

# Rohingya teen injured in firing at border

AFP, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya refugee boy was shot and injured on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border as multiple rounds were fired from a Myanmar border security post, an official said yesterday.

Nurul Islam, 15, was grazing cows when 17 rounds were fired from Myanmar's Rymongkhali security post, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) spokesman Major Iqbal Ahmed said.

"Islam was lucky as a bullet scratched his elbow," he told AFP, adding the boy lives in Balukhali refugee camp in Bangladesh's south-eastern Cox's Bazar district.

The BGB would send a protest letter to their Myanmar counterparts, the Border Guard Police, over the shooting, he said.

A local Bangladeshi official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the incident might be aimed at delaying the repatriation of Rohingya refugees, set to begin in next week.

"Otherwise, why would they fire at the Bangladeshi ground? It is to create pressure on the refugees and the UN," he said.

Bangladesh and Myanmar officials last week said some 2,000 Rohingya refugees would return to their homeland in Myanmar's western Rakhine state as part of a repatriation deal.

More than 720,000 of Myanmar's stateless Rohingya fled a brutal military crackdown in August last year, taking shelter in crowded camps in Bangladesh and bringing with them harrowing tales of rape, murder and arson in a military crackdown.

Investigators have said senior Myanmar military officials should be prosecuted for genocide in Rakhine, but the country has rejected these calls, insisting it was defending itself against militants.

Myanmar and Bangladesh announced a large-scale repatriation plan in November 2017.

But the process hit bureaucratic hurdles almost immediately and failed to take off, as both sides blamed the other for the delay and rights group warned returning the Rohingya to Myanmar would condemn them to further reprisals.

# For the love

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for stray and injured animals. Afzal, who is in his early thirties, made it a mission for himself to rescue animals in need and was named "Robin Hood" (a legendary heroic character of English folklore) by other animal lovers due to his dedication towards animal welfare.

On his Facebook group, "RobinHood The Animal Rescuer", members provide him with information on animals they come across, mainly dogs and cats, which are in trouble. Twenty-six of the group members work as volunteers with Afzal. They accompany him on his rescue missions and not only help him but also capture the missions on videos, which are later posted in the group.

Afzal started rearing wounded dogs he found in the city in 2010. He now has 49 animals in his home in the city's Khilgaon. Some of his pets are paralysed while some are burnt, have lost limbs or teeth or are blind.

"Not a single animal I have is healthy. All are injured and under treatment," he told The Daily Star.

Last year, when Afzal was on his way to Rampura for shooting, he found an injured dog lying in a dustbin which was bleeding severely. He called an NGO official to rescue it. However, on his way back, he found the dog in the same place.

"I took him home and then to the doctor next morning. After surgery and severing a leg, the dog is now fine. I named him Sultan," said Afzal.

He said he has to spend around Tk 40,000 to Tk 50,000 a month for treatment, medicines and food for the animals.

"We get around Tk 10,000 a month from donors. I spend some money from my pocket and my father helps with the rest of the funding," said Afzal.

There are many people who have pets, but often torture the animals physically and mentally. And sometimes when the animals get sick or old, they are left abandoned, Afzal said.

"I want to build a big shelter for animals where those facing problems with injured animals could bring their pets or strays to me for free treatment. It will make it easier for them to raise the animals. I am trying to raise funds for this now," said Afzal.

# Tk 86,687cr projects

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Of the total cost, Tk 66,466 crore will come from the government fund, Tk 313 crore from the agency's fund and Tk 19,907 crore from foreign aid.

Contacted, former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumdar expressed doubts about the projects' implementation, as he thought it was "not possible to do due diligence for the many projects passed in the last few meetings".

"I have serious doubts about whether all aspects -- economic, environmental and others -- of a project are examined properly," said Imam, also a former member of the planning commission.

He said there was a chance that money would be wasted due to possible future project revisions because of the speed of the approvals.

Imam, also a trustee of Transparency International Bangladesh, further termed the high number of projects "not fair" as it might influence voters.

Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, however, said they maintained all standards to approve the projects.

"We have placed the projects [at the meeting] after conducting 100 percent of the study required for them," Kamal told journalists after the meeting.

