement agencies, which are bound by the law to protect the detainees.

Section 328 (a) of the Police Regulation Act reads: "The officer in charge of a police station or post shall be responsible for the safe custody of all prisoners brought to the station or post."

Concerned over frequent custodial deaths, national and international rights groups have long been demanding an immediate end to such killings and thorough investigations into those in vain.

Over the years, victims' families accused police and Rab members of killing their loved ones in the name of crossfire, something the law enforcers deny.

On occasions, families also claimed their relatives were victims of "concocted killings" by law enforcers, like the killing of seven people in Narayanjan by Rab members for money from a local godfather, Nur Hossain. (The High Court recently confirmed the death sentence of 14 Rab members for the high-ranking officials, in the case. Another 11 members of the force have been sentenced to various terms in prison.)

With a very few exceptions, these "shootouts" happen at ungodly hours and the media, unable to find out the truth, end up publishing the story putting the word "crossfire" within quotes.

The two identical narratives police and Rab offer after such "crossfire" have become clichés by now.

One version is that the victim "was killed in a gunfight" with the police and the bad boys.

The other narrative is particularly for those killed in custody. In this case, as the police or Rab version goes, they took the detainee for a drive to recover arms or drugs or to arrest other criminals. Suddenly, his cohorts came out of the blue and started firing at the law enforcers, who fired back at the lawmen. And the victim, caught in the line of fire, was hit and killed.

Mysteriously, the one that always dies is the man in the law enforcers' custody, and not his associates "who shoot at the lawmen. And the lawmen manage to escape the stray bullets.

Also, police or Rab members involved in such drives fail to arrest the "criminals" in most cases.

Over the years, rights activists have raised questions as to why law enforcers fail to provide security to the people in their custody.

When alleged criminals are produced before courts or even paraded before the media to announce their arrests, they are well protected with their heads and bodies covered by helmets and bulletproof vests.

Why then the detainees cannot have the same safety gear when they are sent to the most — that is when law enforcers take them out for raids?

"Available data show that nearly half of the total victims got killed in custody," said Sheeha Hafiza of the ASK.

Such extrajudicial killings in the name of crossfire are not acceptable at all, she said. "We do not want to see a single death for lack of security...killing in crossfire is a gross violation of human rights."

Contacted, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

# CROSSFIRE KILLING SINCE 2004

YEAR	BEFORE ARREST	AFTER ARREST (in custody)	TOTAL
2017 (Jan-July)	67	18	85
2016	123	36	159
2015	95	51	146
2014	79	49	128
2013	40	02	42
2012	57	01	58
2011	60	02	62
2010	87	06	93
2009	112	13	125
2008	110	31	141
2007	81	34	115
2006	62	196	258
2005	94	260	354
2004	46	88	134
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>1,900</b>

SOURCE: AIH O SALISIN KENDRA

Chairman Kazi Rezaul Hoque said, "Police should be more careful and stand guard when they take anyone for what they say is recovering arms or as part of their investigation."

Law enforcers claim that they do take "precautionary measures" ahead of such drives, but cannot provide appropriate answers as to why people continue to get killed, particularly those in their custody.

Take the example of Rakib Hasan Russell, a convicted JMB leader.

Also known as Hafez Mahmud, he was caught from Mirzapur in Tangail, hours after he escaped from a prison van on February 23, 2014. The van was ambushed in

Myemensingh's Trishala area by suspected militants. One policeman was killed and several others were injured in the attack.

After his arrest, journalists asked the then Deputy Inspector General of Dhaka Region Police SM Mahfuzul Haq Nuruzzaman about the possibility of Rakib getting killed in a so-called shootout, just like hundreds of other detainees.

"We will do everything for his security," the DIG said.

Within hours, however, Rakib was killed in a "shootout".

Asked why detainees are not protected with safety gear during drives, Saheli Ferdous, assistant inspector general (media) at the Police Headquarters, said bulletproof vests or helmets could not guarantee foolproof security as parts of their bodies still remained exposed.

"When indiscriminate firing takes place, both the police and the accused may be injured," she said.

But why do the drives take place at the dead of the night and, most of the time, away from localities?

About this, she said, "Police usually conduct such operations in quiet time to keep information of the operation secret. What happens then is beyond our control."

"The incidents [death] take place during exchange of fires and the criminals possibly miss the targets for lack of practice..." In many cases, police members suffer injuries. Now, they [cops] don't get wounded by their own bullets, do they? Certainly, they are hit during the exchange of fire [between police and criminals]."

About their failure to arrest the so-called cohorts, Saheli said, "The situation is highly tense when such gun battles take place; everyone is worried about their own safety."

However, police still try to arrest the associates of the detainees during the drive and also during investigation afterwards.

Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, told this paper that they tried to ensure security of the detainees.

In such cases, they needed to take infamously criminals, who had information of firearms and ammunition and about their associates, in operations, he said. "In a few cases, they got killed during exchange of fire with their own bullets."

Contacted, Inspector General of Police ACC Shahidul Hoque said he would not talk about crossfire because it was an "old issue", and then hung up.

# 10 teachers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
president Md Ali, secretary Amir Hossain, Anwara upazila's teachers' association president Abul Kamal, secretary Badal Das, Patiya upazila teachers' association president Md Yusuf, secretary Shyamal Dey, Satkania upazila association's president Ajit Karan, secretary Waiz Uddin and Chandanaish upazila association president Bijon and general secretary AHM Sayed Hossen.

Earlier on July 19, 2016, a question paper for class nine was published in which a local Union Parishad chairman was compared with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

A session case was filed with Banshkhali police in this connection on April 12, 2017.

Question paper for class nine was published in which a local Union Parishad chairman was compared with Bangabandhu High School prepared the question paper. The rest of the accused were the members of the question preparing committee.