

Dhaka gLobaL DiaLogue

A glimpse of regional tension

Indian, Chinese, Japanese discussants argue while Bangladesh-India relations shine

diplomatic Correspondent

Bangladesh-India relations for development cooperation shined as an instance on the second day of the Dhaka Global Dialogue yesterday, while tensions between regional powers -- Japan versus China and India versus China -- surfaced prominently.

Policymakers and academics lauded Bangladesh and India for solving their maritime and land boundary disputes and for promoting connectivity. "Importance of connectivity [between Bangladesh and India] can be judged by the excitement that is there in India's northeastern states... India's connectivity with Bangladesh is a game-changer," said Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das.

She also spoke of recent deals allowing India to use Chattogram and Mongla ports, and rail and roads linking India and Bangladesh.

These are game-changers for India, especially the northeastern region as well as for Bangladesh, she said at a session on "Connecting the Indo-Pacific: infrastructure and influence" yesterday at the three-day conference.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and India's Observer Research Foundation (ORF) are jointly organising the event at the InterContinental Dhaka.

Riva Ganguly said around 80 percent of India's US \$8 billion line of credit to Bangladesh is being used for connectivity projects.

She said Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's vision is to see all pre-1965 railway connections reestablished between India and Bangladesh. Of those, four are functioning, while others are in progress.

Ryosuke Hanada, research fellow of Japan Institute of International Affairs, said Bangladesh and India abide by the verdict of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and have settled their maritime dispute, making it a great example for others to follow.

However, China is not abiding by the UNCLOS ruling over disputed waters of the South China Sea, the Japanese scholar said.

Minwang Lin, professor at the Institute of International Studies, Fudan University in China, questioned why China and Russia are not invited to the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue -- held by India, the US, Japan and Australia.

In response, Indian Congress leader and MP Manish Tewari said there is "over-sensitivity" about the US-led Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS).

"When my Chinese friend questions why they weren't invited to the Indo-Pacific conference, I can also ask why India was not invited before the BRI [China-led Belt and Road Initiative] was rolled out," he said.

Manish Tewari said, "I don't think if you are going to make it an Asian century, you can live in this zero-sum game... There will be various concepts and constructs. You have to go and help each other."

"People who lead countries need to be a little more enlightened... and think how they can integrate all the different concepts in order to make life of the people in Asia better than what they are today," he said.

He also said India should have articulated its position clearly about the BRI for its own interest, instead of keeping away.

State Minister for foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam said Bangladesh SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

What the world needs now

World Kindness Day today

City desk

World Kindness Day is observed internationally today, in order to encourage individuals to be kind and humane to everyone regardless of nationality, race, or religion.

Introduced by World Kindness Movement (WKM), a non-profit, the theme of the day is empathy, which encourages people to feel the pain of others and extend kindness.

The day is observed in Canada, Australia, Nigeria, UAE, India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, UK, USA and other countries across the globe. Schools in different parts of the world celebrate the day.

According to WKM website, the day aims to highlight deeds in communities, cities, and nations, and encourages people to focus on the positive power and common thread of kindness, which binds the world together. Kindness is a fundamental part of the human condition which bridges the divides of race, religion, politics, and gender.

Bangladesh, the eighth most populous country in the world is observing the day for the first time this year. A book launching event and discussion will be held at The Daily Star Centre, which will be presided by Valerie Taylor on behalf of Shomman Foundation.

abuse of female Workers in kSa Expats' minister comes under fire at JS

Staff Correspondent

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmed came under fire yesterday as three opposition lawmakers in parliament criticised him for his ministry's failure to stop torture and sexual harassment of Bangladeshi female workers in Saudi Arabia.

Jatiya Party MPs Kazi Feroz Rashid and Mujibul Haque Chunnun and Gonoforum's Sultan Mohammad Monsur raised the issue during the question-answer session of parliament.

In reply, the minister said, "If our female workers are unable to work in Saudi Arabia, we will consider whether we should stop sending them."

"We have taken steps to send the female workforce after providing them with training and taking protective measures," the minister said, adding that sending manpower depends on demand of the receiving country.

"Our efforts will be to ensure dignified jobs for them. If that's not possible to ensure, we will think of not sending them," he said.

