

# Netanyahu disappointed by Modi's Jerusalem rejection

AFP, New Delhi

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said yesterday he was "disappointed" by India's refusal to back recognition of Jerusalem as his country's capital but would not let it spoil his landmark visit to the Asian giant.

Netanyahu also vowed that Israel would "catch up" with the killers of a Jewish couple murdered in 2008 attacks in Mumbai whose son is accompanying him on a six-day trip to India.

The Israeli leader arrived Sunday at the head of the biggest business delegation he has taken on a foreign visit.

Netanyahu told the India Today media group, in an interview released yesterday, that he has a "special relationship" with his counterpart Narendra Modi.

But the run-up was clouded by India joining more than 100 countries at the United Nations in voting last month to condemn Washington's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

"Naturally I am disappointed but I think this visit is a testament to the fact that our relationship is moving forward on so many fronts," Netanyahu said in the interview.

# Shabaab forcing civilians to hand over Somali children

AFP, Nairobi

Somalia's al-Qaeda linked Shabaab insurgents are increasingly threatening civilians to force them to hand over young children for "indoctrination and military training", Human Rights Watch (HRW) said yesterday.

The rights watchdog said an aggressive campaign to recruit children had begun in mid-2017, with the jihadists taking reprisals against communities who refuse to cooperate.

Hundreds of children have fled their homes to avoid this fate, often alone, it said in a statement.

"Al-Shabaab's ruthless recruitment campaign is taking rural children from their parents so they can serve this militant armed group," said Laetitia Bader, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch.

The practice was revealed to be taking place in three districts largely under Shabaab control, in the southern Bay region.

According to HRW, Al-Shabaab has opened large Islamic religious schools since 2015 in areas under their control, bringing in younger children and pressuring teachers to teach the Shabaab curriculum in schools and avoid "foreign teachings".

Village elders near Baidoa in southwestern Somalia told HRW that in September, Shabaab militants ordered them to hand over dozens of children between the ages of nine and 15.

# Ride-sharing

FROM PAGE 16

motorcycles and ambulances.

According to the guidelines, the fare of the ride-sharing vehicles cannot exceed the fare mentioned in the Taxicab Service Guideline-2010.

Any company which seeks the BRTA permission must have at least 100 vehicles in its fleet for operating in Dhaka, 50 for Chittagong and 20 for other cities, the guidelines mentioned.

The cabinet secretary added that there are 11 conditions in the guidelines.

The guidelines came at a time when around a dozen app-based transport service providers, including Uber, Pathao, Cholo, Amarbike, Ezzyr and Taxiwala, are already in service in the capital.

When the app-based service providers started the journey in 2016, the BRTA termed it illegal.

Later, Uber and other such service providers had urged the government to formulate a guideline. The BRTA then prepared a draft guideline which was sent to the cabinet through the road transport and bridges ministry for approval.

As per the guidelines, a company will have to pay Tk 1 lakh and submit other relevant documents, including trade licence, to the BRTA to get "enlistment certificate".

On the other hand, a driver will have to pay Tk 1,000 and a biker Tk 500 as yearly enlistment fee, and they have to renew the "enlistment certificates" every three years, the guidelines mentioned.

The apps used by the service providers must have facilities so that both passengers and drivers can contact the police control room in case of emergency, the guidelines added.

# BCL foils demo

FROM PAGE 16

The incident happened around 1:00pm when some 100 students began a sit-in outside the VC office on the campus.

About half an hour later, around 300 BCL activists, led by its central unit President Saifur Rahman Sohag, General Secretary SM Jakir Hossain, DU unit President Abid Al Hasan and General Secretary Motahar Hossain Prince, went to them and urged them to pick a five-member delegation to meet the VC.

The protesters, however, rejected the call and demanded that the VC come to them instead, and announce that the authorities will meet the demand, said witnesses.

The BCL leaders became furious at this and instructed other leaders and activists to gather near the demonstrators. Soon, all the BCL activists, including some females, appeared there. They started to hurl abuses at the female protesters and asked them to leave. At this, most of the female protesters left.

