



PHOTO: REUTERS

A nurse keeps seven-month-old Rohingya refugee Robi Alam warm before he is weighed at the Action Against Hunger centre where the boy is treated for severe malnutrition at Kutupalong camp near Cox's Bazar on Friday.

Zia family

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Sheikh Hasina at another press conference alleged that Khaleda laundered money abroad.

The AL general secretary said the "laundered money" should be brought back.

He called upon the Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate the allegations of money laundering and to bring the real culprits to justice.

About BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's remarks on apologising, Quader said it is not the AL, but the BNP should apologise.

"There is no precedence of the Awami League offering apology. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina didn't speak about BNP chairperson's corruption without having information and evidence," he said.

Fakhrul at a press conference in the capital on Friday blasted the PM for providing "false and fabricated" information about Khaleda and her family members' assets in Saudi Arabia and threatened to take legal action against Hasina if she didn't apologise.

The AL general secretary said BNP never apologised to the nation although its "corruption has been proved" in the US and Singapore courts.

"Mr Mirza Fakhrul, the way you brought the issue while reacting to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's remarks, it seems you are trying to hide the truth," he said.

Quader also criticised Fakhrul for blaming the incumbent government for alleged corruption in different mega projects, including the Padma bridge and metro rail projects.

"Prove that corruption has been committed in the Padma bridge project. Otherwise, you will have to face legal action," Quader said.

He accused the BNP of spreading falsehood and making irresponsible statements against the premier and her family members.

According to some media reports, allegedly based on information by Global Intelligence Network and Canadian TV channel The National, anti-corruption investigation in Saudi Arabia revealed that Khaleda and her family members have assets in the Kingdom.

GD filed

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made derogatory comments on Bangabandhu and Hasina, which hurt him.

He said such remarks by Mahmudur was a threat to the country and legal action should be taken against him under the ICT act.

On December 7, Malek Sheikh, organising secretary of Natore district unit of AL, lodged a case against Mahmudur and sought Tk 1,000 crore in damages.

It will be

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ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three.

All the fishing boats and trawlers on the North Bay have been advised to remain in shelter till further notice.

The depression that formed over the West Central Bay and adjoining North West Bay moved further north-northwestwards and weakened over the North West Bay and the adjoining West Central Bay.

It centred about 760 kms southwest of Chittagong port at 3:00am yesterday, 730 kms southwest of Cox's Bazar port, 610 kms south-southwest of Mongla port and 620 kms south-southwest of Payra port.

It is likely to move in a northerly direction, according to the latest special bulletin of the Met Office.

Equally weather may affect the North Bay, coastal regions of Bangladesh and the maritime ports.

Israeli air strikes

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Hamas terror organization in the Gaza Strip: two weapons manufacturing sites, a weapons warehouse, a military compound," the Israeli military said in a statement.

A Hamas source confirmed the two men killed in the pre-dawn air strikes belonged to the group, which has urged Palestinians to keep up the confrontation with Israeli forces.

Palestinian protests yesterday were less intense than on the previous two days.

About 60 Palestinian youths threw stones at Israeli soldiers across the Gaza-Israel border and the health ministry said at least 10 were wounded by Israeli fire.

In the West Bank, Palestinians set fire to tyres and threw stones and firebombs at Israeli troops, who used tear gas. The Israeli military said one protester was arrested.

In East Jerusalem about 60 people demonstrated near the walled Old City, where paramilitary border police and officers on horseback tried to disperse the crowd with tear gas. Six demonstrators were arrested and two officers were injured by stones, police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said.

On Friday, thousands of Palestinians took to the streets in protest and two Palestinians were killed in clashes with Israeli troops on the Gaza border. Scores more were wounded there and in the West Bank. Across the Arab and Muslim worlds, thousands more protesters had gathered to express solidarity.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Friday the United States would no longer broker peace talks. Trump's adviser and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, is leading efforts to restart negotiations, though his bid has shown little progress.

Abbas's diplomatic affairs adviser said the leader would not be meeting US Vice President Mike Pence, who was due to visit the region later this month.

"America has crossed all red lines with its latest decisions over Jerusalem," the adviser, Majid al-Khalidi, said.

A possible meeting with Pence has also been turned down by Egypt's Coptic Church, MENA state news agency reported yesterday.

