

WB to provide all the support for Rohingyas

Visiting WB officials tell PM

UNB, Dhaka

The visiting executive directors of the World Bank Group yesterday said that they would provide all sorts of support for displaced Rohingyas living in Bangladesh.

Highly appreciating the incredible development that Bangladesh achieved in the last one decade, they also said they would continue support for the country's further progress.

The WB officials said they witnessed "incredible development" in Bangladesh and the country is much ahead in all social indices than other countries in South Asia.

They made the remarks when they met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gono Bhaban.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

The WB officials expressed satisfaction and praised the Bangladesh government for properly implementing its development policies as well as projects funded by the bank.

They said they were highly pleased to see that the local people of Cox's Bazar opened the door to accommodate and help the forcibly-displaced Rohingyas.

The prime minister said the policy of the government and Awami League is to ensure that people living in rural areas could enjoy the fruits of development.



After assuming power, she mentioned, her government had decided to ensure food security, healthcare, development of communication and energy sectors.

"That's why we have opened all these sectors to the private sector," she said.

Briefing the WB executive directors on the country's development in various socioeconomic sectors, Hasina said the poverty rate was 82 percent after the country's independence which now has come to down to 21 percent now.

She said the aim of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the emancipation of the common people.

The prime minister said the primary goal of her government is to materialise the dream of the Father of the Nation, and mentioned that it is improving rail, road, waterways and air communications of the country.

PM's adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi, State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Principal Secretary M Nojibur Rahman, SDG Affairs Principal Coordinator Abul Kalam Azad, ERD Secretary Monowar Ahmed and Finance Secretary Abdur Rouf Talukder were present at the meeting.

Earlier, World Bank Executive Director Apama Subramani met the prime minister at the Gono Bhaban.

Pay 600 staffers dues of Tk 620 crore

HC orders Chevron Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Chevron Bangladesh to provide the Tk 620 crore due to the employees of the US oil and gas company.

The money should be equally distributed amongst 600 employees immediately, according to the HC order.

The bench of Justice Tariq ul Hakim and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir Lytton came up with the order after hearing a writ petition, which was collectively filed by 538 Chevron employees.

A lawyer for the petitioners, Barrister Omar Sadat, told The Daily Star that an "out of court settlement" had recently taken place between Chevron Bangladesh and its employees. The lawyers of the petitioners and Chevron have informed the HC about the settlement.

The company has agreed to give the due money to the employees.

Chevron is supposed to share five percent of net profits with its workers and officials under Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, Omar said, adding that the law also permits the government to take legal action against the company for not doing so.

Around 72 million US dollars have been due to the employees of Chevron since 2006, the lawyer said.

The HC declared the writ petition filed in 2016 disposed of, Omar said.

Following the same writ petition, the HC on December 15, 2016 issued a rule asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to take appropriate legal action against Chevron Bangladesh for not sharing the part of its profit.

In the petition, the employees urged the HC to order the government to take necessary action against Chevron for not giving a part of profit to them -- accumulated from 2006 to 2013.

Following a supplementary writ petition filed on April 10, 2017, another HC bench directed the government not to release the due funds of the employers of Chevron Bangladesh to the company, as they apprehended that the it might leave the country without paying their dues.

The April 10, 2017 order has been lifted following yesterday's HC order, Omar added.

Naim Ahmed appeared for Chevron Bangladesh.

ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Govt not scrimping on security

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is set to take up another project involving Tk 3,449 crore to enhance the security of the country's first nuclear power plant in Rooppur.

The project, which will be placed in today's meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, will look to address Design Basis Threat (DBT) and beyond as well as cybersecurity, and will be wrapped up by March 2023.

This comes on the back of yet another project involving Tk 1,710 crore approved last week to monitor the security of the plant.

A DBT describes the capabilities of potential insiders and external adversaries who might attempt unauthorised removal of nuclear and other radioactive material or sabotage. The operator's physical protection

system is designed and evaluated on the basis of the DBT.

Potential external adversaries include terrorists and other criminals who might seek to use nuclear or other radioactive material for malicious purposes, or to sabotage a facility.

Insiders are individuals with authorised access to facilities, activities or sensitive information who could commit malicious acts or help external adversaries to do so.