Female Chhatra League activists, led by Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall unit President Benjeer Hossain Nishi, Ruqaiyiah Hall unit President BM Lipi Akter, Kuwait Moitri Hall unit President BM Farida Parvin, General Secretarty Srabony Shaila, Sofia Kamal Hall General Secretary Sharjia Shampa, started to assault the girls who did not leave.

Another group of BCL activists, led by Bangabandhu Hall unit General Secretary Al Amin Rahman, harassed two journalists and snatched away their mobile phones as they tried to take footage of the incident, said the witnesses.

Around the same time, some BCL men dragged Moshir Rahman Sadik,

one of the coordinators of the movement, inside the VC office and took his mobile and wallet. They then picked up Sadik. He, however, returned later at night.

Afterwards, the BCL men left the scene. The demonstrators left around 4:30pm.

The entire incident was recorded in cameras of students and journalists. The Daily Star has copies of them.

Contacted, BCL President Sohag denied assaulting or threatening any demonstrator. He claimed they were there "just to resolve the issue".

Asked why such a large number of BCL leaders and activists went there to "resolve" that issue, he said, "They might have gone for academic purposes".

VC Prof Akhtaruzzaman said the demand by the demonstrators was "illogical".

On February 17 last year, the government affiliated Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College, Kabi Nazrul Government College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Mohila College, Mirpur Government Bangla College and Government Titumir College with Dhaka University.

# Inmates abseil

FROM PAGE 2

"It appears guards on the watch towers were sleeping when the three escaped. Three wardens have been suspended," he said.

A hunt is underway for the fugitives. In 2016 eight suspected members of a banned Islamist group escaped from a jail in Bhopal in central India after slitting the throat of a prison guard.

# 14 'Bangladeshis'

FROM PAGE 2

Additional Police Super of Purba Medinipur Indrajit Basu said the authorities concerned have been informed about the matter, but no response has been received as yet.

Shyamsunder Das, secretary of Digha Fishermen and Fish Traders Association said the repair work of the Bangladeshi trawler has been completed. Steps can be taken to send them back in their trawler, whenever it is legally permissible.

Meanwhile, Kazi Muntasir Murshed, assistant deputy high commissioner of Bangladesh in Guwahati, said 14 Bangladeshi citizens held in different jails in Indian state of Assam are being sent back to their country after completion of jail term.

As many as 111 "Bangladeshi" inmates in four prisons -- 51 in Goalpara prison, 34 in Shilchar prison, 23 in Tezpur prison, and three in Kokrajhar prison -- all on charges of infiltration, have completed their jail terms, but have remained there since their nationalities are yet to be verified.

So far, the Deputy High Commission of Bangladesh in Guwahati has confirmed the nationalities of 14 of them on the list, said Murshed.

He added that they are still working on confirming the nationalities of the others, and that if every thing goes well, 13 more Bangladeshi citizens will be able to return to Bangladesh by the end of this month.

# Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 16

president. Pranab's daughter Sharmistha Mukherjee also accompanied him.

Welcoming the veteran Indian leader, Hasina elaborated on the overall economic scenario of Bangladesh. She said the poverty level came down to 22 percent due to various pragmatic steps of her government.

She, however, said the economy incurred losses to some extent last year due to the floods in different parts of the country.

About the Rohingya issue, the PM said over one million Myanmar nationals, who fled to Bangladesh from Rakhine following a crackdown by government forces, have been given shelter in Cox's Bazar on humanitarian grounds.

PM's Principal Secretary Nojibur Rahman and Senior Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office Suraiya Begum were present.

Hasina later hosted a luncheon in honour of the former Indian president. Pranab arrived in Dhaka on Sunday on a four-day private visit to Bangladesh.

# Fifth largest

FROM PAGE 16

The company unearthed the D-colour stone at the Letseng mine in the landlocked southern African country and described the 910-carat find as of "exceptional quality".

"Since Gem Diamonds acquired Letseng in 2006, the mine has produced some of the world's most remarkable diamonds, including the 603 carat Lesotho Promise," Gem Diamonds chief executive Clifford Elphick said in a statement.

