

# Supportive attitude could boost mutual development

Says PM on neighbours; receives Dr Kalam Smriti Award for her role in promoting Indo-Bangla ties, global peace, welfare of people

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for having an accommodative attitude towards relations among neighbouring countries for the sake of mutual development.

"It is very natural to have problems among neighbouring countries. If there is a supportive attitude towards the relations among them, it will be very easy to achieve prosperity in the countries," she said while receiving the Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award-2019.

TP Sreenivasan, chief adviser of the Dr Kalam Smriti International Advisory Council, handed over the award to Hasina at a ceremony at the latter's office in the afternoon.

The award, constituted to disseminate the ideals and teachings of aerospace scientist and former Indian president APJ Abdul Kalam, was conferred upon Hasina in recognition of her commitment to a close and mutually satisfying India-Bangladesh relations, welfare of her people, particularly women and children, and international peace and cooperation.

Hasina said bilateral problems can be solved through negotiations, and the countries can work together so that the people of the neighbouring nations can be benefited.

She said Bangladesh always gives importance to building friendly relations with neighbouring countries.

About the Indo-Bangla ties, she said the relations, which is marked by mutual trust and goodwill, have reached a height over the last one decade.

Recalling the contributions of India to Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971, Hasina said India had sheltered over 10 million people from Bangladesh, helped it emerge as an independent country and build the war-ravaged nation.

The PM said Bangladesh and India solved the land boundary problem peacefully as the Indian parliament unanimously passed a historic bill to implement the Land Boundary Agreement.

"Bangladesh and India have set an example for the world exchanging enclaves between the two countries in a festive mood," she said.

Referring to her government's development activities, the PM said the per capita income in Bangladesh has risen to \$1909 this year from \$543 in 2006.

Hasina said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had told journalists on many occasions that he loved the people of Bangladesh more than his family members.

"I am really proud of hearing this as my father dedicated his whole life to the people of Bangladesh."

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen was present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award-2019 from Chief Adviser of the Dr Kalam Smriti International Advisory Council TP Sreenivasan during a ceremony at her office yesterday. The award was introduced in memory of eminent scientist and former Indian president APJ Abdul Kalam.

PHOTO: BSS

## 9 prison doctors for 90,000 inmates

FROM PAGE 1

With no proper facility to deal with such a case, the jail authorities decided to transfer him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, a mere 13km away. But it was not until 2:00pm the diabetic kidney patient could be taken there, after all procedures and formalities had been completed, the prison sources said.

It was too late. Doctors declared him dead on arrival.

His wife Hasina Begum said Gias had been in prison for seven months. "Every month, I used to send him medicine worth Tk 3,500. Recently, he became more sick and told me that he was not getting proper treatment in the jail hospital," she said on Friday.

"Gias asked me to arrange Tk 20,000 so that he could bribe jail staffers to get transferred to a hospital outside. Before, I could arrange the money he died," she said.

"If the jail authorities had taken steps in time, he might not have died," she said.

Iqbal Kabir Chowdhury, senior jail superintendent at Dhaka Central Jail, said he would definitely investigate the allegations of jail staffers demanding bribes.

On September 3, Musa Sardar, 52, an autorickshaw driver by profession, died while being taken to DMCH.

Musa, diabetic and suffering a heart disease, was in Narayanganj jail for two months.

That very day his wife Rita Akter went to visit him in jail around 12:30pm. She was told her husband had been taken to Narayanganj General (Victoria) Hospital minutes before.

Rita saw Musa was having breathing difficulties at the hospital and the doctors referred him to DMCH as his condition deteriorated.

"But the jail guards did not arrange an ambulance or oxygen support during his transfer to DMCH. They just hired an autorickshaw," Rita told this paper on Friday.

"They reached DMCH around 3:10pm and doctors declared him dead while hospital staffers were preparing his admission," said Rita.

These two cases happened in prisons that had at least one doctor.

### NO DOCTORS IN 60 PRISONS

Only the prisons in Narayanganj, Barishal, Cumilla, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria, Chattogram, Sylhet, and Dhaka Central Jail have doctors.

Dhaka Central Jail has two doctors. Many prisons that do not have doctors at their disposal send sick inmates to Dhaka. The jail has a 172-bed hospital and it treats at least 350 inmates a day.

Amzad Hossain, jailer of Rangpur Central Jail, told The Daily Star this week that they have no doctors and that a pharmacist treats 35 to 40 inmates daily.

