

Democracy, dev to go hand in hand: PM

Merkel greets Hasina, German envoy conveys to the prime minister

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said democracy and development would go hand in hand in Bangladesh.

"Our aim is to ensure the country's development from the grassroots level," she said.

Hasina said this when German Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Fahrenholtz met her at the Gono Bhavan.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

The government expanded the safety net programmes across the country and it would be strengthened further in the coming days, he said, quoting the PM as saying.

Talking about the communications sector, Hasina said the government is developing the country's rail, water

and road communications and has given the utmost importance to development of the rail communications.

The PM said the government is establishing special economic zones in different parts of the country where Japan, China, South Korea and other countries have been investing. "Land has been allocated there for them."

Hasina also offered land for German investors to build their industries by their choice.

Fahrenholtz handed over a message of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to the PM where she wished every success of Hasina's new term in office. "I wish your country's every success as it continues on its path of economic and social development," Merkel said in her message.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Rare Nilgai rescued in Naogaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The once-believed to be extinct Nilgai -- the largest antelope in Asia -- was rescued by local administration from Jotbazar village of Naogaon's Manda upazila yesterday.

It was taken to the animal rescue centre in Rajshahi last evening after the administration handed it over to the wildlife conservation division of the forest department, said Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mushfiqur Rahman.

"The Nilgai has injuries all over its body," said Rahman.

The nilgai was declared extinct in Bangladesh by the International Union for Conservation of Nature but it was found in India's West Bengal, said Jahangir Kabir, an inspector of the wildlife

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



A Nilgai -- the largest antelope in Asia -- rescued from Naogaon's Manda upazila is the star-attraction for a crowd of locals.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

13-year-old shot dead in gunfight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A 13-year-old boy was shot dead during a gunfight between the Border Guard Battalion (BGB) and smugglers in Sonaton Punji area in Sylhet's Kanaighat upazila on Monday.

The dead was identified as Siraj Ahmed, son of Abdul Motalib, of the same area.

Major Mesbah Uddin Russel, additional director (operations) of the BGB in Sylhet, said, "A team of 19 BGB officials seized some smuggled goods from the border area. While returning around 7:00pm, some miscreants attacked them with guns, sharp weapons, stones and bricks."

"For self defence, the force also opened fire. During the shootout, a boy was shot and he died on the spot," Mesbah said, adding that the gunshot which hit the boy was not fired by the BGB and they did not know whether the teenager was involved in the crime.

At least four law enforcers were also

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Freeze Tk 21cr property of Afroza Abbas

A special court asks authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court has ordered the authorities concerned to freeze movable properties of Afroza Abbas, president of Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal, a wing of the BNP.

The properties are worth Tk 20.76 crore.

The Special Judge's Court passed the order following a plea by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

In its petition, the ACC on January 20 said Afroza, the wife of BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas, owned 139,255 shares of the Dhaka Bank and the Dhaka Telephone Company and had savings of about Tk 6.99 lakh with the same bank.

The ACC found this during an investigation in a case filed against her with Shahjahanpur police on January 7.

The commission said Afroza could not show the legal sources against the investment and savings in her name.

In her income tax file, she said she is a handicraft businesswoman. But in her passport, she mentioned herself as a housewife.

The ACC said they had learned that the accused was trying to transfer the money and it would hamper the merit of the case if she became successful.

According to the case statement, Afroza got the wealth from her husband, who earned it 'illegally'.

The ACC has meanwhile approved charge-sheets in two separate cases filed against former BNP leader Mosaddek Ali Falu.

The commission filed two separate cases against Falu on May 15, 2017 and August 10, 2017, for amassing wealth beyond the known sources of income.

In the investigation, ACC found that Falu failed to produce valid documents to prove the sources of Tk 3.93 crore.

In the other case, Falu again failed to produce documents against Tk 17.86 crore, reads the investigation report submitted before the commission.

All of them

FROM PAGE 16

India's opposition parties on Saturday drew half a million supporters to Kolkata's streets for the largest show of force yet against Modi as a national election looms.

Police in the eastern city said 500,000 people turned out for the massive "Unite India" rally, which saw leaders from across the opposition spectrum rail against Modi and his ruling Hindu nationalist party.

