



Dhaka, Delhi ties reached a new height

Bangladesh high commissioner says

BSS, New Delhi

The friendly ties between Bangladesh and India have grown stronger and reached a new height under the guidance of Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali yesterday told officers taking part in the 59th NDC course at National Defence College in New Delhi.

The envoy spoke on "Framework of Bangladesh-India relations: Opportunities and Challenges".

Besides participants from India, the course has 25 overseas officers from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, United States of America, etc.

Muazzem said Bangladesh and India have focused on security, mutual trust, confidence-building and people-to-people connectivity.

He said Sheikh Hasina has restored mutual trust between the two neighbours and brought about a change in the mindset regarding the bilateral ties.

"There is now a greater recognition on both sides that the destinies of the two countries are intertwined and we must grow together," the diplomat told officers at the prestigious course.

Muazzem said Bangladesh and India have steadily developed bilateral defence engagements in recent years.

The two countries signed five MoUs on defence cooperation during Sheikh Hasina's India visit in 2017. The MoUs cover fields of general cooperation, training exchange and procurement of equipment, defence financing, medical cooperation and knowledge sharing between the top defence institutes of both countries.

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House help dies after falling from building

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A domestic worker died after falling from a building in the capital's Dhanmondi area yesterday afternoon. Police suspected that she died while trying to flee from the home where she was working.

The deceased was identified as Riya Akter, 14 -- hailing from Bokshiganj upazila in Jamalpur.

Officer-in-Charge of Dhanmondi Police Station Abdul Latif told The Daily Star that Riya started working at the Dhanmondi home on August 4. After two days, she declined to work there. Her mother, then, assured her that she would take her (Riya) home soon, and asked her to continue working there.

It seemed she tried to flee from the building, but fell from 11th floor, the OC said. Her parents came to the police station but did not lodge any complaint.

House owner Mominul Hasan was released after interrogation.

With food stalls taking up a large part of the space in front, vendors setting up shops in the back and waste being dumped beside the walkway, the Rayerbazar Badhyabumi (killing ground) has been turned into a hangout destination. It is tragic that this utter disrespect towards the country's brightest minds, who were systematically killed by the Pakistan occupation army and their collaborators, goes unnoticed by the authorities concerned. The photos were taken yesterday.

Woman crushed under train in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A woman was crushed under the wheels of a running train at Jashore Railway Station on Thursday night.

The deceased was identified as Rejia Begum, 60, wife of Tofajjal Hossain -- a resident of Navarin Bazar in Sharsha upazila under Jashore district.

Station Master Saidul Islam said the victim fell under the train and it ran over her. She was severely injured and was immediately taken to Jashore General Hospital. The emergency doctor declared her dead.

Medical waste dumped irresponsibly

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Where there are sources that produce medical waste, there should also be means to dispose those of on a regular basis. Unfortunately, in a city like Barishal, there is no such mechanism for doing so, resulting in high risk of public health and environmental degradation.

Every day, at least five tonnes of clinical waste are being produced at four government hospitals, 40 clinics, 182 diagnostic centres, one blood bank and 9 upazila health complexes, according to officials.

Workers of Barishal City Corporation (BCC) and an NGO collect those from the government and private health care institutions respectively. After collection, they just dump the toxic waste on a six-acre landfill in the city's Puranpara-Gauashar area.

During a recent visit, the collectors were seen piling up all sorts of medical waste in a corner of the landfill. There were also quite a few child ragpickers among them.

Not just used syringes, bandages, dressings, saline bags and needles, even amputated parts of human body, stool, urine, blood, expired medicine and various ingredients used for medical services, and disposable and non-disposable items were found there.

According to Barishal Civil Surgeon Monwar Hossain, this type of open dumping is extremely dangerous to human health.

Besides, over 100 families live around the landfill. Several children were seen walking on the piles, putting themselves at risk of injuries inflicted by hidden sharp objects.

This correspondent saw the workers leaving the spot after dumping the waste. Locals said this has been going on for years.

According to the civil surgeon, clinical waste has to be segregated into two parts -- infectious and hazardous; and those have to be crushed and burnt in an incinerator.

But there is no incinerator plant in Barishal to properly dispose of such hazardous materials.

In recent years, the city has experienced a dramatic increase in the amount of medical waste being generated. It used to be 2.5 tonnes around 10 years ago, said Dipok Lal Mridha, former conservancy officer of BCC.

Dr Rabiul Islam, the incumbent officer, said, "With the increase in population, and consequently healthcare facilities, the amount is now almost double."

THE HEALTH HAZARD

Doctors and health experts said dumping such medical waste out in the open could be hazardous for those exposed to it.



A friend of the world

FROM PAGE 3

different activities of the United Nations.

Reading out a message of the Serbian foreign minister, issued on the occasion of National Mourning Day, Milan Milanovic highlighted the friendship between Bangabandhu and former President of Yugoslavia Marshal Josip Broz Tito.

