

Build unified sustainable blue economic belt: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the member states of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to build a unified sustainable blue economic belt in this region by making best use of the untapped resources of the sea.

"There are great opportunities to accelerate the sustainable development process of the respective countries of the region through Blue Economy approach, making best use of the unused or untapped resources of the sea," she said while addressing the inauguration of the 3rd IORA Blue Economy Ministerial Conference.

The foreign ministry in association with IORA organised the conference at Hotel InterContinental Dhaka.

Hasina said the IORA members could tackle the challenges of poverty, food insecurity, energy crisis and ecological imbalances and create huge employment opportunities.

She urged them to build on a consensus agreement to achieve the Goal-14 of the Sustainable Development Goals through a sustainable approach of management of the sea resources.

Mentioning that there is an intricate relation between peace, security and sustainable development, Hasina said, "We have to keep it in mind that we cannot sacrifice the marine environment in pursuing economic growth."

About the IORA, she said the association has become a platform for cooperation in the areas of maritime safety and security, trade and investment facilitation, fisheries management, disaster risk management, and blue economy.

She hoped that this spirit of cooperation among the members of the organisation would be enhanced in future.

In this connection, the PM said Bangladesh is going to take charges as the vice-chair and chair of the IORA on the first day of next month and on 1st October in 2021 respectively for two years.

She requested the IORA members to extend all-out cooperation in discharging these challenging duties.

Hasina said most of the IORA member states are highly vulnerable to tsunami, cyclones and global warming as climate change is threatening the ecology.

She said oceans and seas absorb almost 30 percent of all greenhouse gases as well as 90 percent of the excess heat caused by global warming and the existence of humans will be in peril if the marine ecological system is disrupted.

"We need to respond very quickly to tackle these challenges. We need to be concerned about all kinds of illegal activities in the ocean."

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, IORA Chairperson and South African Deputy Minister for Environment, Forestry and Fisheries Makhotoso Magdeline Soty, IORA Secretary General Nomvuyo N Nokwe and Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority Michael W Lodge also spoke on the occasion.

Ministers, deputy ministers, high government officials and experts, including secretaries of 22 member states and nine dialogue partner countries of the IORA, are participating in the conference.

The IORA, an inter-governmental organisation, was established in 1997 with 21 countries bordering the Indian Ocean. The countries are Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Japan, Germany, China, the UK, the US, France, and Egypt are the dialogue partners of the platform.

Rahmat

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Afghanistan finished the day on 271 for five against the Tigers' all-spin attack at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

The Bangladesh think-tank opted to play without any specialist pace bowler other than part-time slow-medium pacer Soumya Sarkar. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam provided a perfect start for the Tigers by removing openers Ibrahim Zadran and Ihsanullah for just 48 runs. Taijul also reached a personal milestone when he scalped Ihsanullah to become the fastest Bangladeshi bowler to pick up 100 Test wickets.

Taijul took 25 Test matches to complete the feat, eclipsing Shakib who did it in 28.

Having lost two early wickets, the visitors were struggling on 77 for three at one stage but they fought back, riding on a 120-run fourth wicket partnership between Rahmat and Asghar.

Rahmat remained calm and composed during his 163-ball stay to steady the ship following the initial hiccup. He was eventually dismissed on 102 when he offered a simple catch to Soumya Sarkar at slip off a Nayeem Hasan delivery. Nayeem also bowled Mohammad Nabi for a duck in the same over.

Nayeem's double strike seemed to create an opening for Bangladesh to exploit but Afghan and Asfar Zazai added an unbeaten 74-run sixth-wicket stand to keep the momentum going for their side. Asghar suffered a bit due to a hamstring issue but nevertheless remained unbeaten on 88 while Zazai remained not out on 35 at stumps.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with ministers and representatives from Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) countries on stage for an official photograph at the inauguration ceremony of the third IORA Blue Economy Ministerial Conference 2019, held yesterday in the Hotel InterContinental.

PHOTO: PID

Fear of backlash held me back

FROM PAGE 1

SI Khairul said the allegation against him was false and that he did not even go to the woman's house that night. He also said he had "no problem" with a DNA test.

The case has been handed over to the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI).

