



Activists protest against Nato near the State Department in Washington, DC, yesterday as Nato ministers gather for a meeting.

PHOTO: AFP

Rahul to run

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But the party has been trying build its presence in the region, especially Kerala, where the Congress and a communist party are the main players, and where Gandhi is looking to galvanise party workers through his candidacy.

He was accompanied by his sister, the charismatic Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who plunged into active politics in January in another move Congress hopes will add momentum to its campaign.

Gandhi said his candidacy emphasised the unity of India and contrasted with the Hindu-first vision of the nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh that Modi was tied to.

"There is a feeling in south India that the way the government, RSS and Narendra Modi are working... many people in the country feel that their culture, language and history are under attack," he added.

Kerala has a significant population of Muslims and Christians in a predominantly Hindu India. Muslims form nearly 27 percent of the state's population of about 33.4 million, and Christians roughly 18 percent, census figures show.

Congress has accused Modi and aligned right wing groups of pursuing a partisan agenda of attacking Muslims and changing school textbooks in efforts to shape the national identity to reflect their view, that India is a nation of, and for, Hindus.

The BJP denies bias against Muslims, but says it opposes appeasement of any community. Muslims account for 14 percent of India's population of more than 1.2 billion, which is almost 80 percent Hindu, census data shows.

Gandhi is also running from Amethi, in India's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, which sent his father, former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi to parliament, as well as his grandmother Indira Gandhi, another former prime minister.

Indian election rules allow candidates to run for more than one seat in parliament. But the BJP was quick to attack Gandhi for running in two constituencies, saying he was not sure he would win.

However, Modi himself ran from two constituencies in the 2014 election, Varanasi in the north and Vadodara in his western home state of Gujarat, carrying both.

Mokabbir

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and the party is shocked due to his involvement in the anti-party activities," it said in a statement sent to the media.

The statement also said the party's central leaders, including its president, and general secretary, were not aware of his taking oath as an MP.

Mokabbir gave baseless and fabricated statements in the media about the party and its president, it said.

Gonoforum will also take actions if any leader of the party sides with Mokabbir regarding the oath-taking.

Elected from Sylhet-2, Mokabbir, a presidium member of Gonoforum, was the second MP for the opposition coalition, Jatiya Oikyafront, to join the newly elected parliament.

Sultan Muhammad Mansur -- elected from Moulvibazar-2 -- was sworn in on March 7.

Gonoforum expelled Sultan Mansur from the party hours after he took the oath as MP -- violating the party's decision.

Mokabbir on April 1 sent a letter, using Gonoforum's letterhead, to the Speaker -- requesting her to make arrangements for administering the oath.

On March 3, the two Gonoforum lawmakers-elect sent separate letters to the Speaker, requesting her to arrange an oath-taking ceremony on March 7.

However, Mokabbir did not take oath at the time, citing "unavoidable reasons".

Nawazuddin to star

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also be co-producing the film through his production company -- Magic If Films.

The film will also star popular actor Nusrat Imrose Tisha, who is also co-producing along with Farooki through the latter's production house Chhabial.

Anjan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Food & Beverage Ltd (SFBL), will also be a co-producer of "No Land's Man".

"I have been with the development of the script of 'No Land's Man' right from the beginning," says Tisha. "I am so much more excited about producing this film and that too for the first time. I am looking forward to producing many more which will speak of Bangladesh, our culture and also our unique language of films."

"No Land's Man" is about a South Asian man's journey, which gets all the more eventful when he meets an Australian girl in the USA.

"Ever since I read the script, it stayed with me," said Nawazuddin, according to a press release.

"The script explores today's strange world that we are living in, with strong humour, satire, and emotion. There are some films which need to be made anyhow. I felt compelled to be associated with the project in more than the capacity of an actor as I thought this is that kind of film which needs to be made," he said.

Co-producer Anjan had earlier produced movies and documentaries in Bangladesh, two of the famous ones being "Lalon" and "Monpura". He said it was the story and the script that caught his attention.

"Farooki has been working on this film for a very long time.

When he came to me with the script, I gave it a read and loved it," he said, adding, "I am very excited to be a part of this film, mainly because this film will not only make the viewers think, but also because this is quality film."

"The film speaks about different people, their values, cultures and religions. However, the film stresses on and also promotes unity of the different cultures. The story is about looking out for one another," he said.

