

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Delhi assures Dhaka of continued support

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India assured Bangladesh of continued support for safe and speedy repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar last night. The promise came during talks between Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and his Indian counterpart Amit Shah at the latter's North Block Office in New Delhi.

"The Indian home minister assured the home minister of Bangladesh of India's continuing support for safe and speedy repatriation of the displaced Myanmar citizens sheltered in Bangladesh, for whom India has provided humanitarian assistance in four tranches since September 2017," an official statement issued by New Delhi said.

The two leaders also looked forward to enhancing cooperation in simplifying people-to-people contact and travel for business, health and tourism, including through promoting connectivity, the statement added.

"Both the ministers reiterated the significance attached to the Bangladesh-India relationship forged in the 1971 Liberation War, which goes far beyond a strategic partnership," said the statement.

"Today, our ties are a role model for good neighbourly relations across the world. They are rooted in history, culture, language and shared values of democracy, secularism, development cooperation and countless other commonalities."

During the meeting, the two ministers expressed satisfaction that both countries were working closer than ever before in every sector, including security and border management, and reiterated their commitment to keep the borders friendly.

"The Indian home minister appreciated Bangladesh's policy of not allowing use of its territory by extremists and insurgents for perpetrating violence in other countries including India," it said.

According to it, issues related to bilateral security co-operation were discussed during the meeting.

"Both home ministers reaffirmed the need to further curb the menace of trans-border crimes and agreed to greater co-operation to achieve."

The statement also said that Amit Shah raised concern regarding "illicit movement of undocumented persons across the border, with a view to find solutions to this problem especially in North East India".

Shah congratulated Asaduzzaman Khan on his resumption of office as home minister of Bangladesh for a second term and reiterated India's full support for Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's development agenda.

Greek police search for missing British scientist

AFP, Athens

Greek police have launched a large-scale search for a 35-year-old British scientist who went missing on the Aegean island of Icaria, officials said yesterday.

Nicosia-based astrophysicist Natalie Christopher, who had been on holiday with her partner, reportedly failed to return from a run on Monday.

"A police helicopter carrying officers and special equipment to locate missing persons left Athens on Tuesday night," a spokeswoman for the Greek police told AFP.

They joined Icaria port patrols, firefighters and volunteers already combing areas for the scientist, Northern Aegean police said in a statement.

According to Greek and Cypriot media, Christopher and her 38-year-old partner had arrived on Icaria on Saturday and stayed near the port of Agios Kiriakos. She left their hotel for a jog on Monday morning but never returned, her partner told media.

Police have opened a preliminary investigation into the circumstances of her disappearance.