The issue of cybersecurity is also critical.

Cyberattacks on nuclear power plants could have physical effects, especially if the network that runs the machines and software controlling the nuclear reactor are compromised.

This can be used to facilitate sabotage, theft of nuclear materials, or -- in the worst-case scenario -- a reactor meltdown.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



A TRAGIC END ... This three-year-old wild elephant drowned in a fish hatchery in Bandarban's Lama upazila yesterday. Divisional Forest Officer SM Kaisar in the upazila told this newspaper that the hatchery falls in the migration corridor of wild animals.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Trucks are being loaded with goods at Brishalikka on the bank of the Hurasagor, where a river port has been set up illegally depriving the nearby BIWTA port of revenue. Inset, an office constructed to manage loading, unloading and other activities at Brishalikka.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

Mayor running illegal 'river port'

FROM PAGE 1

SM Sazzadur Rahman, in-charge of Baghabari port.

Transport company spokesperson Sohrab didn't disclose how much he was saving by avoiding the proper river port. Several other goods-transport company representatives met by this correspondent also didn't specify the amount they were paying at Brishalikka ghat.

He added that people are often unable to unload goods quickly at Baghabari port due to a lack of

workers. "But in Bera, we don't face that problem."

At Brishalikka ghat last week, this correspondent found some 8 to 10 vessels loaded with cement, food grains, and fertilisers being unloaded.

Asked, Bera Upazila Nirbahi Officer Asif Anam Siddique said, "Brishalikka Ghat is being operated by the Bera Municipality, it's not a part of the upazila administration. We are not concerned about the ghat."

Municipality Mayor Abdul Baten

said, "According to the local government act, the revenue earned from the ghat must go to the local government authorities. Brishalikka ghat is located in the Bera municipality area, so the municipality authorities are collecting the revenue."

He claimed that the activities had been going on at Brishalikka ghat for decades.

He added that the BIWTA's permission was not needed as they were not doing anything new.

Khoka passes away in US

FROM PAGE 1

York yesterday at 2:15pm [Bangladesh time], Ishraque Hossain, eldest son of Khoka, told The Daily Star over phone from New York.

The BNP leader was last admitted to the cancer centre in Manhattan on October 18 after an infection developed in his mouth. On October 27, a tumour was removed from his trachea.

On receiving the news of his father's health worsening, Ishraque travelled to New York last week.

He said that his father wished to be buried at Jurain where his grandparents were laid to rest.

Khoka left behind his wife Ismat Ara and two sons and daughter.

He went to the US in May 2014 for treatment and had been staying at a house in Queens.

A number of corruption cases were filed against him after he left Bangladesh and he had been sentenced to jail in some of them.

In separate statements, BNP acting chief Tarique Rahman and Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir gave their condolences and extended sympathy to the bereaved family.

"We are expecting that the government will not create any obstacle to bring back the body of a freedom fighter," Mirza Fakhru told The Daily Star.

The passports of Khoka and his wife expired in 2017. They had applied for renewed passports to the consulate but were yet to get those.

The government earlier said its Mission in New York is ready to issue "travel permits" if Khoka's family applies for those.

"Our Mission [in New York] will take necessary steps if Sadeque Hossain Khoka's family applies for travel permits," State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam said in a post

on his Facebook profile on Sunday.

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said the government will help bring back the body of Khoka, adding that it is ready to extend all kinds of assistance to his family.

The minister has expressed his deep condolences over Khoka's death. "I am deeply saddened by his death, and pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul."

Jatiya party Chairman GM Quader, Gonoforum President Dr. Kamal Hossain, CPB president Mujahidul Islam Selim, DSCC mayor Sayeed Khokon, DNCC mayor Atiqul Islam, Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League president Kader Siddique, and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Huq Inu expressed deep condolence on the death of Khoka.

Khoka, born in Dhaka on October 1, 1951, was a student of Dhaka University's psychology department. He was involved with politics since his student life and was an elected member of East Pakistan Chhatra Union Dhaka chapter in 1966. He took part in the movement against the Ayub regime.

He stepped into politics by joining Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani's National Awami Party.