The eight other prisons in Rangpur division have no doctors either and sick inmates are sent to Rangpur Central Jail, as it is in close proximity to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

There is an eight-bed prison cell in RMCH.

Every two-three days, doctors from the civil surgeon office visit the central jail and decide if any inmates need to be hospitalised.

"We are not doctors, but we often have to decide if an inmate needs to be hospitalised," added Amzad.

The prisons in the country only have 40 nurses and 28 pharmacists.

According to jail officials, there are 173 posts of nurses and pharmacists.

The jail authorities on several occasions have asked the Public Service Commission and the home ministry to fill the vacant posts.

The Ministry of Public Administration on January 28 last year transferred 20 doctors to prison duty but only four of them joined.

A prisons official told The Daily Star yesterday that they last year wrote to the home ministry to find the 16 who did not join. The ministry is yet to reply.

However, the four who joined want to be transferred, according to ministry sources.

Doctor Mahmudul Hasan Shuvo, now working in Dhaka Central Jail hospital, has sought his transfer.

He told The Daily Star that the home ministry had said his transfer would not

be possible now.

Shuvo said they do not want to stay on jail duty as there was no room for promotions or professional growth. "I did not get any promotion in the last 10 years but many of my batch mates have been promoted to assistant professors or residential surgeons."

"We have to work round the clock here, but in hospitals doctors have fixed working hours," he said.

### SEPARATE MEDICAL UNIT

Mizanur Rahman, a doctor at Sylhet Central Jail, said, "Prisoners die as there is no fully-fledged medical facility in prisons and we only admit sick prisoners to the prison hospital and forward the critical ones to hospitals outside."

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen AKM Mustafa Kamal Pasha yesterday said they were working to solve the doctors' crisis in prisons.

While addressing reporters after inspecting the Narayanganj District Jail, he said they had already held a meeting with ministries concerned. "The prime minister has issued directives in this regard," he added.

Home ministry sources said they were forming medical units for all departments, including prisons. This would allow them to appoint, transfer, and promote doctors in prisons directly, rather than depending on the health ministry.

Col Abrar Hossain, additional inspector general of prisons, told The Daily Star, "We are hopeful that the doctors' crisis will be finally addressed with the formation of the medical units."

A home ministry sub-committee is currently working on formulating appointment rules for the medical units.

Nurul Islam, additional secretary (police and NIMC) of the home ministry who is coordinating the sub-committee's work, yesterday said, "We are hopeful of forming the separate medical units soon."

[Dwoha Chowdhury, our Sylhet Correspondent contributed to this report]

## Tk 50 LAKH EMBEZZLEMENT ACC arrests Jubo League leader in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday arrested a Jubo League leader of Bandarban on charge of swindling Tk 50 lakh out of Agrani Bank Ltd.

"We arrested Kyaching Aung Marmar at Bandarban district administration office premises around 11:30am," said Mohammad Jafor Sadek Shibli, deputy assistant director of ACC's district integrated office, Chattogram-2.

Kyaching, 43, is president of Jubo League's Bandarban sadar upazila unit.

In connivance with some officials of Agrani Bank's Bandarban Bazar branch, he got Tk 28.9 lakh disbursed as loan under the names of the local hill farmers in fiscal years 2011-12 and 2012-13, the ACC official said.

Five people colluded in the crime -- Kyaching, the bank's then manager of this branch Nibarun Chandra Tanchangya, 59, and three field employees, he said.

Using the identification details of the local farmers who mainly cultivate ginger and turmeric, they withdrew the money from 30 bank accounts of the hill farmers, said Bijoy Barua, assistant general manager of the branch. Of the amount, Kyaching distributed Tk 1.2 lakh among the farmers he defrauded, he added.

ACC official Jafor said the loan now amounts to Tk 50 lakh with interest.

An inquiry was launched after the victims, whose documents were used, lodged complaints with ACC. As the allegations were found true, Jafor filed the case with ACC accusing the five on July 21. ACC arrested former manager Nibarun the same day. The accused field workers are Gayan Chakma, 50, Jotish Kumar Khisa, 40, and Hirendra Lal Chakma, 47.

Meanwhile, Pai Hla Aung, president of Bandarban sadar upazila unit of Awami League (AL), said there are a lot of allegations including abduction and arms smuggling against Kyaching.

When asked, AKM Jahangir, vice president of Bandarban district AL and sadar upazila chairman, said, "We heard about his arrest. We'll hold a meeting on the issue. If found guilty, Kyaching would face organisational action."