He said they had placed 40 projects at the meeting but one was not approved after scrutiny.

Replying to another question, he said, "There is a link between the election and passing of the projects because I will not be here. I will go to my area for the election campaign. For this reason, I am giving more projects."

Asked whether anyone Ecnec meetings would be held before the election, he first said it would but then changed his answer and said they would not do anything against the electoral law.

Usually, once the election schedule is announced, no projects are approved.

## PROJECTS FOR LAW ENFORCERS AND GOVT EMPLOYEES

There are five projects for police, costing Tk 2,342.48 crore.

They are -- construction of nine residential towers for members of Dhaka Metropolitan Police; setting up a police centre for combating terrorism and other international crimes; constructing residential buildings for top police officials; purchasing vehicles and other equipments to enhance police capacity and a project for enhancing highway police capacity.

Ecnec also green-lighted the Tk 340.57 crore project for enhancing technical capacity of Rab.

A Tk 1,921.81 crore project was approved for constructing high-rise buildings at Azimpur in the capital for government employees.

Furthermore, another project, costing Tk 165.20 crore, for expanding the diving unit of fire service and civil defence was also given the nod.

## PROJECT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

Ecnec also passed a Tk 125.39 crore project for monitoring social media.

Rab will execute the project between November 2018 and April next year and it will be fully funded by the government.

## RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The government approved a Tk 3,347.24 crore project for making earthen roads in different villages more durable. Under the project, the government will also construct 13,000 bridges and culverts on village roads in 492 upazilas in the next three and a half years.

It approved two other projects costing Tk 6,578.20 crore and Tk 3,516 crore to construct 15-meter long bridges and culverts in the same

# Schedule

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Therefore, the 11th parliamentary election is likely to be held between December 20 and December 23, said sources at the EC.

On November 3, the Jatiya Oikyafront, an alliance formed recently by the BNP, Gonoforum, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Nagorik Oikya and Forward Party, wrote to the CEC not to announce the polls schedule until the end of the ongoing talks that began on November 1.

On November 1, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led a 23-member delegation of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance, while Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain led a 20-member team in a discussion that focused on reaching a consensus over holding the next general election in a fair, credible and inclusive manner.

Although the talks were held in a congenial atmosphere, the PM gave no assurance that the government would meet the Oikyafront's demands, meeting sources said.

## RULES FOR EVM USE

At yesterday's briefing, Shahadat said they had finalised the rules for using electronic voting machines (EVMs) in the upcoming general election.

MONTH	NUMBER OF MEETINGS	PROJECTS	TK (CRORE)
Jul	3	23	16,952
Aug	2	20	9,536
Sep	2	32	30,331
Oct	4	82	88,782
Nov 4	Special Meeting	38	85,102

upazilas and for repairing village roads respectively.

It also passed a Tk 949.65 crore project for Kushtia, a Tk 797.48 crore one for greater Dhaka, a Tk 1,106 crore one for Faridpur, Tk 1,123 crore one for Gopalganj, a Tk 749.10 crore one for the three hilly districts and a Tk 195.15 crore project for Kurigram and Jamalpur districts.

## COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Ecnec approved a Tk 14,250.61 crore project for constructing dual-gauge double-track rail track from Joydebpur to Iswardhi. Of the total cost, China will provide Tk 8,756.76 crore while the government will provide the rest.

The committee also approved a Tk 10,329.66 crore project (revised) for digging a 100-meter canal from Kuril to Boalia in Dhaka and its outskirts. The original cost of the project was Tk 5,145.28 crore.

A Tk 3982.10 crore project was passed for constructing the first terminal at Paira Sea Port while a Tk 4,111.86 crore project for upgrading Dhaka-Khulna highway to a four lane road was also approved.

Furthermore, a Tk 9880.40 crore project (revised) for construction of tunnel under Karnaphuli River in Chittagong was green lighted. The original cost of the project was Tk 8,446.64. Of the total cost, Exim Bank of China will provide 5,913.19 crore.

A Tk 4,268.32 core project (second revision) was approved under the Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project to build Bus Rapid Transit from Airport to Gazipur. The original cost of the project was 2,039.85 crore. Of the total cost, Tk 2,842.51 will come from foreign aid, including from the Asian Development Bank.