In his supplementary question, Kazi Feroz Rashid asked what the expatriate welfare minister is doing when female workers are being subjected to sexual harassment.

"Bodies of around 600 to 700 female workers have returned from Saudi Arabia in the last few years. In every case, the autopsy reports claimed that the deaths were due to natural causes," he said.

"Those were carried out by the Saudi authorities while no representatives from the Bangladesh embassy or expatriates' welfare ministry were present," Kazi Feroz added.

He said the ministry or Bangladesh embassy did not take any action against recruiting agencies for sending female workers without ensuring their safety and salary.

"We cannot do such business [of earning foreign currency] by sending our female workers and subjecting them to torture and sexual harassment," he added.

"Why do we need to send female



The rally at Central Shaheed Minar seeks justice for female migrant workers abused in Saudi Arabia.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

workers to Saudi Arabia? We need to stop this. Are we so poor that we'll have to send them there to earn for the country? Have we become a 'bottomless basket'? We don't need to earn money by selling our mothers and sisters."

The JP MP also said neither the minister nor his ministry took any action to stop this.

During the session, Sultan Mohammad said, "Bangladesh will be known as a country involved in 'slave trade', if we do not stop sending female workers to Saudi Arabia."

Mujibul Haque said due to abuse in the Kingdom, female workers are returning on a regular basis. He wanted to know what action the minister has taken to stop this.

In reply, the minister said the government is more worried than the MPs who raised the issue.

"Recently, I invited the charge d' affaires of the Saudi embassy and discussed the issue with him," the minister said. "The Bangladesh envoy in the Arab country has also been directed to raise it with the Saudi foreign ministry."

He said a joint technical group of

Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia will discuss the issues at a meeting on November 26 in the Middle Eastern country.

The minister said no female worker will be sent there without at least a month's training. "I hope this problem will be resolved to a large extent," he said.

Imran Ahmed also informed the House that in the last couple of months, the ministry has suspended licenses of 160 recruiting agencies, cancelled licenses of three and fined a number of them Tk 3 crore for their involvement in irregularities in sending female workers.

RALLY DEMANDS JUSTICE Meanwhile, a citizens' body yesterday demanded that the government immediately publish on its website the names of employers, their workplace addresses, and updated medical reports of female workers currently working in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries.

They also demanded that the government initiate a help desk at the ministry so that family members stay updated.

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Four men travel on the back of a human haulier, precariously standing on the foot stand and holding on till they reach their destination. Lack of available public transport often leads to this risky behaviour. The photo was recently taken near Tejgaon flyover.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Lawmakers lambast Ranga over Noor Hossain remark

Staff Correspondent

Opposition Chief Whip and Jatiya Party Secretary General Mashiur Rahman Ranga yesterday faced scathing criticism, including from two senior MPs of his own party, alongside lawmakers of the ruling Awami League and opposition parties in the Jatiya Sangsad, for his recent derogatory remarks over Shaheed Noor Hossain.

They demanded that Ranga apologise before the nation for his remarks on Noor Hossain, a young pro-democracy activist who sacrificed his life on November 10, 1987, during the movement to end the autocratic regime of HM Ershad.

Taking floor on point of order, Awami League MP Tahzeeb Alam Siddique began the criticism.

Later, Jatiya Party MPs -- Kazi Feroz Rashid and Mujibul Haque Chunnun, AL lawmakers Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Gonoforum MP Sultan Mohammed Mansur and Tarikat Federation Chairman Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizvandy joined the criticism during the unscheduled discussion, in absence of Ranga.

Ranga, at a discussion arranged by JP Dhaka north city unit on Sunday, had said, "Who was Noor Hossain? An addict... a yaba abuser, a Phensedyl abuser."

Kazi Feroz Rashid said Ranga's comments are not the stance of Jatiya Party. "It is his personal statement. Jatiya Party is ashamed for these remarks. We are sorry and feel humiliated for this," he said.

"We don't own what he said over Noor Hossain. We reject it with hatred."

"We have utmost respect for a brave youth who can sacrifice his life for democracy," he added.