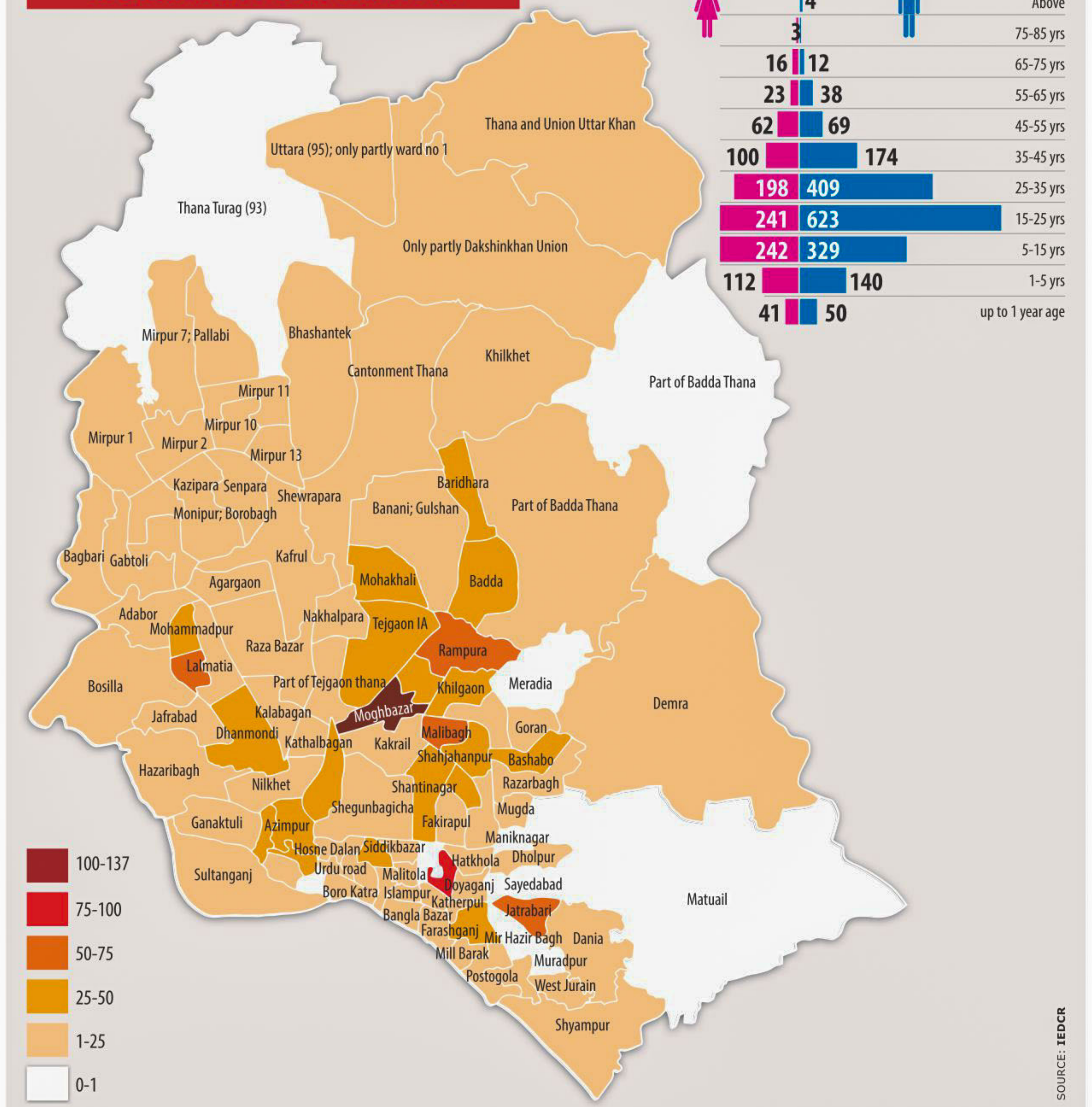
The incident comes three weeks after the murder of US molecular biologist Suzanne Eaton on the Greek island of Crete.

The 59-year-old had been attending a conference near the city of Chania and gone out on July 2 without taking her mobile phone, the police said.

Her body was only found six days later in an abandoned World War II bunker near the town of Hania.

A 27-year-old farmer confessed to raping and killing Eaton, who had worked for the Max Planck Institute at Dresden University.

DENGUE POSITIVE CASE DISTRIBUTION IN DHAKA CITY CORPORATIONS



Upscale areas more prone

FROM PAGE 1 Malibagh and Moghbazar have.

In the capital, Moghbazar has been the worst affected, with at least 137 dengue patients taking treatment.

Malibagh, next to Moghbazar, saw the second highest number of patients - 75 to 100. As high as 40 percent buildings in this neighbourhood are infested with Aedes larvae.

The presence of larvae is similar in Segunbagicha, secretariat area, Dhaka University area, Sabujbagh and Rajarbagh, Narinda, Tikatuli and Gandaria.

MM Aktaruzzaman, programme manager of Communicable Disease Control at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said their survey team inspected under-construction buildings, semi-structured one- and two-story buildings, multistory buildings as well as unoccupied apartments.

Concentration of Aedes larvae was high in buildings where people stored water for aesthetic purposes, he said.

"This type of mosquito needs clean water for reproduction," he said, adding that many flats in upscale areas had unused bathrooms with commodes where female Aedes mosquitoes laid eggs.

The team found larvae in discarded tyres, water on the floors, plastic buckets, potteries/clay pots, flower vases and trays and metal cans with water stored in them.

The survey on the concentration of patients was done analysing information about 3,000 patients who took treatment at 12 public and 35 private hospitals across the capital from May 1 to August 2. The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) carried out this survey.

The survey on the mosquito larvae was done by the DGHS from July 17-

27, covering 100 neighbourhoods of 98 wards in the two city corporations in Dhaka.