The Turkish presidential source said Erdogan and Macron agreed during a phone call that Trump's move was worrying for the region and that Turkey and France would make a joint effort to reverse the U.S. decision.

Erdogan also spoke to the presidents of Kazakhstan, Lebanon and Azerbaijan yesterday, the source said. On Wednesday, he called an urgent meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Turkey next week.

The status of Jerusalem has been one of the biggest obstacles to a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians for generations.

Israel considers all of Jerusalem to be its capital. Palestinians want the eastern

part of the city as the capital of a future independent state of their own.

Most countries consider East Jerusalem, which Israel annexed after capturing it in the 1967 Middle East War, to be occupied territory. It includes the Old City, home to sites considered holy to Muslims, Jews and Christians alike.

For decades, Washington, like most of the rest of the international community, held back from recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital, saying its status should be determined as part of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process.

Trump also said on Wednesday he was starting the process of moving the United States embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The Trump administration argues that the peace process has become moribund, and outdated policies need to be jettisoned for the sides in the conflict to make progress.

A senior United Arab Emirates (UAE) official yesterday said that Trump's move was a boon to radicals.

"These issues are a gift to radicalism. Radicals and extremists will use that to fan the language of hate," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash said at the Manama Dialogue security conference in Bahrain.

Govt spreading

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abroad] we talked to the envoys of the respective countries. They told us it's baseless and fake news. What do you [govt] want to gain by spreading such propaganda and misleading people?" he said.

The BNP leader came up with the comments while speaking at a discussion arranged by Kalyan Party, one of the components of the BNP-led 20-party alliance, at the Jatiya Press club.

Fakhrul also alleged that the government was conspiring to hold another "lopsided" election like the one of 2014 keeping BNP out of the race.

He warned that the country's people will never allow anyone to hold a 2014-like election.

The BNP leader said their party wants to run in the next polls. "But it must be held under a non-party administration. A level-playing field will have to be created for holding the election in a fair and credible manner."

He demanded that the government trace the missing Kalyan Party General Secretary M Aminur Rahman and ensure his safe return.

Aminur has been missing since he was picked up on his way to his Savar home on August 27 from Nayapaltan by a group of people introducing themselves as law enforcers.

Kalyan Party Chairman Syed Ibrahim alleged that the government

was making various evil plans to suppress the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

He urged the 20-party alliance partners to have patience and refrain from responding to any provocative acts by the government.

ACC to go after big names

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The days of misappropriating peoples' money from banks are over, he said.

"None of those who swindled banks will be spared."

The ACC boss also urged people of all walks of life, especially politicians and journalists, to unite against corruption.

The lust for money is like an addiction. It must stop for the sake of future generations, he said.

He did not comment when reporters asked him about former Basic Bank chairman Abdul Hye Bacchu, who is being investigated by the ACC.

Addressing the discussion, educationist and writer Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal said the country would be free of corruption as it was born through the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of lives.

He urged young people to be honest and tell others to be so.

"The purpose of life is not to sit on money. The wealth in this century is knowledge. We will use technology, but let us make sure technology does not take over our lives."

He also urged the government not to include similar sections in any other laws.

Human race

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of data and found that there appears to be limits on our characteristics, like when we die, how tall we can be and how strong we are. We are pushing up against those limits now, the research suggests.

What's more, the ways that we are changing our environment - including through global warming - is probably going to pull those limits down and force humanity into a decline, the researchers said.

For a long time, humanity has looked to be improving. Sprinting speeds that once seemed impossible are now commonplace, for instance, and the record for oldest person in the world is often being broken.

But with time, we'll probably see fewer world records being broken, the new research suggests, and little development in how old the oldest people are. More people might reach those peaks of performance, but the peaks will get no higher, the research published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology* found.

"These traits no longer increase, despite further continuous nutritional, medical, and scientific progress. This suggests that modern societies have allowed our species to reach its limits. We are the first generation to become aware of this," said Jean-François Toussaint from Paris Descartes University, France.

Some of those limits now appear to be falling. And it is in large part because of changes we are making to our environment, said Professor Toussaint.

"This will be one of the biggest challenges of this century as the added pressure from anthropogenic activities will be responsible for damaging effects on human health and the environment," he said in a statement. "The current declines in human capacities we can see today are a sign that environmental changes, including climate, are already contributing to the increasing constraints we now have to consider."