Besides, a Tk 3,709.61 crore project was approved for the expanding runway of Cox's Bazar Airport.

## URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The urban infrastructure development projects include: Tk 228.79 crore for development of infrastructure of Tangail municipality, Tk 210.61 crore for Tepakhola Lake development in Faridpur town, Tk 145 crore for five municipalities in Cumilla, and Tk 1,378.55 crore for setting up the Bogura-Rangpur-Syedpur gas transmission pipeline.

Besides, there are several projects for hospitals, universities and some government establishments.

# Outsiders clash

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verbally abusing its female security guards and students of Gono University.

When one of the guards protested, they physically assaulted her and at the same time some of the outsiders started throwing brick chips at Gonoshasthaya officials and Gono University students, leaving five of them injured, they claimed.

The injured were undergoing treatment at Gonoshasthaya Kendra Hospital, officials said.

However, Mohamad Ali, one of the plaintiffs, said Gonoshasthaya officials and Gono University students attacked them when they gathered at the PHA Bhaban -- which they claim is built on the land belonging to Cotton Textile Craft Ltd. -- to organise a press conference.

He said six of their injured men were taken to Savar Upazila Health Complex, while one was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Denying Mohamad's allegations, Mir Murtoja Ali Babu, controller of examinations at Gono University, said a group of people were organising the press conference, blocking the main entrance of PHA Bhaban, while another group entered the Bhaban and began abusing the female security guards and students.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Moni Aktar, a paramedic student of Gonoshasthaya Kendra, said they were in fear of further attacks.

Rezaul Haque, officer in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said after he heard the news of the clash, he sent a police team to the spot who brought the situation under control.

"I heard that Gono University students attacked Cotton Textile Craft Ltd men while they were holding a press conference," he said.

On October 26, a group of people, allegedly led by the plaintiffs who recently filed cases against Zafullah Chowdhury, along with others, attacked Gonoshasthaya Kendra officials and students.

They also vandalised the PHA Bhaban, looted office equipment and physically assaulted and abused male and female students.

# AL, BNP men

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When police were taking Moinul back to Rangpur jail around 2:00pm, the AL men hurled shoes and eggs at him, the witnesses said.

Mainul, a former adviser to a caretaker government, was wearing a red helmet.

As some pro-BNP lawyers protested the incident, the AL men started chanting anti-BNP slogans on the court premises. The BNP leaders and activists, who went to the court for different case hearings, protested the slogans.

At one stage, both the groups locked in a clash. They hurled brick chips at each other and several chases and counter-chases ensued.

To bring the situation under control, police charged truncheons on the clashing groups. Police also fired four rubber bullets and two teargas canisters to disperse them, said Altaf Hossain, additional superintendent of Rangpur police.

The injured took treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Mili Maya Begum, in Rangpur's Mulatol area, lodged the case with the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in the district, accusing Mainul of hurling abuse at journalist Masuda Bhatti during a TV talk show on the night of October 16.

Police arrested him from the capital on October 22 after an arrest warrant was issued.

Meanwhile, Gonoforum President and Jatiya Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain condemned activists of the ruling AL for assaulting Mainul while he was in police custody.

In a statement, he also demanded that the government take legal action against the attackers.

# US, Japan

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Rajapaksa) democratic countries have concerns," he said in the interview conducted in the prime minister's official residence in a colonial-era bungalow where Wickremesinghe is camping along with his supporters.

The United States has held off on a nearly \$500 million aid programme for building of highways and improving land administration by the government-funded Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Wickremesinghe said.

Japan had also put on hold plans to extend a soft loan of \$1.4 billion for a light railway project, he said. "A lot of projects are held up, the Millennium Challenge, the Japanese loan," he said.

The Sri Lankan embassy in Washington has been informally told by the MCC that around \$480 million will be on hold because of the latest situation in the country, a Sri Lankan foreign ministry official separately confirmed to Reuters.

An official at the Sri Lankan ministry of Megapolis and Western Development also confirmed the freeze to Reuters on the Japanese loan, imperilling the project.

An official at the Japan International Cooperation Agency said the agency was closely monitoring political developments and the railway project loan had been withheld.

