

Modi praises Hasina's zero tolerance policy on terrorism

Bss, New Delhi

Describing Bangladesh as a role model in maintaining religious harmony, India yesterday highly praised the "zero tolerance" policy of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina against any forms of terrorism and religious extremism.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said experts should visit Bangladesh to witness how the Bangladeshi people were living together in peace and religious harmony.

His comment came when Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan paid a courtesy call on him at his official residence in New Delhi.

The minister arrived in the Indian capital on Tuesday to attend the 7th Bangladesh-India home minister level talks.

During the meeting, Modi congratulated Hasina for becoming the prime minister of Bangladesh for a third consecutive term.

He appreciated Bangladesh's policy of not allowing use of its territory by extremists and insurgents for perpetrating violence in other countries, including India.

About the Rohingya issue, Modi

said India already raised the issue with the Myanmar authorities as his country thought that the crisis must be resolved.

He assured the Bangladesh minister of discussing the issue again with Myanmar to ensure smooth and peaceful repatriation of the Rohingyas.

About the border management issue, the Indian PM assured Asaduzzaman that the two countries would work together for a secured and effective border by fighting drug smuggling and cross-border terrorism.

He also said the BIMSTEC could play a crucial role in maintaining peace and development in the region.

Modi expressed his country's eagerness to be a partner of programmes taken up by the Bangladesh government to observe the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzam Ali, Home Secretary (public safety division) Mostafa Kamal Uddin, Secretary (protection division) Mohammad Shahiduzzaman and Inspector General of Police Mohammad Javed Patwary were present at the meeting.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanges greetings with Awami League leaders at the Gobo Bhaban after she returned home from the UK yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

HC rejects Minni's bail petition

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government, told the court that Minni cannot get bail in the sensational murder case.

Five accused in the case, including Minni, recorded their confessional statement before magistrates and the investigation is still on, Fakir added.

Minni, who is now in jail, submitted the bail petition to the HC on August 5 through her lawyers citing different grounds on which the HC may consider her bail.

In the petition, Minni said she was innocent and not involved in the murder in any way.

She also said that she had been made accused with an ulterior motive and on the instructions of a vested quarter.

Earlier, two courts in Barguna

rejected Minni's bail on July 22 and July 30.

Police arrested Minni after a daylong interrogation on July 16. A court placed her on a five-day remand the following day. Three days later, a Barguna court recorded her statement.

On June 26, Rifat Sharif, 25, an internet service provider, was hacked to death in broad daylight in Barguna town.

In a footage of the incident that went viral on social media, Minni was seen screaming and trying to save her husband from the attackers.

Rifat's father filed the murder case with Barguna Sadar Police Station against 12 people on the day of the murder.

Prime accused in the case, Nayan Bond, was killed in a "gunfight" with police on July 2.

Homegoers' trips turn chaotic

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Ferries are taking 20 minutes more than the normal time to cross the river due to strong current, said Abdul.

Rafiqul Islam, a private service holder, said his bus of Tungpara Express was supposed to start from Gulistan at 12:00noon but started at 2:30pm citing huge jam at Shimulia-Kathalbari terminals.

The disruption at Shimulia-Kathalbari eventually affected the ferry services at Paturia-Dauladia terminals.

At 3:00pm, some 300 light vehicles, 100 buses and 400 trucks were waiting at Paturia end, although the situation improved a little in the evening. [according to?]

Azamal Hossain, deputy general manager of BIWTC at Aricha office, said they were operating 17 ferries and that three more ferries would join their fleet soon.

Rifat Hossain, a private university student, said, "I came to the terminal at 9:00am defying rain, but my bus has not arrived yet [11:00am]. I don't know how much longer I will have to wait."

TRAFFIC JAM AT HIGHWAYS

People heading for northern district faced traffic jam after crossing the Bangabandhu bridge for hours in the morning due to the sorry state of road at different points and poor condition of Nolka bridge.

Vehicles have to cross the bridge very slowly due to its poor condition, causing traffic jam from Bangabandhu bridge west zone to Nolka point, said Sayed Shahid Alam, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu bridge west zone police station.

Situation on the road turned had after a road crash at Pachalia on Wednesday night, he said.

Besides, repairing work was going

on the Dhaka (Hatikumru)-Bogura and Dhaka (Hatikumru)-Bonpara highways for the last day before Eid, causing traffic congestion.

Vehicles heading for 22 districts of north, west and south have to cross Hatikumru point, Akteruzzaman, officer in charge of Hatikumru highway police station, said.

People also faced problem on the 13km stretch from Tongi Bridge to Joydevpur Chowrasta on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway.

The Gazipur City Corporation Mayor assured of deploying 500 volunteers to control the situation, but that gave little relief due to rain, headed.

CROWD AT KAMALAPUR

Commuters travelling on trains to northern and northwestern regions continued to suffer as all but one intercity trains were late by one two three hours.

