

# Bangladeshis or Rohingyas, infiltrators to be driven out

Says Indian BJP

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has said the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was determined in weeding out infiltrators, be them Bangladeshis or Rohingyas.

A political resolution adopted at the party's National Executive said the publication of the draft National Register of Citizens in Assam was monumental in securing the cultural, economic and demographic interests of the state as well as national security. "The National Executive reassures every genuine Indian citizen that none of them shall be left out when the final NRC is published," it said.

The resolution said the BJP would also "take steps to protect the interests of the minorities in our neighbourhood who come to India seeking refuge," an apparent reference to the Citizenship Amendment Bill under which the Modi government has promised Indian citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who are "persecuted" in those countries.

"The National Executive compliments the Modi government for its determination in weeding out the infiltrators ...," said the resolution.

## 'Drug peddler' shot in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An alleged drug peddler was injured and another arrested during a "shoot-out" with police in Bogra's Dupchanchia upazila early yesterday.

The bullet-hit man, identified as Md Mahbubur Rahman Mahbub, 36, son of Md Rafiqul Islam of Dimshahar village under Dupchanchia upazila, is now undergoing treatment at the Bogra Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

The arrestee was identified as Md Zakaria, 28, son of Nurul Islam from the same village, Dupchanchia police said.

Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge (OC) at Dupchanchia police station, said Rahman is accused in five narcotics cases filed with Dupchanchia Police Station and Akkelpur Police Station in Joypurhat while Zakaria is accused in one case.

The OC said the "gunfight" took place in a mango orchard in Pachchim Alohali village of the upazila near Talora-Dupchanchia intersection area. Based on information received that five drug peddlers

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## Medical board

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A 10-member delegation led by party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir met the home minister at his Secretariat office yesterday and made the plea.

"We requested the minister to take our leader to a specialised hospital. She wants to be treated at United Hospital; and we requested as such," Fakhrul said after the meeting.

The minister assured that he would take steps to this end after talking to the secretary of the respective ministry, prison authorities and other officials, he added.

Responding to a query, Fakhrul said the home minister did not mention any date but said he would hold a meeting with the officials.

The BNP chief has been at the Old Dhaka Central Jail on the capital's Nazimuddin Road after she was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case on February 8.

Earlier, a medical board was formed to examine her health when she became sick. The board had said her condition was not severe. On April 14, the former premier was taken to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University for an x-ray.

BNP, however, showed no confidence in the medical board's report.

Its leaders also met the home minister on March 27 and April 23 over Khaleda's health condition.

KHALEDA'S WRIT PETITION

The BNP chairperson yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking its directive on the government to send her to a specialised hospital for treatment.

The HC may hold the hearing today, AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, a lawyer for Khaleda, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Citing the petition, he said the BNP chairperson was seriously ill as she had been suffering from various diseases; therefore, she needs to be admitted to a specialised hospital for treatment.



Motorbikes wait at Banglamotor intersection blocking the zebra crossing there, forcing people to either go through or around them to cross the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Inset, a policeman uses a rope to prevent bikers from occupying the Bijoy Sarani intersection or running a stop signal.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS/AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Violation of rules rises

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prone than three or four-wheeler vehicles and they tend to violate traffic rules more.

They said the hike in the number of bikes could be attributed to traffic jams and poor public transport system in Dhaka city, and nationwide economic development and expanded road network. Many prefer it as it can weave through and easily beat traffic.

### FLOATING TRAFFIC RULES

The tendency to violate traffic rules is seen the most among motorbike riders, said Mir Rezaul Alam, additional commissioner (traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Every vehicle is supposed to stop before the zebra crossing at intersections but motorcyclists often ignore this rule and cross the intersection, he said.

"It's difficult to control them. However, we are trying our best and already got some results. Now more than 95 percent motorcyclists and pillions use helmets," he said.

During the last 10-day-long Traffic Week from August 5, police filed more than 83,000 cases against errant vehicles and drivers. Of them, around

44,000 cases were against motorbikes and 1,742 bikes were impounded.

At least 259 people were killed and 960 injured in 237 road accidents in 13 days from August 16 during the Eidul-Azha rush, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity. Motorcycles were involved in 16.72 percent of the accidents, it said.

BRTA spokesperson Mahbub-E-Rabbani said it was not possible to stop plying of motorcycles that have been registered and it was normal to be concerned about the rising number of bikes.

"We are trying to ensure road safety by enforcing the law," he added.

Rabbani, also the director (road safety) of the BRTA, said they have not been directed to control motorcycle registrations.

### RINGING ALARM

Noted transport expert Prof Moazzem Hossain said bikes are open and provide no protection to its riders.

He said due to a lack of quality public transport, the number of bikes are rising in the capital and the government would not be able to stop this unless it improves public transport services.