Quoting the woman, a number of newspapers have already reported that the SI, Kamrul and a few others went to her house around 2:30am on Tuesday and demanded Tk 50,000 for the release of her husband, who was arrested only days earlier in a drug-related case. But when she refused to give any money, the SI and his source raped her.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, the woman stood by her story.

She said she was vexed by Khairul's demand for money and asked him to leave her house immediately.

"At this, Khairul threatened me and pinned me down on the floor of my house and asked his companion to grab me. Kamrul then blindfolded me and gagged me with my scarf."

SI Khairul then raped me," she said, adding that the SI was in plainclothes, but had a gun on him.

She said she screamed for help during the rape, but no one heard her cry as she was gagged.

She said she was a simple woman living in a village and was nervous in front of top police officers at the SP's office, where Khairul was produced on Tuesday evening.

Asked if any senior police officer instructed her not to name Khairul, in-charge of Gopara Police Camp in Sharsha, she replied in the negative.

The woman said when the case statement was read out to her, she asked the police officials why they did not include Khairul's name in it.

The case writer at Sharsha Police Station said he could not do so because she did not name him before the top officials.

Police registered the case on Wednesday accusing Kamrul, Omar, Latif and another unidentified person.

The Daily Star visited the area yesterday and found there are no house

within about 200 yards of her house, where she lives with her two children aged four-and-a-half years and eight months.

During the visit, many locals demanded exemplary punishment for the SI while others declined to comment out of fear of backlash.

Khairul arrested her husband 11 days ago and filed a case against him for allegedly possessing 50 bottles of phensedyl.

The woman termed it a false case, saying although her husband was involved in smuggling in the past, he was living a normal life as a farmer for the last few years.

Asked about the woman's yesterday's allegation that Khairul raped her, the SP said he himself had asked her to name the rapists without any fear, but she did not mention the SI's name.

"The SI would have been certainly made an accused if the complainant had named him," he added.

"But we will definitely take legal action if the SI's involvement surfaced at any stage of the investigation," he

said.

Asked if Khairul's specimen would be sent for DNA matching, the SP said if the PBI thought it necessary at any stage of the probe, they would do that.

Allegations of rape against police members have hit headlines a number of this year.

On February 12, Sub-inspector Sekendar Hossain and Assistant Sub-inspector Mazharul Islam of Satoria Police Station were withdrawn for allegedly raping a woman, keeping her captive for two days in a rest house.

Then on August 7, Khulna Government Railway Police Station officer-in-charge Osman Gani Pathan and Sub-Inspector Nazmul Haque were withdrawn on charges of raping a woman in the residential building of GRP members.

On August 26, constable Sabbir Ahmed Mehedi of River Police of Dhaka was arrested in Narayanganj on charges of raping a woman multiple times and blackmailing her into giving him money and gold ornaments.

Post-Ershad JP split over party helm

FROM PAGE 1

Apart from other leaders and activists, 10 JP presidium members, including five MPs, were present.

The announcement exposes the turmoil in JP sans HM Ershad, who died on July 14 after prolonged bouts of illness.

Hours after the Raushan faction's press conference, Quader held a briefing at the party's Banani office and said action would be taken against those who declared Raushan the JP chief.

He said that according to the party charter, he is still the chairman.

Earlier on Wednesday, Raushan wrote to the Speaker not to accept Quader's letter for recognising him as the Leader of the Opposition.

She said Quader sent the letter without any decision at the party forum and meeting of the Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party.

THE DIVISION
Anisul alleged that Quader was declared JP chairman violating the party's constitution.

He said Raushan would recognise Quader as JP co-chairman.

Anisul said Moshir Rahman Ranga would remain the party's secretary general.

Hours after "taking charge as JP chairperson", Raushan formed a 13-member Jatiya Party Parliamentary

Board to finalise the party's candidate to run for Rangpur-3 constituency, which fell vacant following Ershad's death.

Interestingly, Quader was made a member of the Board.

On August 25, Quader had also formed a parliamentary board for the same purpose but Raushan was not included.

Formed in 1986, JP has so far broken up thrice, party insiders said.

Sources said JP lawmakers Anisul, Mujibul Haque Chinnu, and Fakhrul Imam played key roles in declaring Raushan the party chief.

The trio could not accept Quader as co-chairman after Ershad promoted him on January 17, 2016.

Following pressure from Anisul group, Ershad in April, 2016, appointed Raushan as JP senior co-chairperson.