According to the Train Tracking Monitoring System, Chilahati-bound Nilsagar Express, Rajshahi-bound Silkcity, Rangpur-bound Rangpur Express, Panchagarh-bound Ekata Express, Rajshahi-bound Dhumketu Express and Silkcity Express and Khulna-bound Sundarban Express were late by about two hours to nearly three and a half hours.

Only Chapainawabganj-bound Banolata Expresses left the Kamalapur Station at 20 minutes late.

Operation of trains on other routes was normal.

Asked about the reason for the delays, Aminul Hoque, station manager at the railway station, told reporters that holidaymakers usually take a long time to embark and disembark trains, resulting in such delays. Our Correspondent from Munshiganj, Pabna, Manikganj and Gazipur contributed the report.



Homegoers rush on railway tracks in rain to catch a train in the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

PM returns home after 20 days

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Shameem and Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, among other AL leaders, were present.

Hasina left Heathrow International Airport in London at 6:55pm (London time) on Wednesday. Bangladesh

High Commissioner to the UK Saida Muna Tasneem saw her off at the airport.

The PM went to London on July 19. During her stay in the UK, she joined a conference of Bangladesh envoys in Europe on July 20.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland QC and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon separately called on Hasina in London.

On July 22, the PM underwent a successful surgery on her left eye at a London hospital.

A trucker's trip not free at all

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in any district, they have to show that pass to drive ahead, he said, without disclosing any name.

On Tuesday evening, this correspondent got on the cabin of the truck in Saatmile Bazar, one of the largest cattle markets in the region, with two cattle traders alongside a helper and the driver.

He was allowed on the truck on request of a local chairman though the traders said they don't accept any outsider for safety of their cattle. The 18 oxen the truck was carrying were priced at Tk 23 lakh.

On the road, the truck was first stopped before the Navaron bridge in Sharsa. Some people collected Tk 300 from the trucker giving two slips -- one was titled "contribute for development of Navaron Bazar" and the other "Driver's Transport Agency".

As it reached Jhikargachha after about 20 minutes, the driver had to pay Tk 100 to some people who claimed to be from Jashore District Truck, Trunk-lorry, Tractor and Covered Van Workers' Union.

He also paid Tk 50 each to three groups in Palbari and Newmarket points in Jashore and Goalondo intersection of Rajbari. They claimed it was for Jashore Municipality, Jashore District Truck Owners' and Workers' Joint Welfare Fund and Rajbari District Road Transport Workers' Union respectively.

Around 12:30am on Wednesday, the truck had to join an around six-kilometre queue of vehicles up to the

Daulatdia ferry terminal.

The driver paid Tk 20 for weighing the vehicle though it is supposed to be free. The helper then left for the toll booth to pay the ferry charge of Tk 1,060.

There the ferry tickets were not given by the employees of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation but some local goons, according to the helper.

When he went to collect the ticket, they asked him what the truck was carrying. As he said they were transporting sacrificial animal, those men charged additional Tk 500 without providing any slip.

They, however, gave a ticket for the ferry charge.

Around 5:30am, after five hours of wait, the truck could board the ferry. After crossing the river, there was no interruption for any illegal toll collection.

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY

On July 31, IGP Mohammad Javed Patwary instructed police officials not to stop any truck carrying sacrificial animals on the highways unless there is a specific allegation. He gave the instruction at crime conference at the Police Headquarters.

About the extortion near the Navaron bridge, Moshir Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sharsa Police Station, yesterday said they removed an illegal toll booth, operated by some truck workers' union leaders, in the area.

When told that two days ago this correspondent witnessed toll

collection at that point, he said he would look into the matter.

Half an hour later, the OC called back and said two persons of Jhikargachha Truck Workers' Union were collecting the toll and they were asked to stop it immediately.

Tajul Islam, president of Bangladesh Inter District Truck Drivers' Union, said illegal toll is being collected in the name of different transport workers' unions in different areas.

"We informed it to police and they asked for a written complaint from us. I will file the complaint after this Eid."

Md Abdul Maleque, additional inspector general of police (highway), said he was not informed about these allegations and he would ask the district police to take steps.

Zillur Rahman, assistant general manager of BIWTC Aricha office, denied that local goons were collecting the ferry charge at Daulatdia.

But Rajbari Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman said they got complaint about illegal toll collection by some outsiders at the ferry terminal and asked the BIWTC authorities to ensure sale of the tickets by their staffers.

The Daily Star tried to reach Jashore Municipality Mayor Jahirul Islam Chaklader Rentu for his comment about the allegation of illegal toll collection from trucks in the name of his municipality.

But he did not receive any calls yesterday evening.