## CRACKDOWN IN KSA

### 175 Bangladeshi workers return empty-handed

UNB, Dhaka

Some 175 Bangladeshi workers returned home from Saudi Arabia on Sunday night amid a crackdown on undocumented workers there.

A flight of Saudi Airlines carrying the Bangladeshi workers landed at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:07pm, said Shariful Hasan, programme head of Brac Migration Programme.

The authorities concerned of Wage Earners Welfare Board under the Brac Migration Programme have provided necessary assistance, including food, to the Bangladeshi workers.

The returnees said hundreds of workers were being arrested by the Saudi government every day and over 1,000 Bangladeshis were at Riyadh Deportation Camp.

The returnees, including Alim, Manir Hossain of Tangail and Zubair of Narsingdi, alleged that they were sent back home despite having valid documents.

The Bangladesh embassy in Saudi Arabia did not take any measures in this regard, they said.

The Saudi authorities have arrested around 3.8 million foreigners as it

SEE PAGE 10 COL

## Probe purchase

FROM PAGE 1

The vehicles include 300 double-decker buses (Tk 90 lakh per unit), 100 non-AC buses (Tk 49 lakh per unit), 100 AC city buses (Tk 67 lakh per unit), 100 AC intercity bus (Tk 72 lakh per unit), 350 (16.2 tonne) trucks (Tk 20 lakh per unit) and 150 (10.2-tonne) trucks (Tk 21 lakh per unit).

The values included VAT, according to the BRTC.

Indian company Ashok Leyland supplied the double-deckers, AC city buses, AC intercity buses while Tata Motors supplied the non-AC buses and 10.2-tonne trucks. VE Commercial Vehicle supplied the 16.2-tonne trucks.

The 600 buses cost nearly Tk 475 crore.

Recently, several Bangladeshi media outlets ran reports saying some of the non-AC buses leaked water from roof during rain, while some double-deckers did not meet the specifications of the vehicles.

Asked about the issue, Quader yesterday said the defects in the specification had already been examined. He said those who supplied the vehicles had taken the responsibility and promised to fix them.

He also acknowledged that water leaked from the roofs of some vehicles.

He said there should be specific deadlines for fixing the defects maintaining the proper standards.

### OTHER ISSUES

Yesterday, the minister also directed the BRTC authorities not to lease buses to anyone without taking the profits and losses into consideration.

"I think it won't be profitable if BRTC leases buses without doing proper assessment," he said while talking to the reporters.

Talking about alleged corruption, irregularities and mismanagement

at the BRTC, Quader said the government spent thousands of crores of taka to buy vehicles and replaced the BRTC chairman on different occasions, but the situation did not improve.

He said BRTC buses get damaged within a short time due to a lack of maintenance.

"I want to tell the chairman that there are 'ghosts' within [the BRTC]. So these ghosts have to be hunted down," he said, adding, "If necessary, you [the chairman] will run the body with insufficient manpower, but will not allow any corrupts here."

Curbing graft and irregularities at the BRTC would be the main challenge for the new chairman, he said and hoped that the chairman would be able to do so.

BRTC Chairman Ehsan-E-Elahi said the corporation owns 1,830 buses, of which 1,182 are in service. Of the 648 buses which are out of service, 325 new buses will start operation after necessary procedures while 248 had to be discarded and 75 needed repairs.

Talking about the challenges, Ehsan said his main challenge was to pay the months-long arrears of the drivers and other staffers.

The chairman said he asked the depot managers to pay the staffers one month's arrears with their monthly salaries every month. "If anyone [depot manager] fails to walk with me, I will simply close that person."

He said the BRTC was playing a vital role in providing training to drivers and it had already sent a Development Project Proforma (DPP) to the planning ministry to create three lakh drivers within the next five years.

Six organisations, led by the BRTC, will be involved in the Tk 2,200 crore project, he said.

BRTC depot managers were also present at the meeting yesterday.

## Shovon quits DU senate

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, on his verified Facebook page, Rabbani yesterday wrote, "Time will say how much of the allegations against me is conspiracy, and how much is exaggeration."

He also apologised to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the party activists, saying, "I have hurt you; I am regretful and seek your forgiveness."

He noted that he was not above error. "But I can swear, I have never willingly-knowingly committed any culpable crime which is contradictory to the ideologies and principles of the organisation I love."