"Motorcycle is an unsafe vehicle. If the number of bikes increases, the situation will deteriorate. And, if the number increases in the city where the number of people is huge, the situation will take a serious turn," said Moazzem, also a former director of Accident Research Institute (ARI) at Buet.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader on several occasions said motorcycles are "terror incarnated".

Prof Mizanur Rahman, director of ARI, told The Daily Star on Wednesday most of the riders are young people, between 15 and 35 years of age, and they often speed and cause accidents, he said.

Fatalities in motorbike crashes will increase if the authorities do not stop the sharp rise in their numbers or train the riders. "The authorities should limit the number of motorcycles for road safety," he said.

### THE RISE

According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, 2.19 lakh motorbikes were registered in the first seven months of the year, 77.70 percent of the total vehicle registrations during

that period. About 3.26 lakh (77.68 percent) motorcycles were registered in 2017, 3.32 lakh (79.74 percent) in 2016 and 2.40 lakh (47.83 percent) in 2015.

The rate of licence issuance has been increasing over the years. In the first seven months of the year, 2.17 lakh licences were given. At least 3.77 lakh were issued in 2017, and 2.17 in 2016, and 1.40 lakh in 2015, according to BRTA data.

The BRTA data shows that since 1971, about 4.95 lakh motorbikes were registered in Dhaka alone.

The number of motorbikes sharply rose in Dhaka recently mainly due to traffic jams as the two-wheelers take people to their destinations faster weaving through standstill traffic, said Sitangshu Shekhar Bishwas, director (operation) of the BRTA. Introduction of ride-sharing apps in 2016 is also a reason, he said.

In other parts of the country, people are enjoying improved economic conditions and the road network has expanded, allowing many to afford and use motorbikes, he said.

There are around 35 lakh registered vehicles of several kinds in the country.

## It's 'misuse' of judicial powers

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Supreme Court of Bangladesh, which is mandated under article 116 of the constitution," the petition said.

Shifting a court without the SC's permission is illegal and it undermines the apex court, they said.

Supreme Court Bar Association President Zainul Abedin and Secretary AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon signed the application.

Besides them, Pro-BNP lawyers Khandker Mahbub Hossain, Jamiruddin Sircar, AJ Mohammad Ali, Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin and Brodrudoza Badal met the chief justice at his SC office and submitted

the application yesterday afternoon.

Zainul told The Daily Star that the chief justice received the application and assured them of looking into the matter within the scope of his legal and administrative jurisdiction.

Shifting the court for Khaleda's trial has offended her right to fair trial guaranteed under article 35(3) of the constitution inasmuch as this will cause prejudice to her right to have a public trial, the application stated.

Khaleda can hardly walk due to her illness and needs medical treatment first. But the court has not taken appropriate steps for her treatment by any doctor of her choice, it added.

The constitution and the statutory scheme do not allow any government to set up any court or to continue any trial in an abandoned jail, it said.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul told reporters on the SC premises, "I think, if they have made such allegations, I will say that they don't know law."

He went to the SC to meet the chief justice.

Also yesterday, the hearing of 11 cases, including one of sedition, against Khaleda was adjourned by a Dhaka court till October 7.

Judge KM Imrul Kayes of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court

passed the order after Khaleda's lawyers submitted 11 separate petitions seeking adjournment of the hearings.

In the petitions, Khaleda's lawyer Ziauddin Zia said their client had filed separate writ petitions with the High Court seeking quashing of the case proceedings, and the HC had stayed trial proceedings of the 11 cases.

Of the 11 cases, 10 were lodged in the first three months of 2015 over arson attacks on vehicles. The other case was filed with a Dhaka court on charge of making seditious comments about the freedom fighters and the martyrs of the Liberation War.

## Election nears, fear escalates

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"It's an old, evil design of the government to keep the BNP out of the electoral fray," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told this newspaper last night.

"The government is filing ghost cases against our leaders and activists, from various tiers as it doesn't want a fair election. For this, there is an arrest spree even before the announcement of the election schedule," he added.

Khandakar Mosharrif Hossain, the party's standing committee member, said, "Police have started filing

false and fabricated cases against BNP leaders and activists.

"We do not have any political programmes right now. Still police are filing cases showing made-up incidents. It indicates that the government is afraid of the BNP."

Party leaders alleged the crackdown became more severe seeing the participation of BNP leaders and activists on the September 1 rally marking the founding anniversary of the party.

Party leaders have been compiling data of fresh arrests and cases and will make it public today through a press conference, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi,

senior joint secretary general of the party, said.

BNP leaders are also asking grassroots leaders to stay alert and avoid police harassment.

"We are giving legal assistance to the arrested BNP leaders and activists in districts," said Barkatullah Bulu, vice chairman of the party.

The BNP is in the opposition for the last 12 years; so the party men know what to do in such a crucial time, he added.

Grassroots leaders alleged that the party men cannot stay in their houses as police are conducting raids regularly.

"Police have been filing false cases one after another. In Gangni upazila of my district, 23 were arrested on Thursday, six on Saturday and five yesterday," said Amzad Hossain, general secretary of Meherpur BNP.