Speeches were beamed on 20 giant screens to a sea of spectators waving the national tricolour flag and the banners of India's myriad opposition movements. Police said 5,000 officers were on standby for security.

"The Modi government is past its expiry date," said Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal state, from an enormous raised platform.

India

FROM PAGE 16

shelter, food and material are being provided to them by the force," he added.

30 MORE ROHINGYAS ARRESTED IN TRIPURA-ASSAM BORDER

Meanwhile, Assam police on Monday night arrested 30 more Rohingyas, including 12 children, from a Guwahati-bound bus in Tripura's Churaibari village along the Tripura-Assam border, reports NDTV, quoting North Tripura District Police Chief Bhanupada Chakraborty.

They were produced before an Assam court yesterday after primary interrogation, he added.

Our Brahmanbaria and New Delhi correspondents contributed to this report.

Hard to believe

FROM PAGE 1

unlawfully in Mallikpur Bazar area and brought out a procession in support of "sheaf of paddy" around 4:40pm on that day.

They blocked the road and attacked police, leaving at least five policemen, including the complainant, injured.

"I did not participate in any procession whatsoever, let alone attacking police," said Tara Mia.

He was anxiously pacing up and down the court premises.

The fear of arrest brought the man to the HC from Sunamganj on January 15. Since then, he has been staying either at the roadside or empty places as he cannot afford to rent a hotel room.

His wait for bail lingered as the court could not hear his petition yesterday due to time constraint.

Like him, around 600 to 700 people thronged the HC corridors yesterday, seeking bail in cases they claim to be false.

These cases were filed in weeks before the election, mostly against BNP leaders and supporters, allegedly for vandalising campaign offices of the ruling Awami League and its allies, or for planning subversive activities.

They came from Sunamganj, Jashore, Sylhet, Bogura, Narayanganj, Sherpur, Netrakona, Mymensingh and several other districts. Many of them came to the capital over a week ago to seek bail.

A few of them told this newspaper that the incidents happened but they

were falsely implicated in the cases.

Several hundred people turned up on the HC premises every day for the last one week. Many of them got bail while others had to wait for hearing.

Yesterday, they were waiting in groups under trees. Some were standing while several others were seen lying on the grass. Anxiety and anger were writ on their faces.

Seventy-year old Mofazzal Hossain from Sherpur's Jhenaigati upazila is one of them. Wary, he was seen dozing off around 2:00pm under a tree on the court premises.

He did not even know the charges brought against him. He was an accused in a case filed with Jhenaigati Police Station.

"I am not involved in politics but I was implicated in a political case," he said.

Yards away, Manik Mia, who was made an accused along with Tara Mia, was crying, holding another person.

"I am very poor ... I earn a living by rearing ducks ... sometimes I work as a day labourer.

"They made me an accused, but I don't know how I will continue the case against me," Manik said in a choked voice.

"I took a loan of Tk 1,000 from a neighbour, but I have already spent most of it in the last few days," he said.

Asked about the case against Tara and Manik, the complainant, ASI Tarikul, said only those involved in the incident were made accused.

TS Ayub, president of Bagarpara

upazila BNP in Jashore, is one of the over 1,000 BNP men, who were accused in at least eight cases filed a couple of days before the polls.

"We have been away from home much before the election. If we don't get bail, we will not be able to return home," he said.

The Daily Star could not independently verify their claims. But there have been media reports that "ghost" cases were filed before the election, and even dead men, people staying abroad and injured persons were made accused.

A couple of months ago, the police authorities ordered the unit chiefs to scrutinise how such cases were filed in different parts of the country in September and October.

For example, police in the capital filed 38 cases against several thousand leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations within 12 hours of the BNP rally on September 30 at Suhrawardy Udyan.

The Daily Star visited the 10 spots named as "place of occurrence" in the cases filed with Hazaribagh, Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, New Market, Kamrangirchar, Motijheel, Paltan, Shabbagh, Ramna and Jatrabari police.

This newspaper spoke with more than a dozen roadside vendors, shop owners and their employees and local residents around each of those spots. None of them could recall any incident of attack on police, vandalism or obstruction of police duty as claimed in the case statements.