[Our Benapole and Manikganj correspondents contributed to the report]

Cattle markets to heighten risks

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This view was echoed by other entomologists, who said if necessary cleaning works and spraying of insecticides were not properly conducted over the next one week, then the risk of cattle markets becoming breeding spots for Aedes mosquitoes would become higher.

On the other hand, cattle traders will be most at risk during this time, as most either do not take proper protection against Aedes mosquitoes or may not know what precautionary measures to take against dengue.

Md Ariful came at the market on Monday with 20 cattle from Kushtia. He kept his cows amid ankle deep water.

"I raised the cattle for the last one year for this festival. ... I'm not worried about dengue," he said.

Cattle trader Fazar Ali brought five oxen from Faridpur in the market.

"I hope we'll return home without dengue," he said.

Another worry are the locals in the vicinity of cattle markets. Such markets have been set up on Gopibag, Kamalapur Balurmath and adjacent areas to Kamalapur Stadium.

Visiting some of them, no proper drainage system was found. Stagnant water had also pooled in certain parts of the markets and mosquitoes were seen hovering over those.

A resident of Gopibag, Akbar Hossain said, "Previously, the cattle market was limited to the playground. But this year it has grown till the rail line and narrow streets, making us apprehensive of the dengue threat."

In some of the markets, wet hay was found scattered everywhere.

Former director of IEDCR Mahmudur Rahman said, "There is risk of the dengue virus spreading through

different cattle markets," he said, adding it was a big possibility as the Aedes mosquito population had not been controlled so far.

"We are suggesting everyone to go to the cattle markets taking proper protection, like covering their body as much as they can," he said.

Kankar Ghosh, epidemiologist of Dhaka Shishu Hospital said cattle traders are very vulnerable during this time as the traders would remain busy with their cattle. Many also do not have any idea about dengue, so the DGHS and city corporations need to raise awareness on the issue among them.

He also suggested to make sure the cattle traders use mosquito nets, spray aerosol or use mosquito repellent coils when they sleep.

"In every cattle market, city corporations of Dhaka [should] set up medical teams to provide necessary support to the traders and if they give advice through the team, it will be very effective," he said.

There are also fears of cattle traders taking the disease back to their homes with them, further spreading the disease.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon said they were spraying cattle markets and doing campaigns about dengue prevention.

He said as Aedes mosquitoes were born in clean water, the risk was lessened at the markets, adding that nonetheless loudspeakers would be used to raise awareness.

At least 2,326 dengue patients got admitted to hospitals across the country in 24 hours since 8:00am Wednesday, taking the total to 34,666 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Trump has 'fanned the flames of white supremacy': Biden

AFP, Washington

Joe Biden, the frontrunner in the race for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, lashed out at President Donald Trump on Wednesday, saying he has "fanned the flames of white supremacy."

"We have a problem with this rising tide of white supremacy in America and we have a president who encourages and emboldens it," Biden said at a campaign event in Burlington, Iowa.

"In both clear language and in code, this president has fanned the flames of white supremacy in this nation," the 76-year-old former vice president said, using some of his harshest language yet about the Republican president.

Biden said Trump "offers no moral leadership" and shows "no interest in unifying the nation."

"Instead we have a president with a toxic tongue who has publicly and unapologetically embraced a political strategy of hate, racism, and division," he said.

Trump has been accused by his Democratic critics and others of promoting white nationalism with his frequent attacks on immigrants and minorities.

A 21-year-old white man killed 22 people in El Paso, Texas over the weekend in a mass shooting he said was carried out to repel a "Hispanic invasion."

Biden laid some of the blame at Trump's doorstep.

"How far is it from Trump's saying this is 'an invasion' to the shooter in El Paso declaring 'this attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas?'" Biden asked. "Not far at all."

Biden cited the actions of past presidents and said they "chose to fight for what the best of American character is about."

"We don't have that today," he said. "We have a president who has aligned himself with the darkest forces in this nation."

"And that makes winning the battle for the soul of this nation that much harder."

Biden said America was going through a rare episode in its history with a president who "isn't up to the moment, where our president lacks the moral authority to lead."

New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, another 2020 Democratic hopeful, also denounced Trump on Wednesday, in a speech at a black church in Charleston, South Carolina, where nine black parishioners were shot dead in 2015 by a white supremacist.

Booker, one of two main African-American candidates in the race, said the United States was being led by a "president who spews hateful rhetoric and endangers the lives of people of color and immigrants."

He said the El Paso attack "was sowed by those who spoke the same words the El Paso murderer did: warning of an 'invasion.'"

"It was sowed by those who spoke of an 'infestation,' and 'rats and rodents' in majority Black cities," Booker added in a reference to Trump's comments about the city of Baltimore.

Trump on Wednesday said he opposed "white supremacy or any other kind of supremacy" and accused Democrats of trying to score "political points."

Tweeting while heading to El Paso for a condolence visit, Trump also said he watched Biden's speech and declared it "Sooo Boring!"