Aktaruzzaman recommended further studies for better understanding of mosquito prevalence and infection. 5-35 AGE GROUP MOST VULNERABLE

Findings also show that most dengue patients who took treatment are aged between 5 and 35, with the number of male patients much higher compared to female patients.

Students and job holders are at the highest risk as they remain outside home in the morning and evening hours, when Aedes mosquitoes are known to bite, said Kankar Ghosh, an epidemiologist at Dhaka Shishu Hospital.

These mosquitos usually bite people two hours after sunrise and two hours before sunset, and people of these two groups remain outside

home at these hours, he said. "For example, an officegoer leaves home before 8:00am and returns after sunset, meaning he remains outside home at risky hours."

And although people can keep their homes clean, they have to rely on the authorities or the city corporations for cleaning offices and educational institutions, he said.

"The number of infections would come down by half if children stopped going outside their home at the risky hours," he noted.

The study found 56 percent children aged 5-11 were infected from schools, he said.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said students were very vulnerable as many schools, colleges and coaching centres were not cleaned properly, a reason why students are being infected there.

Situation worsens

FROM PAGE 1 Medical College Hospital.

In the other incident, Mehedi Hasan, a student of Government Titumir College, died of dengue yesterday.

Mehedi, undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of the United Hospital, breathed his last at around 3:30pm, confirmed Dr Shagufa Anwar, Chief Communication and Business Development Officer of the Hospital.

So far this year, 8,863 people with dengue got admitted to hospitals outside Dhaka.

In Mymensingh, 153 were taking treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital after 49 more got admitted in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, said AB Md Shamsuzzaman, assistant director of the hospital.

Seventeen new patients got admitted to Pabna Medical College Hospital in the last 24 hours, said Ranjan Kumar, assistant director of the hospital, yesterday evening.

In Kishoreganj, 112 people were taking treatment at different hospitals in the district, said Kishoreganj Civil Surgeon Md Habibur Rahman.

EID WORRY

Worried that things could get worse during the Eid holidays when many homes in the capital would be unattended for days, the DGHS yesterday suggested that people cover traditional and western commodes before they leave.

It also asked them to remove water from the trays at the bottom of refrigerators, from air conditioning drain pipes, buckets, plant pots, and barrels.

The DGHS asked them to turn bowls, trays or kitchen pots upside down before they leave and cover water tanks.

The education ministry is also worried about the holidays. Education institutions will remain closed for 12 days.

The ministry in a circular issued yesterday asked schools to form six- to 10-member teams comprising teachers, staffers, scouts, BNCC members and students to monitor the institutions during the holidays so that Aedes mosquito do not get a free pass to breed. The teams would remove any stagnant water.

The ministry asked the schools to

keep their offices open every day and have teachers and staffers man them in turns.

The cabinet division yesterday issued a circular asking all ministries and divisions, departments, and other agencies under ministries to take necessary steps so that Aedes mosquitoes cannot breed in offices and their surrounding areas during the holidays.

It mentioned that the Eid holidays, coupled with weekends and the National Mourning Day, would create a long holiday during which the mosquitoes could breed.

MONEY FOR FIGHTING MOSQUITOES

The government has allocated Tk 51.5 crore to help the city corporations and municipalities fight mosquitoes, UNB reports.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Md Tazul Islam said this at a meeting with Bangladesh Climate Change Journalist Forum (BCJF) at the secretariat.

Of the amount, the two Dhaka city corporations were given Tk 7.5 crore each. Tk 1 crore each was allocated for Gazipur, Narayanganj, and

Chattogram city corporations.

Other city corporations received Tk 50 lakh each.

The municipalities would get Tk 30 crore.

The minister said it is conducting mosquito prevention activities in the light of Kolkata's experience. "The menace will be under control if everyone keeps the premises of their homes and offices clean."

He said, "Kolkata achieved a lot by raising public awareness. They say they've got rid of this problem as 90 percent of the people were aware of dengue."

Meanwhile, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday asked the authorities concerned to stop spraying ineffective anti-mosquito chemicals, reports UNB. "Effective insecticide will arrive in Dhaka within two to four days and in the meantime there's no need to spray ineffective chemicals just to show off," he said after attending a cleanliness drive in the city's Mirpur Mazar Road area.