"However, this exceptional top quality diamond is the largest to be mined to date... This is a landmark discovery."

Ben Davis, a mining analyst at Liberum Capital, speculated in a research note to investors that the diamond could be worth as much as \$40 million (33 million euros).

Gem Diamonds shares in London were up 14 percent from the market open to £0.92 a piece.

# Recruitment

FROM PAGE 16

questioned how the police would improve its efficiency if this continued.

The police on December 22 published a circular to recruit 8,500 male and 1,500 female constables. The recruitment process was scheduled to end on February 1.

Political leaders allegedly take hefty sums of money in bribes from aspiring candidates. In some cases, dishonest superintendents of police (SPs) also allegedly take bribes for recruiting constables, allowing inefficient people into the force.

The job of a constable could be secured for Tk 6-8 lakh and that of an SI for Tk-15 lakh, some newly recruited police officials, constables and family members told this correspondent recently.

"It is said that recruitment in the police's lower tiers is almost impossible without bribes. There is an understanding between politicians and police in this regard," said a mid-level AL leader, asking not to be named.

He, however, said not all recruitment was done taking bribes.

A private television channel recently aired investigative reports on how corruption was being committed in the recruitment of constables in different districts.

Meanwhile, the PHQ is planning to conduct the constable recruitment process centrally instead of by the SPs.

According to the plan, representatives from the Police Headquarters would visit districts for the recruitment, said a police official.

# Company that got the job

FROM PAGE 1

"So, we gave the money, which they gave to some of our officials, back to the Chinese embassy and naturally blacklisted the company."

The finance minister added, "Now we will implement it by ourselves."

He, however, neither mentioned the name of the company nor gave any other details.

Bangladesh and China signed a memorandum of understanding during the Chinese president's visit to Bangladesh in 2016.

Under the deal, China had promised to give soft loans of \$21.5 billion for 26 projects, including the Dhaka-Sylhet four-lane highway project. The estimated Chinese finance was \$1.6 billion for this project.

China also selected China Harbor Engineering Company Limited for Dhaka-Sylhet Highway project and asked Bangladesh to sign a commer-

cial contract with the company.

Negotiation process also started between the company and the Roads and Highways Department of Bangladesh, finance ministry sources said.

The Bangladesh government planned to sign loan agreements for eight of the 26 projects with China's Exim Bank within 2017. This project was one of them; but the loan agreement involving this project was not signed, sources added.

Earlier, the government on October 9, 2016, signed a primary deal with China Harbor. RHD Chief Engineer Ibne Alam Hasan and the company's Vice-president Tang Qiaoliang signed the agreement at a hotel in Dhaka.

On September 21, 2016, the cabinet committee on economic affairs approved RHD's proposal, allowing China Harbour to carry out the project.

# Myanmar building

FROM PAGE 16

as ethnic cleansing, created a global outcry.

Myanmar signed a repatriation deal on November 23, and subsequently a Joint Working Group, comprising of officials from Bangladesh and Myanmar, was formed on December 19.

The Bangladesh foreign secretary is leading the 14-member Bangladesh delegation in the meeting. Its outcome could not be known yet.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's state-run newspaper, Global New Light of Myanmar, said they were building a camp in Hla Po Khaung in northern Rakhine.

"The 124-acre Hla Po Khaung will accommodate about 30,000 people in its 625 buildings," it said, adding that the construction of some 100 buildings would be completed by the end of January, reports Reuters.

Aung Tun Thet, chief coordinator of Myanmar's Union Enterprises for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development, told Reuters that the camp in Hla Po Khaung would be a "transition place" for Rohingya refugees before they are repatriated to their "place of origin" or the nearest settlement to their place of origin.

"We will try to accept all of those who are coming back to Myanmar," he said, adding that to verify returnees' residency, they would be sent to assessment camps in Taunggyoletwei or Ngakhuya before they are moved to the Hla Po Khaung camp.

Soe Aung, permanent secretary of Myanmar's ministry of social welfare, relief and resettlement, said returnees would spend "at least one or two months" in Hla Po Khaung before their new homes are built.