The sixth span of the Padma Bridge has been brought to near pear-36 at Jazira point of Shariatpur. The 150-metre-long superstructure is likely to be placed between pear-36 and 37 today. Following its placement, 900 metres of the 6.15 km bridge will be visible. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Police draw up long list of demands

FROM PAGE 1

The highest policy-making body of police, in a meeting at the PHQ on Monday, discussed the demands.

The deputy inspector general (DIG), with higher-ranked PHQ officials, range DIGs and police commissioners of different metropolitan areas attended the meeting, officials said.

"Nothing has been finalised. Discussions are underway regarding different proposals relating to the necessity of the police," SM Ruhul Amin, DIG (Media and Planning) at the PHQ, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Replying to a query, he said the policy-making body discussed that an additional 70 to 75 thousand police members need to be recruited to match other SAARC countries in terms of the police-population ratio.

"We are planning to propose a police-population ratio of 1:600, for which another 70 to 75 thousand force

members are required," the official said. If the additional forces are recruited, the ratio will be almost similar to that of India and Pakistan, he claimed.

The current ratio in Bangladesh stands at an estimated 1:755.

"Since the police organisation is force-oriented, creation of some posts at a senior level will be brought up [at the meeting]...", DIG Ruhul Amin said.

He, however, could not say how many posts will be demanded.

"The number has yet not been finalised.

"If the additional forces are recruited, the number of posts will be increased at all levels."

Currently, the police force has around 2.12 lakh members.

Around 75,000 police members were recruited during the last two tenures of the government.

Asked about the upgrading the IGP's rank badge to four-stars, Ruhul said it

was subject to discussion with the PM.

Currently the rank of IGP is three-stars while the rank of the chief of army is four-stars.

"It will be finalised upon discussion with the prime minister," he said, adding the issue was being discussed as the size of the force was increasing.

Sources said police high-ups might also demand establishing a separate police division in the home ministry.

DIG Ruhul Amin, however, said demand for creation of a division was not discussed in the recent policy-group meeting.

The need for a separate medical college for police will also be raised.

Last year, police raised the issue of shortage of physicians for the force upon which the PM asked them to form a medical core for the police.

There will also be some demands like for a refreshment allowance from the forces' welfare trust, officials said.

A warrior on many fronts

FROM PAGE 1

"Bulbul Bhai, how can we forget you!" wrote a Facebook user in response.

"You are the Bulbul [songbird] of Bangla music, a proud freedom fighter of an independent country. As long as the red-green will fly, you will live forever in our hearts."

So will his musical gems embellished with the cultural legacy of this land. *Shob Kota Janala Khuley Dao Na*, the song he composed with the lyric of Nazrul Islam Babu, himself a freedom fighter, will remain a timeless elegy for martyred freedom fighters of 1971.

The protagonist of the song asks all to wipe out their tears and not to sing a heart-breaking song as now is the time to celebrate the victory, while the tune of Bulbul expresses unbearable feelings of losing someone very close.

The man behind many such evergreen patriotic songs, as well as numerous popular numbers, passed away at his Aftabnagar residence in Dhaka yesterday morning. He was 63.

Bulbul was taken to Universal Medical College and Hospital around 6:15am yesterday, where the doctors declared him dead.

He had suffered a cardiac arrest and died before he was taken to the hospital, according to doctors.

His body will be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar around 11:00am today and kept there till 12:30pm for people from all walks of life to pay their last tributes to the maestro.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Central Mosque of Dhaka University after Zohr prayers. The freedom fighter will be given a guard of honour, according to Golam Kuddus, president of Sammilito Sangskritik Jote, a platform of cultural organisations.

The musician will be buried at Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur.

President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid expressed profound shocks at the death of the acclaimed composer.

In a condolence message, the prime minister recalled Bulbul's outstanding contributions to the Liberation War as well as the music industry.

"The country has lost a valiant freedom fighter and prominent singer and music composer," she said, adding that his death was an irreparable loss to the country's music industry.

The president and the prime minister also prayed for the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to his bereaved family members, reports UNB.