[Our Dinajpur, Pabna and Mymensingh correspondents contributed to the report.]

Trump revives political bias accusations against Google

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump revived his criticism of Google on Tuesday, referencing a fired engineer who claimed the internet giant was working against his re-election.

The latest diatribe from Trump was based on allegations voiced by a former Google engineer interviewed

on Fox News.

"I watched Kevin Cernekee, a Google engineer, say terrible things about what they did in 2016 and that they want to 'Make sure that Trump loses in 2020,'" Trump said in a tweet Tuesday.

The comments were the latest from the US leader alleging, without supporting evidence,

that Silicon Valley giants distort searches and social feeds to suppress conservatives.

Trump has assailed Google on several occasions, claiming bias against him and his supporters.

Google repeated its response that these claims are baseless.

"The statements made by this disgruntled former employee

are absolutely false," a Google spokesperson said in a statement.

"We go to great lengths to build our products and enforce our policies in ways that don't take political leanings into account. Distorting results for political purposes would harm our business and go against our mission of providing helpful content to all of our users."

Journos need

FROM PAGE 1

expect them to also bear great responsibility. Such responsibility must entail, reflecting the whole truth, as opposed to simply highlighting fractions of it," said an HC bench.

The bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice Mohammad Ali came up with the observation while passing an order on a writ petition.

Earlier in the day, SC lawyer Shahinur Rahman filed the petition seeking necessary order on the issue.

He submitted the petition as some "online newspapers" published reports on August 2 "misquoting" an observation made by another HC bench on July 31 about the importance of people's lives and the protocol for VIPs.

The court also directed the authorities to continue providing privileges (protocol) without fail to those who are supposed to get such privileges as per the warrant of precedence.

"... the deputy commissioners and superintendents of police and other concerned in the metropolitan cities and all other townships have been directed to provide the requisite privileges by virtue of the constitution, warrant of precedence and the laws of this land," the bench led by Justice Obaidul Hassan said in the order.

The court said, "It is important to remind everyone that when the justices of the courts think aloud and speak their thoughts; it is risky to take their words in that situation as being the ultimate version."

"In the case at hand, the words of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader had been taken out of context and has thus gone on to create confusion in numerous cases."

"In the future, it is imperative that people not jump to conclusions simply based on the word uttered by the court without having gone through the final judgment, where the court is allowed time to reflect and properly articulate its intentions and thoughts."

The HC bench continued, "Though we are addressed as 'My Lords' in our courtrooms, it is imperative that we all remember that the justices of this esteemed court are still humans. We are not infallible. In shouldering the burdens of our duties, we are sensible enough to recognise that we may sometimes not be able to articulate our thoughts with perfection. We are thus, often hopeful, that such instances are viewed with a degree of indulgence by those who understand the work that we do."

"Having said so, it is important to recognise that while we do speak our thoughts in court; sometimes it may be so that some fail to understand the message that we intend to convey. And so, it is important to wait for the final pronouncement of our judgements to truly understand or grasp what it is that we, as justice, intend to relay."

During hearing another writ petition filed over the death of 13-year-old Titash Ghosh, the HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader on July 31 made an observation about the importance of people's lives and security of the president and the prime minister.

Family sources said Titash died in an ambulance as the ferry, which was going to Dhaka, delayed loading vehicles for three hours to wait for the arrival of a government official.

The bench had observed that government officials are merely the servants of the republic, and they are not "very important persons" (VIPs).

Only the president and the prime minister of the country are the VVIPs (very, very important persons), and security issues are involved with regard to their movements, said the bench.

But some media on August 2 allegedly published reports misquoting the HC observation following which lawyer Shahinur yesterday submitted the petition before the HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice Mohammad Ali.

In the petition, the lawyer said different "online newspapers" -- The Bangladesh Today, Dhaka Tribune Bangla, Awaz BD, Barishal Times, Channel24, Purbopashchimbd, news and 24 Live Newspaper -- have published reports on the issue which are absolutely derogatory and disrespectful to the honour and dignity of the SC.

He prayed to the HC to order the government to make the electronic and print media refrain from circulating and publishing the news regarding protocol of the SC judges.

Ekrumul Haque Tutul, Syed Mamun Mahub and Tapas Kumar Biswas appeared for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder represented the state.