"Observing decreasing tendencies may provide an early signal that something has changed but not for the better. Human height has decreased in the last decade in some African countries; this suggests some societies are no longer able to provide sufficient nutrition for each of their children and maintain the health of their younger inhabitants."

The focus of politicians and other important decision makers should now be to focus on ensuring as many people as possible can reach the current limits, rather than stressing our need to keep pushing them higher, the researchers said.

"Now that we know the limits of the human species, this can act as a clear goal for nations to ensure that human capacities reach their highest possible values for most of the population," said Professor Toussaint.

Of fish

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said he had been part of the racing scene for more than eight years. "We regularly arrange pigeon racing. The pigeons that were released today at the inauguration ceremony were mine. They reached my home nine kilometers from here within just six minutes."

The largest stall of foreign birds in the exhibition was set by Chittagong Bird Breeders Association (CBBA).

Budgerigar, Macaw, Sun Conure, Cockatiel, Goldfinch, different love birds and Finch grabbed the visitors' attention as they were seen taking selves with the winged creatures.

Enamul Haque Shiblu, a member of CBBA, said the response they had been receiving from the youth in recent years was beyond expectation.

"The love for birds among the youth is endless. Our group is growing bigger than ever," Enamul said. Another CBBA stall was set up near the entrance to facilitate bird lovers in becoming members of the association.

Delighting the visitors, a budget beauty contest was arranged at a CBBA stall. Judges ranked the birds according to their beauty.

Several pharmaceutical companies also had their own stalls for promoting animal food and medicines.

At Rasifish, a stall for fish hobbyists, different aquarium fish like clown fish, star fish, tetra, yellow stat, Mexican cray fish and Red-eared turtles were displayed.

Chittagong Bagan Paribar brought different plant species like cactus, orchids, bougainvillea, aparajita and bonsai for the exhibition.

At a stall by the students and doctors of CVASU, different rabbit species like Florida White, Dutch and Rex were exhibited.

A new species of maze called Hydroponic Fodder, which can grow on running tap water, was also exhibited at their stall.

CVASU Vice-Chancellor Goutam Buddha Das said many pet breeders come to visit the exhibition every year. "It has become a good source of income for some young entrepreneurs. The love for birds and animals among the youth is now stronger than we have ever seen," he said.

This was the third such exhibition taking place at CVASU. The exhibition was jointly organised by the Association of Avian Veterinarian, Chittagong Bird Breeders Association and Chittagong Fancy Pigeon Breeders' Association.

He also hailed the government initiative to scrap Section-57 of the ICT Act, saying that the initiative would remove hurdles in the way of free flow of information and expression of opinions.

He also urged the government not to

EU stresses fair, inclusive polls for prosperity

UNB, Dhaka

The European Union said free, fair and inclusive elections in accordance with international standards will contribute to creating a more prosperous Bangladesh.

The EU, a political and economic union of 28 member states, also laid emphasis on the respect and promotion of human rights and democracy.

It encouraged Dhaka to continue its efforts to protect the rights of the Rohingyas, saying the EU remained vocal against the plights inflicted on the Rohingyas.

"The recent situation of the Rohingya community in Myanmar has once again reminded the world that almost 70 years after the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these rights are still vulnerable to large-scale persecution and human rights violations due to differences in culture, religion and ethnicity," said the EU in a statement yesterday.

The EU embassy in Dhaka issued the statement on the occasion of Human Rights Day today.

"It is crucial for stability, economic growth and development that

Bangladesh promotes and protects the human rights of all, regardless of ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious or political affiliation, disability or socio-economic background," said the EU.

On December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has been accepted by virtually all states and has been incorporated into their laws and legal obligations.

Today the world marks the 69th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration.

Human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights are core values embedded in the European Union (EU) treaties and working of the European Union.

In the Cooperation Agreement signed between Bangladesh and the European Union in 2001, both sides reaffirmed the importance they attach to the principles of human rights in the UN conventions.

The EU said human rights have become an integral part of the EU-Bangladesh relations.

It was not a drama

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supplied to the media, including footage of his movement in Khulna, sending money through bKash and making a phone call to a woman all a set-up by the abductors, he claimed.

He did everything as instructed by his captors to save his life, he added.

"The place where the abductors released me was totally unknown to me. I realised that the abductors were watching me. They asked me to take a back