Riyad H Mansour said 44 years after the assassination of Bangabandhu, his martyrdom anniversary was observed in the UN Headquarters, which is an outstanding initiative to pay homage to the legendary leader.

In his welcome address, Ambassador Momen highlighted the role and ideology of Bangabandhu in empowering people, protecting human rights, ensuring socioeconomic freedom and establishing democracy and peace.

Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN observed the National Mourning Day in the UN Headquarters for the first time with due solemnity.

Permanent representatives of different countries to the UN, diplomats, UN officials, rights activists and writers, among others, joined the programmes.

Earlier in the day, the national flag was hoisted at half-mast atop Bangladesh Permanent Mission. Milad and doa mahfils were also held, seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of Bangabandhu and his family members.



Medical waste is dumped in the open at this landfill in Barishal's Puranpara-Gauashar area. The landfill has already reached its full capacity, and the clinical waste often get mixed with other garbage. Top right, a man and child ragpickers sorting such hazardous waste without any safety gears, exposing themselves to infections and diseases. The photos were taken recently.

These waste may spread several contagious diseases, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C, tuberculosis, and malaria. Infected syringes and scalpels could cause fatal diseases like HIV/AIDS.

"Pathogens, substances mixed with chemicals, and pharmaceutical, pathological and genotoxic waste put people at risk of being infected with various viruses like hepatitis B and C, and even HIV," said Shymal Krishna Mandal, assistant director of Directorate General of Health Services, Barishal.

Such open dumping may also spread contagious diseases, he further said.

Civil surgeon Monwar Hossain said people, especially health workers and those living around the landfill, are more vulnerable to those diseases.

IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT

Dumping medical waste in the open is not only hazardous to health, but also harmful to the environment. Once the waste is shifted to a landfill, it becomes even more hazardous, said environmentalists.

Infectious blood tossed inside a landfill

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Passengers face hassles at Barishal Launch Terminal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Heavy rush of passengers returning to the capital after Eid resulted in overcrowded launches and people missing their transport at Barishal Launch Terminal yesterday.

A total of 21 launches left for Dhaka yesterday, but many passengers missed their transport as some vessels were forced to leave the terminal earlier than the scheduled time.

Kaniz Sultana, a garment worker, said passengers board overcrowded launches as there is no alternative promising low fares and an easy journey, that too without affecting their schedule for rejoining work.

Anwarul Islam, a private company official, who came to the terminal from Mehendiganj upazila with his family, said he managed to secure a small space for themselves on the deck of Parabat-11 by paying Tk 200 to a person who reserves space.

"I could not get a cabin so I am staying on the launch deck with my family. I chose this because journey by water is safer than road," said Rezaul Islam, a businessman.

Ajmol Huda Mithu, deputy director (marine safety and river traffic) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority at Barishal River Port, said as per their estimate, more than two lakh individuals arrived in Barishal via waterways to observe Eid this year.

"A large number of people left Barishal via waterways without any problem. A control room was opened at the terminal to monitor the situation and volunteers helped the authorities for safe boarding of women, children and elders," he added.

Administrative officials, police and Rab were on-duty to tackle the situation.

Cabin passengers of the launches were requested to take seat from 3pm, 5-6 hours before the scheduled time as authorities requested overcrowded launches to leave the station 2-3 hours ahead of schedule.

Saidur Rahman Rintu, vice president of Barishal Launch Owners Association, acknowledging the facts, said authorities put a stated limit of 750-1300 passengers for each of the 16 triple-decker launches plying regularly or on Eid on Barishal-Dhaka route.

However, those that plied yesterday carried 2,500-3,500 passengers, Rintu said. Authorities assured that the launches are capable of carrying that many passengers but the limit is there to provide ample space for everyone's convenience.

Teenage rickshaw-puller killed in Sylhet, 2 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday recovered the body of a teenage rickshaw-puller from Daldali Tea Garden area in Sylhet Sadar upazila.

The deceased was identified as Naim Ahmed, 15, son of Abbas Ahmed of Beanibazar upazila and a resident of Hazaribag area in the city.

Shahadat Hossain, OC of Sylhet Airport Police Station, said, "Naim went missing on Thursday and his father filed a general diary that night. Police arrested two later that night and they confessed to the murder."

The arrestees are: Abdur Rukon, 21, and Parvez, 20, of Hazaribag area.

The OC said, "Naim saw Rukon and Parvez trying to steal his battery-driven rickshaw and they killed Naim by strangling him. The duo hid Naim's body in the tea garden. After they confessed, we recovered the body around 7pm and sent the corpse to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College for autopsy."

The arrestees will be sent to Sylhet court and the general diary have been filed as a murder case, the OC said.

Barishal launch terminal is full again, but this time with people returning to Dhaka after Eid vacation. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: TITU DAS