According to Farooki, "No Land's Man" is about the nomad that lives within us.

"From time immemorial, people have been moving, from east to the west and vice versa," he said. "One cannot stop these changes and these movements, since change is constant. It's the results and consequences of these movements, changes and the mixing of cultures that I find extremely fascinating. 'No Land's Man' is about appreciating these changes, embracing new challenges and experiencing new stories."

Farooki's "Television" was the closing film of the 2012 Busan Film Festival. His latest venture, "Saturday Afternoon", a hostage drama based on a terrorist attack, has been selected for the Main Competition category at the 41st Moscow International Film Festival (MIFF), which will be held later this month.

In 2014, "No Land's Man" won the Motion Picture Association of America and Asia Pacific Screen Awards' Script Development fund; was part of the Asian Project Market at Busan and was also chosen as the best project at India's Film Bazaar. Shooting for the film will begin later this year.

Police, jute mill

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injuring four policemen, claimed Kazi Mostaq Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police station. The four injured law enforcers are traffic inspectors Abul Basher, Monir, Raatul and Raihan.

An ambulance which came to take the injured policemen was also attacked.

Contacted, Khulna Metropolitan Additional Deputy Police Commissioner Sheikh Moniruzzaman also claimed that jute mill workers attacked police without any provocation.

Jute Mill Workers' League President Sardar Motahar Uddin, however, denied the allegation and said no worker was involved in the attack on policemen.

Motahar also said they had been invited by the BJMC for a meeting on their demands in Dhaka on Saturday. After reaching a decision the Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) and Non-CBA Oikya Parishad, the banners under which the workers protested, will arrange a meeting with CBA leaders of 26 state-owned jute mills.

The workers' nine-point demand includes clearing all arrears, implementing the National Wage Scale-2015, clearing payments related to gratuities and insurance claims of retired and deceased workers, reinstating workers who lost jobs during previous workers' demonstrations, regularising temporary workers and authorising the mill authorities to recruit more workers.

Elsewhere in Khulna, workers blockaded the Khulna-Jashore road and other roads in Shonadanga Bus Stand, Noyabati, and Atra since morning. Train movement from Khulna to

other routes was also halted for strike.

No long route buses left the district till 12:00pm, said bus operators.

After conclusion of the shutdown, normal traffic resumed in key parts of the city in the afternoon.

Meanwhile in Narsingdi, agitating workers took position blocking the rail routes at Torua Mazar area from 6:00am.

They set fire to the rail tracks and threw brick bats. Later around 11:05am, the workers stopped the Karnafuli Express Train which was going to Chattogram from Dhaka.

Sub-Inspector Firoz Ahmed of Narsingdi Railway Police Outpost said railway police and fire fighters rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. The train restarted around 11:40am.

In Chattogram, shuttle train services for Chittagong University (CU) remained suspended yesterday following the protests. Workers took position on Chattogram-Rangamati road from early morning.

The workers also brought out processions and staged demonstrations on Oxygen-Muradpur road. They burned tyres on the streets and halted vehicular movement, said Ataur Rahman Khandakar, officer-in-charge of Bayezid Police Station, adding that police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

The demonstration continued till 12:00pm, said Arifur Rahman, president of CBA at Amin Jute Mills, adding they would meet with the chairman of BJMC on Saturday.

[Our correspondents from Khulna, Brahmanbaria and Chattogram contributed to this report.]

Press charge

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programme was attended by MPs and deputy commissioners from 32 bordering districts, the home secretary, inspector general of police, and director generals of Rab, narcotics department, BGB, and the Coast Guard.

The food minister also recommended ensuring quick trial of the narcotics cases.

"A narcotics case takes 10 to 12 year for disposal. Ensuring quick trial would...reduce the narcotics menace."

Addressing the police chief, he said competent officers should be placed in police stations near the border.

Sadhan also suggested launching anti drugs awareness campaign on social media and TV.

IGP Mohammad Javed Patwary suggested launching joint patrol by police, BGB and Coast Guard personnel in Cox's Bazar.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman said Nearly half of the inmates in jails were arrested in drugs cases.

"We have already enacted a narcotics law with a provision for capital punishment for yaba smuggling," he said.

"We do not produce any narcotics. All the narcotics are either coming from India or Myanmar."

He added that talks had been held with India about stopping the trafficking of Phensedyl.