Addressing Hasina, also president of the Awami League, he wrote, "Dear sister, ... I want to live the rest of the life with your forgiveness..."

Meanwhile, Pragatishel Chhatra Jote, an alliance of several left-leaning student organisations, continues to demand suspension of Rabbani from the Dhaka University Central

Students' Union. He is the general secretary of the student body.

At a press conference at the Madhur Canteen, the leaders also demanded fresh polls to the Ducus.

"A person who has been removed from his organisation's post on corruption charges cannot hold a Ducus post," Chhatra Union President Mehedi Hasan Nobel said.

"WILL TRY TO RECOVER LOST IMAGE"

The new BCL acting president AL Nahian Khan Joy and general secretary Lekhak Bhattacharjee yesterday said they would try to bring back the organisation's lost glory.

The duo started their organisational duties by paying tributes to Bangabandhu at Bangabandhu Bhaban in Dhanmondi.

"We will try until death to recover the image and heritage of Chhatra League," Nahian told reporters.

## 6 lakh face 'serious risk of genocide'

FROM PAGE 1

that have occurred in Rohingya camps, reported UNB.

"The search for justice for the young Bangladeshi man killed on August 22 is of the utmost importance, but it's equally necessary to ensure that the presumption of innocence is upheld and that reactionary, summary and ad hoc justice is not doled out solely to placate the legitimate concerns of the host community," said a joint media release issued by the experts from Geneva.

"WAR CRIMES" The UN mission reiterated calls for the UN Security Council to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or to set up a tribunal, like for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

It said it had a confidential list of more than 100 names, including officials, suspected of being involved in genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, in addition to the six generals named publicly last year.

The report also repeated calls for foreign governments and companies to sever all business ties with the military, urging a "moratorium" on investment and development assistance in Rakhine state.

The maligned Muslim community has long been subjected to tight

movement restrictions, making it difficult or impossible to access healthcare, work and education.

The Rohingyas are denied citizenship in Buddhist-majority Myanmar and are accused of being illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh.

The army justified the crackdown as a means of rooting out Rohingya insurgents.

Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a repatriation deal two years ago, but virtually no refugees have returned to date.

The investigators described conditions in Myanmar as "unsafe, unsustainable and impossible" for returns to take place.

Nearly 130,000 Rohingyas have been trapped in camps in central Rakhine since a previous bout of violence seven years ago.

Described as "open-air prisons" by Amnesty International, people there remain reliant on humanitarian aid and are rarely granted permission to leave.

Those outside the camps fare little better, needing special authorisation -- and often hefty bribes -- to leave their village boundaries.

Their homes flattened by bulldozers and land commandeered, refugees in Bangladesh fear they will be subjected

to the same, or even worse, treatment if they return to the processing camps built by Myanmar.

The UN team also accused the army of fresh "war crimes", including forced labour and torture, against civilians in the north of Rakhine state.

The area has once again become embroiled in conflict as the military wages war on the Arakan Army (AA), rebels fighting for the rights of ethnic Rakhine Buddhists.

Myanmar military spokesman Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun rejected the team's findings, calling them "one-sided".

"Instead of making biased accusations, they should go onto the ground to see the reality," Zaw Min Tun told AFP.

The UN investigators have never been granted permission to enter Myanmar or access Rakhine.

The team has handed its report to an investigative panel, which aims to build up evidence to support any future prosecution.

"The scandal of international inaction has to end," mission expert Christopher Sidoti said.

"Unless the United Nations and the international community take effective action this time, this sad history is destined to be repeated."

## Indian rescuers search for 39 missing after boat accident

AFP, New Delhi

Indian authorities were engaged in a major search and rescue operation yesterday to find 39 people missing after their tour boat capsized in a fast-flowing swollen river.

Police told AFP that eight bodies have been recovered, down from a previous tally of 12, after the accident on the Godavari river in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

The boat was carrying a total of 73 passengers, of whom 26 have been rescued, local police official Adnan Asmi said.

Almost 300 personnel using boats and a helicopter were engaged in the search operation yesterday including from the Indian Navy and the National Disaster Response Force.

Media reports said that a special diver team equipped with sonar

equipment was expected to reach the spot later in the day from the northern state of Uttarakhand.

The vessel was heading to a popular picnic spot when it capsized. Local media reports said the Godavari river has been in spate for a week.

A report in the Times of India quoted a senior Andhra Pradesh minister as saying that the vessel had no licence or permission to carry tourists while the river was swollen.