On July 18, JP Secretary General Ranga formally announced that Quader was the JP chairman.

Ranga at a press conference that day said Ershad had declared that Quader would be the party chairman in his absence. "So, we've decided that Quader is our party chairman."

Four days later, Raushan in a statement said Quader could not be declared the chairman without any decision made at party forums. She said she did not accept Quader as the

chairman.

While suffering from various old-age complications, Ershad in February made Quader the party's acting chairman. On March 22, caving in to pressure from Anisul group, he removed Quader from the post, party insiders said.

The following day, he removed Quader from the post of deputy leader of the opposition and gave Raushan the post.

On May 4, Ershad reinstated Quader to the post of acting chairman and urged party men to make Quader the new chairman of JP in the next party council.

WHAT QUADER SAYS
Quader at his press conference said JP would take actions against those who breached party discipline.

He said, "HM Ershad made me the party's acting chairman in line with the party's charter. He [Ershad] also in a written statement said I will act as the Jatiya Party chairman in his [Ershad] absence. After his death, majority of the party's presidium members in a meeting in July decided to make me chairman of the party."

Quader said the party, in line with its charter, had declared that he was the JP chairman. Eleven presidium members, including seven lawmakers, were present at that meeting.

JP has 25 lawmakers and 54 party

presidium members.

"None becomes a king through just an announcement. The main thing is whether the announcement is valid. There should be a kingdom and legal acceptance to become a king."

"Raushan Ershad is like my mother and I still respect her." He said he doubts whether she was involved in her being declared the JP chairperson.

Like Anisul, he claimed that Ranga was with him and he was still the secretary general.

Ranga was not in any of the press briefings.

Quader claimed the party was united and that anyone had the right to leave.

Jatiya Party sources said most party MPs and presidium members were backing Quader.

A presidium member loyal to Quader, said, "A section of JP senior leaders are getting benefits from the party in different ways ... using Raushan Ershad. They have moved again to divide the party for their personal interests ... We will suffer more, if the party is divided again."

Another presidium member said government high-ups could be behind the move made by Anisul group.

The notion that the government is behind the chaos in JP is absurd, said Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif.

Support our plan or leave the country

FROM PAGE 1

the refugees. But the aid agencies working in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps don't want to move to Bhasan Char. In Cox's Bazar, they stay in five-star hotels and so they don't want to go to another place.

"We are also identifying international non-government organisations that are politicising the Rohingya issue."

Even if the UN agencies don't support the relocation plan, the government might go ahead with it, the foreign minister said.

"We have seized many leaflets, CDs and videos that urge Rohingyas not to go back to Myanmar if certain demands are not met. Myanmar authorities have agreed to meet one of these demands: provide safety, security and mobility to the Rohingya people."

Demands such as granting citizenship to Rohingyas, punishment for people involved in the Rohingya massacre, recognising Rohingya as an ethnic group, and allowing them to return to their own homes have not been agreed upon.

The government can relocate 100,000 Rohingyas to Bhasan Char without UN support, Momen said.

"The UN has to agree to the plan or it can take the refugees with them. Already, some of these people are getting involved in criminal activities."

The number of Rohingya refugees in the area is more than double the number of local citizens. The local residents are increasingly complaining of criminal activities, he said.

"We cannot allow that. That is why we could force their relocation."

"Bangladesh is not a rich nation. We're the world's most densely populated country. Still, we have done a lot for the Rohingya. It's time for others to come forward because it is not just our problem. It's an international issue, and had we not given them protection, they could have faced a genocide."

"We are willing to send them anywhere, to anyone who wants to take them. We cannot afford to keep them for years."

The arrangement at the Bhasan Char island would be temporary. Bangladesh cannot keep them there forever, Momen said.

Asked if the government should antagonise the UN, he said the UN was not helping much.

"They are not working to create a conducive environment in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Why don't these UN aid agencies work in Myanmar? They should go to Myanmar, especially to Rakhine state, to create conditions that could help these refugees to go back to their country. The UN is not doing the job that we expect them to do."