About yaba trafficking, he said the BGB and narcotics department often held meetings with Myanmar officials to no avail.

Killings along Bangladesh-India border were also discussed at the meeting.

Asaduzzaman said, "Most of the killings are taking place as our people go too close to the Indian border or cut the fences."

The discussants also talked about the killing of three people allegedly by BGB men on February 12 in Thakurgaon's Baharampur.

At this, the home minister said the BGB personnel would not visit cattle sheds or markets in the country's bordering area from now on.

"Many people said the BGB men discharge their duties with over-enthusiasm. So we came up with this directive."

He added that the BGB would only do what they are supposed to do at the border.

The MPs proposed reducing the BGB's range of duty area at the border. Presently, the BGB men work up to 5km inside Bangladesh territory.

The home minister in response said the 5km range was in line with an international convention.

"We will solve the issue through discussion."

The silent

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the area.

At one point of our journey when the crew started preparing meal, I slipped out with my cameras and started following the only road of the village that led me to a BGB camp, and later to Bulupara, the remotest village in the area.

The denuded forests adjacent to Bulupara reminded me of the existence of massive green forests with some 60 to 80 feet tall Garjan and other such trees.

With a heavy heart, I started walking following the trail until a sound of a bird or cricket or Cicada made me realise the pin-drop silence that had been surrounding me throughout my way.

Suddenly, I heard a loud sound. Looking along the trail, I found a goat like creature that had been staring into my eyes. The way the Serow or Bon Chhagol was staring and thumping on the ground, indeed, forced me to take a step back. I was made motionless.

A heavily pregnant she-goat, two sided of her looked so bulged that it appeared to be carrying two drums, kept looking at me and thumping the ground amid loud snorting.

I realised that she was scared of seeing me, an alien with much of unknown dresses and gadgets with a cap, as she and her clans are accustomed of seeing villagers with bare body and loin clothes.

Minutes passed, we were in standstill positions. It seemed that she was not in a mood to backing down and giving me a way to pass.

So, I moved myself a bit into the bush and waited there for her to pass. Realising that I was not a formidable enemy, she walked like a queen and crossed me with bold steps without even looking at my face and stopped only when she reached the boundary of Bulupara and looked back, possibly to say goodbye to me or showing a victory sign!

I admire the courage of this short-legged "lady of Malingapara" who showed enough courage to block me using her own lane of daily traffic through the silent forests.

Compensation

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driver over rear-ending his car. As Russell chased down the bus, the bus driver ran him over.

The injured was first taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with the severed leg and later transferred to Square and Apollo hospitals.

Yesterday, the HC also ordered Green Line Paribahan to submit a report by Wednesday after complying with its order and fixed April 10 for passing further orders on the issue.

The bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the order after hearing the statement of Green Line Paribahan General Manger Abdus Sattar.

Sattar appeared before the bench at 2:00pm as per its earlier order.

Responding to queries from the HC, Sattar said his company could not give the money to Russell as its owner, Mohammad Alauddin, was abroad.

He said Alauddin, an elderly person, was sick and he went to India on March 31 for treatment. He will return home on Tuesday.

Sattar told the HC that they informed Alauddin, who issues all the cheques on behalf of Green Line Paribahan, about the court's directive.

The HC then asked Sattar not to sell tickets for Thursday and make the passengers suffer by doing so if the company did not pay Tk 50 lakh to Russell by Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, the HC bench

summoned the transport company official to appear before it to give an explanation for not paying Tk 50 lakh to Russell in line with its previous order.

The victim, along with his father, wife and two-year-old child, was present at the court.

WRIT PETITION

During hearing a writ petition, the HC bench on March 31 directed the Green Line Paribahan to pay Tk 50 lakh to Russell by April 3 and also asked the company to inform it by April 4 (yesterday) after complying with its order.

Also on March 31, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court upheld the March 12 HC order that asked the Green Line to pay Tk 50 lakh to Russell for treatment.

Advocate Umme Kulsum Smrity had filed the writ petition with the HC on May 13 last year, seeking necessary order on the authorities concerned to compensate Russell and stop reckless driving.

The following day, the HC issued a rule asking the Green Line Paribahan and the government to explain why they would not be ordered to pay a compensation of Tk 1 crore to Russell.

Advocate Khandker Shamsul Haque Reza appeared for the writ petitioner while advocate Md Ozi Ullah defended the Green Line Paribahan.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Shamsul said a case was filed in connection with the accident and the bus driver was on bail.