The US embassy in Colombo had no immediate comment when asked if Washington is taking any measures due to the Sri Lankan political crisis.

The United States and the EU have urged the president to immediately summon parliament and let deputies decide who is to lead the country. Sirisena suspended parliament until November 16 and has made no public statement on his plans.

While Wickremesinghe is staying on in the premier's residence called Temple Trees, Rajapaksa has taken over the offices of the prime minister following his swearing in.

Wickremesinghe said his party will step up a public campaign for parliament to be called and he be allowed to prove his majority. "We are all contemplating alternative actions, this includes a big mobilisation of people. Ultimately this has to be decided in parliament."

## NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Sri Lanka's Tamil minority pledged to back a motion of no-confidence against Rajapaksa when parliament reconvenes.

In a statement on Saturday, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) called Rajapaksa's shock appointment by the president last week "unconstitutional and illegal" and said its members would back a bid by sacked Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to remove him.

The minority coalition has the backing of 15 legislators in the 225-member parliament and could play a key role in swaying a no-confidence vote as Rajapaksa and Wickremesinghe now command the support of about a 100 politicians each, reported Aljazeera Online.

But analysts said the TNA's decision did not spell defeat for Rajapaksa because the former president has managed to whittle away at Wickremesinghe's initial majority by getting at least six members from his United National Party (UNP) to switch camps.

# Crucial days ahead

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November 8, said Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury after an EC meeting last night.

The Oikyafront on Saturday wrote to the EC requesting deferral of the schedule announcement until the dialogue between the ruling and the opposition parties ends.

"If the second round of discussion between the Awami League-led alliance and the Oikyafront goes well, the EC may be requested to delay the announcement of the schedule by a few more days," a senior AL leader told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

A number of senior leaders of the Oikyafront say they now want to reach a solution to the "current political stalemate" by negotiating with the ruling party.

In the second round of talks, they may focus on the demand for the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who is in jail since February 8 upon being sentenced in a corruption case, and dissolution of parliament before the election, sources said.

The Oikyafront may not strongly oppose the election-time government led by Hasina if its other demands are met. In that case, it may ask the prime minister to include at least four of its senior leaders in her cabinet as technocrat ministers, the sources added.

It may also place an outline of the election-time government within the purview of the current constitutional provisions.

A draft of the outline is now being prepared and some senior leaders of the alliance yesterday held a meeting with some constitution experts in this regard, sources said.

A senior AL leader said they will not go beyond the constitution but are likely to accept some demands of the Oikyafront.

Talking to this newspaper yesterday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We want a solution and that's why we want to hold talks again. We want a free and fair election and our issue is how this can be ensured. Solution can be found out if the government holds talks in a sincere manner."

Echoing his view, Abdul Awal Minto, BNP's vice chairman, said, "We want to settle the political crisis through talks."

"If talks fail," he added, "crisis will deepen and then the solution may come through movement or election."

ICE MELTING?

During a press conference at his secretariat office yesterday, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said, "Ice has started melting. When we sit for discussion, many problems get resolved."

He added that granting bail to Khaleda is the jurisdiction of court. But if the BNP wants Khaleda's release on parole for her treatment, the party can discuss the matter with the prime minister.

"The door remains open for discussions," said Quader, also road transport and bridges minister.

Later, the AL leader told reporters that another dialogue between 14-party alliance and Jatiya Oikyafront will be held on Wednesday.

"The talks will take place at the prime minister's official residence Gono Bhaban at 11:00am on November 7," he said after a meeting of the 14-party combine at the Gono

Bhaban.

Earlier in the morning, Dr Kamal Hossain, on behalf of the Oikyafront, sent a letter to Hasina urging the second round of talks with her.

He wrote that a limited-scale discussion involving experts from both sides is necessary for analysing the constitutional and legal aspects of the seven-point demand of the Oikyafront.

In another development, Hasina has invited Islamic Oikyajote to the Gono Bhaban to discuss the upcoming national election. The dialogue will be held at 2:00pm tomorrow, sources said.

## OIKYAFRONT RALLY

Formed on October 13, the Oikyafront held two rallies in Sylhet and Chittagong cities seeking people's support to its seven-point demand and 11-point goal.

The 11-point goal includes ensuring checks and balances, decentralisation of administration, freeing MPs from the stringent restrictions imposed on them under article 70 of the constitution, formation of a constitutional commission to make appointments to all constitutional and other important posts and full independence of the judiciary.

Its demands include holding the next parliamentary election under a nonpartisan government, dissolution of parliament before the polls and reforming the Election Commission.

After Thursday's talks with Sheikh Hasina, the alliance on Friday announced that it will hold a public rally at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital on Tuesday (tomorrow).

Jamiruddin Sircar, BNP's standing committee member, said, "Agitations and election preparations will go on simultaneously. We will deliver some key messages from the rally."

The Oikyafront leaders have planned to urge the grassroots to start campaigning in their areas, sources said.

The senior leaders of the alliance think that after the rally the political situation will change. And their announcement will boost the morale of the grassroots and mount pressure on the government as well.

# Announce

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nomination papers in those constituencies where other alliance candidates will contest," said another leader of the alliance, who also wished not to be named.

In her introductory speech, Hasina said the next general election would be held in a free and fair manner. She hoped that the people would re-elect the AL, considering the country's development and progress in the last 10 years, BSS adds.

Top leaders of Workers Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Jatiya Party, Torikat Federation, Bangladesher Samyabadi Dal and Bangladesh Nationalist Front were present at the meeting.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said Hasina told the 14-party leaders that the alliance would contest the election to win it, UNB reports.

"There is no way to consider the opponents weak."

Talking to reporters, 14-party Spokesperson Mohammed Nasim said the alliance leaders gave Hasina the authority to decide on seat sharing.

# Tigers collapse yet again

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the Sylhet International Stadium yesterday.

Astonishingly, five of the 10 Bangladesh wickets came from edges to the slip cordon. Already leading by 140 runs with 10 wickets in hand, Zimbabwe will look to cash in and take a vice grip of the Test match when they resume their second innings on one without loss today.

Yesterday morning, left-arm spinner Tajul Islam's six wickets helped Bangladesh bowl out Zimbabwe for 282 in their first innings. The visitors could add just 46 runs to their overnight score before losing their last five wickets before lunch.

Tajul's effort, however, went in vain after the home batsmen gift-wrapped the hard-won momentum and handed it to the visitors.

Opens Liton Das and Imrul Kayes added only eight runs in 3.5 overs and after the latter departed, it went from bad to worse as the home side were soon reeling on 49 for five.

The debacle started when Imrul was bowled off an inside edge by pacer Tendai Chatara, which was soon followed by Kyle Jarvis having a wafting Liton caught behind.

The lack of partnerships has been one of the biggest reasons for Bangladesh's repeated failures, and Nazmul Hossain Shanto -- coming in at number four -- departed playing a pretty similar shot with negligible feet movement.

Chatara then removed skipper Mahmudullah Riyad in the same over - the right-hander poked his bat outside his off stump and only manages to

edged the ball into the stumps.

Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominul Haque had the daunting task to build a much-needed partnership, and just when the duo looked settled, the small partnership of 30 runs for the fifth wicket was broken when Mominul edged off-spinner Sikandar Raza to slip.

In the first over after tea, Mushfiqur fell when he fished his bat out to a Jarvis delivery and was caught behind for 31.

Mehidi Hasan Miraz was dismissed in comical manner when he top-edged Sean Williams, giving the left-arm spinner a return catch to break a 30-run stand with debutant Ariful Haque.

Ariful was the only Bangladeshi batsman who looked comfortable and was unbeaten on 41 off 96 balls as the Tigers concluded a horrible outing with the bat.

Earlier, Tajul ripped through the Zimbabwe lower order, adding four wickets to the two he took on the first day. He first removed overnight batsman Regis Chakabva on 28, with Shanto taking his second catch of the game at short leg, and followed that by removing Wellington Masakadza.

The other overnight batsman, Peter Moor, remained unbeaten on 63 off 192 balls with six fours but he kept losing partners at the other end.

Nazmul Islam bagged his second wicket by removing Brandon Mavuta before Tajul finished the innings off.

Tajul registered his fourth five-wicket haul in the format and his figures of six for 108 was his second-best in Tests.