It is unclear, however, how many returnees would qualify for citizenship in Myanmar. The authorities have said Rohingya Muslims could apply for

citizenship if they can show their ancestors lived in Myanmar. But the latest deal -- like the one in 1992 -- does not guarantee citizenship.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar has for years denied Rohingyas citizenship, freedom of movement and access to basic services such as healthcare and education. They are considered illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Win Myat Aye, the minister of social welfare, relief and resettlement, told AP that "We are planning ahead to be able accept the returnees from next week and we are sure that this will be done on time."

The UN refugee agency said it is not involved in the process but is willing to play a "constructive role" in the process if allowed, specifically in registering the refugees and helping determine whether they are returning to Myanmar voluntarily.

"Our involvement in the process and our full access to areas of return in Myanmar can help build confidence for all concerned, including the refugees," said Vivian Tan, UNHCR's senior regional communication officer.

In the November agreement, Myanmar's civilian government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, pledged to take measures to halt the outflow of Rohingyas to Bangladesh and restore normalcy in the region.

The UN and other rights groups have urged the Myanmar government to ensure the safe and voluntary return of the Rohingya refugees.

Many have questioned whether Rohingyas would return to Myanmar under the current circumstances when many Rohingyas are still fleeing to Bangladesh.

United Nations agencies and human rights bodies have voiced scepticism about the resettlement plans and demanded a more transparent process to safeguard the Rohingya's voluntary return.

# Candidates demand

FROM PAGE 1

Police beat up number of candidates, who wanted to march towards Bangladesh Bank (BB) Office in Motijheel from Dainik Bangla area to submit a memorandum to its governor, leaving several candidates injured.

Following Friday's demonstrations, the Bankers' Selection Committee had declared that the recruitment tests would be held on January 20 but only for the 5,600 candidates who could not take the exams at Government Bangla College and Hazrat Shah Ali Mohila College in Mirpur due to seat shortage and mismanagement. However, more than 2,13,000 who sat for the exams would not have to retake it.

Amid the on-going protest, chief executives of 14 state-run banks and financial institutions, including Sonali, Rupali and Janata, decided to hold an emergency meeting with BB Governor Fazle Kabir today, Md Mosharraf Hossain Khan, member secretary of Bankers' Selection Committee told The Daily Star yesterday.

The 100-mark MCQ test, held at 61 exam centres in Dhaka to fill up 1,663 posts, was mired in mismanagement, including no seat plans, shortage of seats, use of mobile phones by

examinees and question paper leaks.

The demonstrators yesterday again threatened to take the issue to the court if their demands are not met soon. Police detained two candidates but released them around an hour later.

"We told police that we want to submit a memorandum to the governor, but they did not listen to us. Instead, they started charging baton us," Nasir Uddin Morshed, a member of the committee, told this newspaper.

However, a delegation later managed to submit the memorandum.

"We wanted to meet the member secretary of Bankers' Selection Committee Mosharraf to talk about the issue, but he did not meet us," said Morshed.

The demonstrators also demanded reform in the Bankers' Selection Committee as such incidents of mismanagement and irregularities had occurred before during previous recruitment tests.

They will observe a sit-in programme in Shahbagh from 10:00am today.

Candidates also organised several protest rallies and human chains in Rajshahi, Chittagong, Jessore and Rangpur.

# Malaysia plans special court on human trafficking

Malaysia is setting up a special court to tackle rising numbers of human trafficking cases, in a move welcomed by campaigners who said it would help deliver justice to victims.

The Southeast Asian nation relies heavily on foreign domestic workers as well as labourers from countries including Indonesia, Bangladesh and Nepal for jobs shunned by locals including work on plantations and in construction.

It has nearly two million registered migrant workers, according to government data, but rights groups say there are also many others who work in the

country without permits.

But advocacy groups say many of the workers are victims of human trafficking and debt bondage, who had to fork out huge sums to pay recruiters in return for jobs that paid much less than the ones they were promised.

Under a pilot project, the special court is expected to be set up as early as May in the central state of Selangor, with a dedicated judge to hear cases, before it is gradually rolled out in other parts of the country.