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SwachhhaSebak League Confce Activists scuffle over seating arrangement

Staff Correspondent

Followers of two aspirants for the president position of Awami Swachhhabak League's Dhaka north city unit locked in altercation and threw plastic chairs at each other at the organisation's conference in the capital.

The chaotic situation -- reportedly over establishing supremacy -- arose before the conference started at Krishibid Institution Auditorium, said activists of the organisation.

They said followers of Swachhhabak League's Dhaka north city unit general secretary Faridur Rahman Khan and former Dhaka north unit Chhatra League president Ishak Miah created the chaos at around 11:10am.

Faridur Rahman and Ishak Miah are frontrunners for the president position of the Dhaka north city unit of Swachhhabak League.

At one point, senior leaders of the organisation brought the situation under control.

Faridur Rahman Khan and Ishak Miah were both unavailable for comments.

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Judicial body to inquire failure in containing dengue

Staff Correspondent

The High Court yesterday set up a two-member judicial probe committee to identify the reasons for the failure of the authorities concerned in taking appropriate measures for the eradication of Aedes mosquitoes and in preventing dengue and chikungunya.

The committee will be headed by a district judge while another member will be a representative of the LGRD ministry, not below the rank of joint secretary.

The probe body will inquire into the reasons of the failure of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) in preventing dengue and

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Pneumonia killed 12,000 children last year

Save the Children in Bangladesh says

Staff Correspondent

Pneumonia killed over 12,000 children (under five) in 2018, Save the Children in Bangladesh said yesterday, citing a new analysis from global health agencies.

With this figure Bangladesh ranks 14th among the 15 countries that see most pneumonia-related deaths in children under the age of five in 2018, according to Unicef.

Globally, pneumonia claimed lives of more than 800,000 children under the age of five last year, or one child every 39 seconds, according to the analysis.

Most deaths occurred among children under the age of two, and almost 153,000 died within the first month.

More than half of pneumonia deaths in children occur in five countries including Nigeria (162,000), India (127,000), Pakistan (58,000), the Democratic Republic of Congo (40,000) and Ethiopia (32,000).

In Bangladesh, pneumonia caused four deaths out of 1000 live births (13 percent

of total) in 2017, standing as the third biggest killer of children under five.

Children with immune systems weakened by other conditions like malnutrition and those living in areas with high levels of air pollution and unsafe water are at far greater risk.

The disease can be prevented with vaccines, and easily treated with low-cost antibiotics if properly diagnosed, according to experts.

Yet globally, tens of millions of children are still going unvaccinated while one in three with symptoms do not receive essential medical care.

Dr Sabina Ashrafee, deputy programme manager (MNHP and IMCI) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star, "Pneumonia is an airborne disease and malnourished children are mostly affected by this."

According to experts, protecting children by establishing good health practices from birth, preventing the disease by addressing

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Woman run over by bus in Shantinagar

Staff Correspondent

A woman was run over by a bus as it sped up while she was getting off the vehicle in the city's Shantinagar area yesterday morning.

Deceased Kaniz Fatema, 30, used to work at a lab of Quantum Blood Bank at Shantinagar.

She was on her way to office from her parents' house in Mirpur when the tragic accident took place around 9am.

The bus, belonging to Al Makkah Paribahan, reached near her office and slowed down.

As she tried to get off the bus, its driver recklessly pulled away, her husband Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star, quoting witnesses.

Kaniz fell on the road and the rear wheels crushed her lower body, leaving her critically injured.

Locals rescued the victim and took her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) around 1pm, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH police outpost.

Kaniz used to live with her husband at Dania in the capital. She went to visit her parents on Monday.

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Advertisement for a seminar titled 'ভুল সংশোধনী' (Correction of Mistakes) on November 22, 2019, at the National Institute of Open University, Dhaka. It features a list of speakers and topics related to education and health.

Advertisement for 'DHAKA TODAY' featuring a lecture on 'TAGORE' by Prof MM Akash and an 'ACADEMIC SESSION' on 'Writing Effective Statement of Purpose'.

Advertisement for 'COMMERCIAL SPACE AVAILABLE FOR SALE' located at '23 GULSHAN AVENUE'. It includes contact information: 0173 002 0499 and the website baydevelopments.com.