The Election Commission is likely to announce the election schedule in October.

Although the BNP is yet to make a formal announcement, party insiders said it would participate in the election whatever the situation is.

The BNP and most other political parties boycotted the last parliamentary polls demanding election under a non-partisan interim government.

## Take steps

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Myanmar nationals. To continue the pressure on Myanmar for implementing the agreements, I urge the international community to take specific effective steps," she said.

The PM said this while inaugurating the Regional Hub of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) in Dhaka at Radisson Hotel. This IsDB Regional Hub will cover 19 countries like Singapore, Australia, Thailand and India.

She said Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) had given an instruction to stand beside the oppressed people and the IsDB could not remain silent when the Rohingyas were facing ethnic cleansing. "So, to ensure the repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas, I request the IsDB to firmly stand beside them."

Bangladesh is proactively responding to the unprecedented humanitarian crisis by keeping its border open and accepting the large influx of forcibly displaced Rohingyas despite having multifarious negative impacts on the local community and the country's ecosystem and resources, the PM said. "We're giving shelter and food to the Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds."

Hasina mentioned that Bangladesh now wanted them to go back to their own land.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, IsDB President Bandar MH Hajjar and Economic Relations Division Secretary Kazi Shofiqul Azam also spoke on the occasion.

Though Bangladesh is acclaimed internationally for good disaster management, it is still one of the most vulnerable countries that suffers and will continue to suffer for climate change, the PM said.

A good number of activities under the "Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan" are underway for mitigating the effects of climate change, she said. "We've set up 'Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund' with our own resources."

Hasina said "Country Invest Plan (2016-2021)" had been prepared.

"Some USD 11.7 billion will be required during the tenure of the investment plan; of which USD 4.7 billion has been invested from internal and external sources. It means there's an overall investment deficit of USD 7 billion. We need your extended financial support in this regard."

Bangladesh has been striving to ensure socio-economic development in a sustainable manner, the PM said. "We're working towards elevating our status to an upper middle-income country shortly. We've also set our next target of becoming a happy and prosperous country by 2041."

She thanked the IsDB for opening the Dhaka Regional Hub as part of its recent decentralisation drive of operations from headquarters to the client countries.

"This will definitely help IDB, one of the trusted development partners of Bangladesh, speed up its operational activities further and improve the quality and efficiency of its development interventions such as projects management, implementation and monitoring. This will also help IDB to be more intimate and closer to client countries in understanding the development needs and challenges as well as development priorities," Hasina added.

## OMS food

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market as the traders fled during the drive, he said.

Asked about the seizure at the CSD the magistrate said they got names of some officials there and that they would hand the list over to the Anti Corruption Commission for investigation.

The raid was conducted on information that a syndicate of about 15, including CSD officials, dealers and unscrupulous traders, sells OMS rice and flour illegally in markets across the country, said Sarwoer.

They sell at least 100 tonnes of OMS rice and flour every day illegally from the CSD alone.

In the capital, about 30 of the 141 OMS dealers operate their shops properly, he added.

Each dealer gets a tonne of rice and two tonnes of flour a day, six days a week.

The government procures the rice and flour at farm level at Tk 39 and Tk 32 respectively and sell them in open market at Tk 30 and Tk 16.

Contacted, CSD Manager Humayun Kabir denied that his officials were involved in the theft.

He claimed that they delivered the rice and flour in line with Demand Orders.

## 2 held

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Ershadnagar area of Rangpur city.

Based on a tip-off, a team from Rangpur Rab-13 carried out a raid at Ashratpur village near Rangpur-Kurigram road on Saturday night and arrested them with 460g cocaine in possession. They also seized a pickup van, 3 mobile phones and Tk 21,480 from them.

Mozammel Haque, commander of Rab-13, said the two arrestees have been handed over to Rangpur Police authority.

## 'Is this a joke?'

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A bench comprising Justices S A Bobde and L N Rao took serious note of the submissions and said, "What is happening in Jharkhand. This process cannot be allowed, and we cannot allow administration of justice to be brought into disrepute".

Both the accused have now told the apex court that the trial judge had on April 19 this year framed charges against them through a 'WhatsApp' call despite they raising objections to it.

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"We are here on the way of trial being conducted through WhatsApp. This cannot be done. What kind of a trial is this? Is this a kind of joke?" the

bench asked the counsel appearing for Jharkhand.

The bench issued notice to Jharkhand on the plea by both the accused, who have sought transfer of their cases from Hazaribagh to New Delhi, and asked the state to respond to it within two weeks.

Jharkhand's counsel told the top court that Sao has been violating the bail condition and had been out of

Bhopal most of the time due to which proceedings in the case were delayed.

To this, the bench observed, "That is a different thing. If you have a problem with violation of bail conditions by the accused, you can file a separate application seeking cancellation of bail. We make it clear that we have no sympathy with those who have violated bail condition."