<p>BRIG GEN (RETD) M SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN</p> <p>If he really made such remarks, it's not palatable for anyone or any organisation. I cannot believe that he, as a foreign minister, would say that. He is known as a gentleman and he is aware about the UN system. The foreign minister's post is very vital in diplomacy. He has to take responsibility for what he has said. We are an active member of the UN... We don't expect such remarks.</p>	<p>AMBASSADOR HUMAYUN KABIR</p> <p>ACTING PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE</p> <p>This is rhetoric; there is nothing to take seriously. He probably said those out of frustration... Perhaps, he wants the UN to play bigger roles, especially regarding repatriation. That's what he meant. I think, the UN is quite active when it comes to the Rohingya issue. We need to engage with them [regarding Bhasan Char].</p>	<p>ASIF MUNIER</p> <p>MIGRATION RESEARCHER</p> <p>Asking the UN to leave the country appears to be a confrontational approach, which is not the right one for Bangladesh. Moving the Rohingyas to Bhasan Char should be a voluntary process. I doubt if any Rohingyas have been taken there to see what the facilities built in the island look like. Criticising the UN agencies is also not very helpful.</p>	<p>PROF IMTIAZ AHMED</p> <p>DHAKA UNIVERSITY</p> <p>I don't think Bangladesh can ask the UN to leave... It is possible to come up with different interpretations of what the minister had said. Not everyone can always handle technical questions... These Rohingyas are vulnerable to land erosion or flooding in the Cox's Bazar camps. Would those who are opposing the relocation plan take responsibilities if something like that happens?</p>
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Regarding the safety of human inhabitation in the island, Momen said the government had built embankments and beautiful houses there. "If we tell Bangladeshi people

to go there, they would definitely go there."

If the refugees move to Bhasan Char, they would be able to enjoy free movement there, he said.

Teen gangs' feud cost Mohsin his life

Say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Internal conflict among teen gangs over establishing supremacy instigated the murder of 17-year-old Mohsin Ali in Dhaka's Mohammadpur area, said police.

Mohsin, a tenth grader of Child Heaven International School, was hacked to death near a culvert of Chan Mia Housing Society in Mohammadpur on Wednesday.

Yesterday, the victim's brother Yousuf filed a murder case with Mohammadpur Police Station accusing 13 named and a few unnamed persons, said GG Biswas, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Meanwhile, police arrested two accused, aged between 15 and 18, in Chan Mia Housing Society area, he added.

During primary interrogation, police found that all the people involved in the murder were members of teen gangs. Mohsin fell victim to a fight between two gangs of Mohammadpur and Dhaka Udyan, the OC said.

The two gangs were led by Rubel, 23, and Rocky, 18 respectively, said police sources.

Mizanur Rahman, Mohsin's friend and a witness of the murder, said a gang of 15 to 20 members, led by Rocky, came to Chan Mia Housing area when Mohsin and six of his friends were having a chitchat there.

"Rocky called Mohsin and stabbed him with a knife. When he fell on the ground, the gang started hacking him indiscriminately," Mizanur said, adding that three friends of Mohsin were also injured as they tried to save him.

Later, locals rushed the victims to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Mohsin dead, he added.

Mohsin's mother Laily Begum, who works as a housemaid, said her dreams were shattered as she lost her youngest son.

Idris Ali, the victim's father who was an auto-rickshaw driver by profession, died in 2008 as robbers hacked him to death in Ashulia. Since then, she has earned all the family expenses and raised Mohsin, said the mother.

"I demand exemplary punishment of the culprits," she said.

No exam

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also be evaluated on their overall performances like etiquette, manner and discipline at school.

Earlier in March, the ministry had announced that students of classes I, II and III would not require to sit for any examinations starting from this year.

The ministry took the decision following a directive from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to abolish exams for students of the aforementioned classes.

Currently, students of these grades need to take several exams, including a final test, to complete an academic year.

Yesterday, the secretary said the system would be introduced at 100 primary schools next year on a pilot basis, in which there will be no traditional exams. He added that a new academic curriculum would be introduced at the primary level from 2021.

There are more than 65,500 government primary schools in the country where no admission test is held for students.

Speaking on literacy, Primary and Mass Education Minister Zakir Hossain said the literacy rate is currently 73.9 percent in the country. The rate was 53.5 percent in 2005.

With the theme "Literacy and Multilingualism", the International Literacy Day will be observed in the country and around the world on September 8 with the objective of raising awareness on the serious consequences of illiteracy and the importance of universal education.