At the age of 19, he participated in the 1971 Liberation War in sector-2 and took part in a number of guerrilla operations in and around Dhaka.

Khoka was awarded with the title of Bir Pratik for his role in the war.

He was elected a municipal commissioner on 1977. He then joined BNP in 1984 and played a crucial role in the movement against the autocratic regime of HM Ershad.

Khoka also took the charge of Brothers Union Sports Club in 1972 and was its general secretary till 1979. From 1979-89, he was general

secretary of Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association and joint secretary of Bangladesh Football Federation.

He was first elected lawmaker from Dhaka-7, after defeating the then Awami League President Sheikh Hasina. He was made the state minister for youth and sports. That victory was what drew the people's attention to him.

He was also elected lawmaker in the sixth, seventh and eighth parliaments.

Khoka earned the trust of old Dhaka residents after he played a vital role in diffusing tensions that rose in the area centring the demolishing of Babri Mosque in India in 1992.

His popularity in old town was what made him the only BNP candidate in Dhaka to become an elected lawmaker in the 1996 election.

Khoka was given the charge of reorganising the party that year, after the party-backed candidate Mirza Abbas was defeated in the 1994 Dhaka City Corporation election.

After being elected in parliament in 2001, he became the fisheries and livestock minister.

He was elected mayor of Dhaka City Corporation on April 25, 2002, and held the post for nearly nine years until the corporation split in two for providing better services. At the same time, he was made president of BNP's Dhaka city unit.

Khoka was arrested days before the January 5 national election in 2014.

Released on bail from jail, he was admitted to Birdem Hospital in the capital, but doctors could not detect his health problem.

He then went to the US on May 14, 2014, and had been receiving treatment at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center under Dr James Shieh's supervision.

Girl found hanging from tree

Father claims she was killed after rape, police say she died by suicide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

The hanging body of a girl was found in Baraigram upazila of Natore early yesterday.

The dead is 12-year-old Halima Khatun, daughter of Abul Hashem of Garfa village in the upazila, said police.

Local fishermen saw the body hanging from a banyan tree by a swamp some 700 yards away from her house around 3:00am, said Dilip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge (OC) of Baraigram Police Station.

The OC said there was no injury mark on the body and the circumstantial evidences suggested the incident to be a suicide.

Police lodged an unnatural death case and sent the body to Natore Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Meanwhile, Hashem, the girl's father, said his daughter was "murdered" after being "raped".

He alleged that two youths in the village often used to stalk his daughter, and they hanged her from the tree after raping her.

He, however, could not tell when his daughter went out of the house or if she was taken away.

OC Dilip said they found no evidence of rape and murder while visiting the spot.

He said the deceased's father filed a general diary claiming that his daughter was raped and killed. "We will investigate the matter as soon as we receive the autopsy report."

Asean leaders

FROM PAGE 1

the Bangladesh-Myanmar bilateral agreements on repatriation.

They encouraged Myanmar to continue to implement the remaining recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

"We expect that the Independent Commission of Enquiry, established by the Government of Myanmar, would seek accountability by carrying out an independent and impartial investigation into alleged human rights violations and related issues," read a statement issued after the Summit.

Myanmar is a member of Asean. Bangladesh is now hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas who had fled their homes in Rakhine after being persecuted by their own country.

Myanmar did not take back a single Rohingya from Bangladesh over the last two years, but the country in its attempts to "mislead" the international community claimed that 397 displaced people have voluntarily returned to Myanmar from Bangladesh.

Two repatriation attempts were unsuccessful as Myanmar "failed to remove trust deficit" among the Rohingyas and there was "lack of conducive environment" in Rakhine for their return.

Last week, Bangladesh accused Myanmar of remaining engaged in a "persistent campaign" to mislead the international community to avoid its obligations for "sustained repatriation" and reintegration of the Rohingyas.

Two journos stabbed to death in Indonesia

AFP, Medan

Two Indonesian journalists mediating a land dispute between a palm oil company and residents have been found dead with multiple stab wounds near a plantation in Sumatra, police said.

The body of Maraden Sianipar was found Wednesday in a ditch near a palm plantation in Labuhan Batu district, an eight-hour drive from the capital of North Sumatra province.