Bulbul received various awards for his contribution to music industry, most remarkably the Ekushey Padak, the President's Award, the Shikha Anirban Award (the highest honour conferred by the Bangladesh Armed Forces) and the Bachsas Award (11 times).

He won the National Film Award for music direction in critically acclaimed films *Premier Tajmahal* and *Hajar Bochor Dhorey*.

Starting his career as a music director in the film *Megh Bijli Badol*, he composed numerous songs for films.

His famous works include *O Majhi Nao Chhaira Dey*, *Shei Rail Liner Dharey*, *Sundar Suborno Tarunya Labonya*, *Amar Sara Deho Kheo Go Mati* and *Amar Babar Mukhey Prothom Jedin*.

FROM GUERRILLA WAR TO GUITAR

Bulbul was in his early teens when he joined the war in 1971. Initially, he took part in a number of guerrilla operations in Dhaka and subsequently joined Sector 2.

He was arrested twice by the Pakistani occupational forces and their local collaborators. He was tortured behind bars but miraculously escaped death at the time.

Quazi Ziaul Islam, known as Mahbub, a fellow freedom fighter and a childhood friend, yesterday gave a vivid narrative of Bulbul's heroics in an emotional tribute.

"In 1971, his elder brother Tultul Bhai was part of the Crack Platoon,

receiving orders directly from Khaled Mosharraf and ATM Haider. Bulbul was in school and Sarwar and I were in College. Tultul Bhai supplied us with grenades to carry out an operation in New Market, which we did together," Mahbub told The Daily Star.

He also recalled those turbulent days starting from Bulbul's participation in military training in Meghalaya to being captured twice.

"After the training, Bulbul, Manik and I had been sent to carry out a reconnaissance mission in Brahmanbaria. We were successful in gathering information but was ambushed and caught on our way back to Dhaka. From there we had been taken to a local jail where we were held captive and tortured for 17 days.

The army was executing all freedom fighters they had caught. On the 17th day, the Pakistani Army was transporting us to another location. I knew the area very well, and we found the opportunity to flee from captivity.

"We made it back to Dhaka and sought shelter in Mushurikhola. The army carried out a raid there as they found we had been sheltering there. Bulbul and his father were caught and taken to Ramna jail. At that time, he went through extreme torture.

On December 17, we were finally able to retrieve him. He was in a terrible condition but he pulled through because he was a true warrior."

Bulbul was a great friend, a great companion, who has done a lot for his country, family and friends. The country has lost a loyal son, an incredible musician and a pride of the nation, said Mahbub.

The experience in the Liberation War left an indelible impression on Bulbul's artistic career that he mentioned in many interviews.

"After independence, I composed patriotic songs for BTV. Those songs were rendered by Sabina Yasmin ... In the 1980s, for eight years, BTV used my composition *Shob Kota Janala* as a prelude to the news bulletin," Bulbul told The Daily Star in an interview.

THE 'COST' OF COURAGE

In 2012, he became a witness before the war crimes tribunal.

"With courage, I had to present my testimony of the mass murder that took place in Brahmanbaria prison in 1971. I am one of the five who survived the mass murder. There, 49 freedom fighters were killed together," Bulbul wrote in a Facebook post on May 15, 2018.

"But, I could never believe that my innocent younger brother Miraz will be murdered because of my testimony. I sought justice from the government but did not get it."

He further said that he was living in virtual confinement under 24-hour police protection at his home with his only child. "This is an unprecedented sad chapter."

"I have been living an isolated life for the last six years and now I am very sick. Eight blocks have been found in my heart and there is no treatment left but bypass surgery."

He said he had been admitted to the CCU of Ibrahim Cardiac for four days, but did not inform anyone. He said he was ready to go through his bypass surgery within the next 10 days.

"I don't need any help from my colleagues or co-artists. I, myself, am enough (just want to hold the flag of Bangladesh and the Quran close to my chest for 10 seconds ahead of the surgery)."

"And you all pray for me. Don't worry."

In another post about a month later, he said he was feeling much better, thanks to the initiatives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"I could have gone abroad for my treatment if I wanted to. The honourable prime minister had given me that option too. But my love for my country did not allow me to leave," he said.

"Everything began just the way I wanted. The national flag on my chest and the holy Quran on the flag."