Negotiations

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their nationals through negotiations," she said while visiting the defence ministry in the capital.

The PM said Bangladesh provided around one million Rohingyas with shelter on humanitarian grounds. "It's surprising to the world how we could provide such huge number of people with shelter and save them."

She added, "We don't want to engage in any conflict with Myanmar. We have discussed and signed agreements with them. Our aim is to send them [Rohingyas] back to their country through dialogue."

Hasina, also the defence minister, asked all the authorities to discharge their responsibility according to the goal.

Acting army chief Lt Gen Md Shamsul Haque, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Aurangzeb Chowdhury, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat and PM's Military Secretary Maj Gen Mia Md Jainul Abedin were present.

Defence Secretary Akhter Hussain Bhuiya delivered the welcome speech.

The PM underscored the need for having a strong defence system to give a befitting reply to safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty in case of any attack by anyone.

"We want a peaceful environment. But if anyone attacks us, we'll have to have this preparation always so that we can give a fitting reply to the attack and protect our independence and sovereignty."

"We'll not engage in any war with anyone. We don't want any war. We want a peaceful environment with all," she said, adding that Bangladesh's foreign policy adopted by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is "Friendship to all and malice towards none".

Noting that Bangladesh has the capacity to face any natural or man-made disaster, Hasina said, "We can face any situation. We've proved that."

She put emphasis on developing the armed forces with newer and modern technologies, alongside providing the officials with modern training to keep pace with the modern world.

Describing the armed forces as the symbol of the country's independence and sovereignty, Hasina said members of the armed forces were playing a very important role in safeguarding the country.

The armed forces have been developed with the latest tools and technologies through imparting necessary training, she said.

About maritime boundary disputes,

Another accused

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as she "campaign for an upazila vice chairman candidate".

The victim's husband had filed a case with Char Jabbar Police Station on Monday, accusing 12 people, including four unnamed.

The incident happened barely three months after a mother of four was gang-raped by 10 to 12 people in the same area allegedly for voting for "sheaf of paddy", the electoral symbol of BNP, in the December 30 parliamentary election.

the PM said it was a tough task to win the cases against India and Myanmar at international courts maintaining good relations with the two friendly countries.

She said it had been possible only because all concerned in Bangladesh worked with sincerity, responsibility and dutifulness.

The PM went to the ministry as part of her regular visit to different ministries after forming her government for the third consecutive term in January this year.

Helicopter

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Ahmed, a community leader from Kin Taung village told Reuters by telephone.

"People in the village don't dare to go out and are frightened," he added.

Many villages around Buthidaung were razed during the 2017 campaign against Rohingya, though the village that was home to the casualties from Wednesday's attack was spared at that time.

Myanmar's leaders have vowed to crush all the rebels fighting for autonomy in Rakhine State, an area long scarred by complex ethnic divisions, and authorities have blocked most aid agencies' access to the area, raising fears of more civilian suffering.

Stephan Sakalian, head of delegation in Myanmar at the International Committee of the Red Cross, said teams from the organisation had visited Buthidaung Hospital where 13 people were being treated for wounds, some of them in "urgent need of surgery".

"ICRC and Myanmar Red Cross teams are following the situation very closely and offered our services in case of need, including medical supplies or transfer to the Sittwe hospital, as we did two weeks ago with 5 wounded civilians," he said.

Rashid Ahmed, a labourer who spoke by telephone to Reuters, said his elder brother, uncle and nephew had been shot while they were working at Sai Din valley.

"A helicopter attacked them while they were working there, cutting and collecting bamboo," he said. Two other villagers said a helicopter had attacked the group.

Some of the wounded were brought to Buthidaung town, but several died before they reached the hospital, said Maung Kyaw Zan, a lawmaker for the township, adding that five bodies had been recovered.

"When I talked to the wounded people they said the shooting came from the air, there were no clashes on the ground," the lawmaker said.

More than 17,000 people have been displaced by the violence in Rakhine since December, the US embassy said in a statement on Tuesday that urged authorities to allow humanitarian relief for those affected.

"The United States is deeply concerned about the harm to civilians of the ongoing conflict in Rakhine and Chin States between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military," it said.

"We call on all parties to renew their efforts to end the fighting and work toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict."