

Return to Rakhine

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the hearing at International Court of Justice held from December 10-12 in The Hague. The Gambia accused Myanmar of genocide against Rohingya people in the ICJ.

Chan Aye, director-general of the International Organisations and Economic Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, led the delegation that arrived in Dhaka Tuesday night and then flew to Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

The officials held talks with the Rohingya representatives at camp-4 in Ukhia from 2:00pm-4:30pm and told them that the situation in Rakhine was good, said Bangladesh officials.

The Rohingya representatives told the delegation clearly that they wanted a guarantee of citizenship in Myanmar and the presence of international security force in Rakhine. They said they won't accept the National Verification Card," an official told The Daily Star.

The demands are similar to the ones made by the Rohingyas when Myanmar delegations visited the camps on two occasions in the last two years, he said.

Some 750,000 Rohingyas fled Rakhine since August 2017 and took shelter in the squalid camps in Cox's Bazar. The refugees joined 300,000 other Rohingyas who had fled earlier waves of violence in Rakhine since the 80s.

"The visit by the delegation after the ICJ is a positive development. The Rohingyas are their people and they should convince them to return," said a foreign ministry official.

Run-fest

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The day's first match also produced a mountain of runs as Cumilla Warriors -- riding on 40s from Soumya Sarkar, Sabbir Rahman and Dawid Malan -- chased down a formidable 181 for eight posted by Rangpur Rangers. For Rangpur, Mohammad Shahzad was the top scorer with a 27-ball 61 but they suffered from a lack of contributions from the others as Tom Abel, Mohammad Nabi and Lewis Gregory all scored 20s but did not stick around for the final flourish.

But it was the night match that offered even more value for the spectators. After being asked to bat, Chattogram opener Lendl Simmons started things off on the right note with a 36-ball 57 and all the batsmen contributed thereafter.

Imrul Kayes chipped in with 40 off 24 balls, but it was Mahmudullah's fireworks at the end and an 18-ball 27 from Chadwick Walton that lifted Chattogram to a mammoth total.

During the chase, after Mashrafe's blitz got Dhaka to within 50 runs of the target with 25 balls left, it was the hard-hitting Thisara Perera who took Dhaka close with 47 off 27 balls. For Chattogram, pacers Mehedi Hasan Rana and Muktar Ali took three wickets each.

Mercury falls

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Temperatures will again drop after December 26, and the country may face cold wave in January, he said.

The weather may remain dry amid cloudy skies over the country for 24 hours, beginning from 9:00am yesterday, according to BMD.

Moderate to thick fog may form over the northwestern part of the country and light to moderate fog might be seen elsewhere between late night and early morning, a met office release said.

THE CHILL IN THE NORTH
The biting cold which began yesterday affected day-to-day activities in the northern districts, with the chill intensifying as cold wind began descending from the Himalayas.

The sky remained overcast all the day across the region, while fog engulfed eight districts of Rangpur division.

The other low temperatures recorded yesterday were 13.7 in Dinajpur, 13.5 in Syedpur of Nilphamari, 13.2 in Dimla of Nilphamari and 13.3 degrees Celsius in Tetulia of Panchagarh district.

In Panchagarh, the sky remained overcast all day since yesterday morning as cold winds lashed the district.

Khalilur Rahman, a rickshaw-puller in Banglambanda, said his earning had dropped alarmingly as people opted to stay indoors to escape the cold.

Besides, vehicular movement in the district was disrupted by the dense fog.

"This was the first cold-wave like situation in Dinajpur," said Tofazzal Hossain, in-charge of Dinajpur Meteorological office.

In Rangpur, people thronged markets to purchase warm clothes since yesterday morning. "It [price of clothes] is still cheap, but price may go up anytime due to high demand," said Shahidul Islam of Lalbag area in Rangpur city.

Fazle Rabby, general secretary of Dinajpur Transport Workers Union, said drivers of buses on all the routes were using lights due to thick and moderate fog weather.

Rejoinder

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The incident took place at another resort around one-and-a-half-kilometres away from Mermaid, the rejoinder said.

OUR REPLY
We stand corrected.

62pc wage hike proposed

COMPARISON NEW AND PREVIOUS WAGE BOARD

NAME	WAGE BOARD 2019 (BASIC-TK)	WAGE BOARD 2019 (TOTAL-TK)	WAGE BOARD 2010 (BASIC-TK)	WAGE BOARD 2010 (TOTAL-TK)
Driver (higher skill)	12,800	20,200	8,000	12,700
Driver (heavy licence)	11,200	17,800	7,000	11,200
Driver (light licence)	9,600	15,400	6,000	9,700
Supervisor	8,000	13,000	5,000	8,200
Helper	6,500	10,750	4,000	6,700
Other staff (grade one)	9,600	15,400	6,000	9,700

SOURCE: MINIMUM WAGE BOARD

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new road transport act makes the issuance of appointment letters for workers mandatory.

Experts said the implementation of the new wage structure for staffers and workers of the "highly disorganized" transport sector, in which more than 70 lakh workers are involved, will be difficult.

Under the new structure, top grade drivers of public service transport like bus would get basic salaries of 12,800 each, instead of the previous Tk 8,000.

The total would rise to Tk 20,200 from Tk 12,700 in last wage board. Drivers living outside city corporations or divisional headquarters would get Tk 1,280 less than others.

The minimum wage of a helper would rise to Tk 6,500 from the previous Tk 4,000. They will get a total of Tk 10,750 (Tk 3,250, Tk 700 and 300 as house rent, and medical and transport allowance.)

Helpers living outside city corporations or divisional headquarters would get Tk 650 less than others.

A trainee would get a total Tk 7,500 and his training period would be three months, and may be extended to six months.

The wage board comprises its chairman Syed Aminul Islam (a senior district judge), three permanent members (one neutral, one owner and one workers' representative) and two temporary members (one owner and another workers' representative).

The Labour and Employment Ministry on August 7 asked the chairman of the Minimum Wage Board to announce the minimum wage for workers of the privately road transport sector and appointed two temporary members.

The board held several meetings and considered the proposals of the

owners and workers' representatives, the living cost of labourers, inflation, prices of essentials and other issues before giving recommendations.

Insur Ali, a member of the board and a transport workers' leader, said it is true that the recommendations of the previous board were not implemented because no representatives of transport owners and workers was included in that board.

"We hope the recommendations of this board would be implemented as both the representatives of transport owners and workers gave their approval," Insur, also the general secretary of the Bangladesh Road Transport Workers League, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said owners' associations will play the main role in implementing the recommendations.

He, however, said giving appointment letters and service books to all transport workers is a necessity to implement the recommendations and this is a big challenge for which both the government and transport leaders have to work unitedly.

Abul Kalam, a transport owners' leader and also a board member, said they have given the recommendation of the salary hike considering prices

of essential commodities and house rent.

He said the previous board's recommendations were not implemented as the wages of drivers and others were very low.

Kalam, also a vice president of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, hoped transport workers would accept it.

About giving appointment letters to workers, he said, "We will give appointment [letters] because it is necessary to bring discipline to the road transport sector."

Osman Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation, an umbrella organisation of 235 transport worker unions across the country, said they will make their comment after going through all the recommendations.

However, giving appointment letters and monthly salaries to transport workers is necessary to implement the new wage structure, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Zafrul Hasan, executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), said the government, owners and workers have to work jointly to implement the new recommendations.

House begins

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vice president and leading Democratic contender in the 2020 election. Trump is also accused of obstructing the congressional investigation into the matter.

Republicans signalled as soon as the day began that they intend to do everything possible to stall the proceedings. Representative Andy Biggs, a Republican member of the Judiciary Committee, called for the House to adjourn immediately after the morning prayer and pledge of allegiance, leading to a vote on the House floor.

Trump has called the impeachment process "a total sham," and on Tuesday sent House Speaker Nancy Pelosi a lengthy letter in which he accused her of engaging in a "perversion of justice."

The president has denounced the probe as an "illegal coup" and has argued Democrats are trying to undo the results of the 2016 election in which he defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"Can you believe that I will be impeached today by the Radical Left, Do Nothing Democrats, AND I DID NOTHING WRONG! A terrible thing," Trump tweeted yesterday morning. "Say a prayer!"

With Trump seeking a second term next year, impeachment has cleared the public, with most Democratic voters supporting it and most Republicans opposed.

What remains unclear is whether the months-long partisan drama will have any effect on the 2020 election beyond giving Trump reasons to boast of having beaten back Democratic efforts to remove him.

Republicans contend that a "yea" vote on impeachment could cost some moderate House Democrats their seats in next year's congressional elections. Still, several Democrats who represent districts that backed Trump in 2016 have said in recent days they will vote to impeach him.

PRESIDENT ABUSED HIS POWER
On the eve of the vote, Pelosi sent a letter on Tuesday to all 232 Democratic members of the House, urging them to abide by the Constitution's standards.

"Very sadly, the facts have made clear that the President abused his power for his own personal, political benefit and that he obstructed Congress as he demanded that he is above accountability, above the Constitution and above the American people," she wrote.

Fearful of the political blowback, Democrats were long resistant to an impeachment inquiry, even after Special Counsel Robert Mueller outlined potential episodes of Trump obstructing justice in his report on

Russian interference in the 2016 election.

But after a whistleblower brought to light a July phone call in which Trump pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to investigate Biden, House Democrats moved swiftly to take testimony from current and former administration officials.

Democrats accuse Trump of freezing nearly \$400 million in US security aid to Ukraine and offering a possible White House meeting to Zelenskiy to get him to publicly announce investigations of Biden and his son Hunter, who was on the board of a Ukrainian gas company.

The first article of impeachment details the Democrats' account of Trump's dealings with Ukraine. The second article accuses Trump of obstruction of Congress by directing administration officials and agencies not to comply with lawful House subpoenas for testimony and documents related to impeachment.

The Senate has yet to set its procedures for a trial on the charges, which would be overseen by US Chief Justice John Roberts.

The chamber's top Republican, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, has rejected Democratic proposals to call further administration officials to testify and has said there is "no chance" Trump will be removed from office.

On Tuesday, McConnell said on the Senate floor that it would be senators' role to act as a "judge and jury" in the trial, but he later told reporters that he would not be "an impartial juror."

"This is a political process. There is not anything judicial about it," he said. "Impeachment is a political decision."

Removing Trump from office would require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in the 100-member chamber, meaning Democrats would have to persuade at least 20 Republicans to join with them to end Trump's presidency.

Cop held

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seeking a 10-day remand for his interrogation. The court will hear the remand prayer today, the OC said.

According to the case statement, Prasad handed over two pen drives with confidential information to Indian police in 2018.

On October 25 last, members of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence and Rapid Action Battalion held an army man and seized a pen drive containing valuable information from a hotel at Kamalapur in Dhaka.

Later, Prasad was found involved in leaking information.

No stay order

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Meanwhile, anti-CAA protests continued outside the Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi for third consecutive day yesterday.

The protesters raised slogans against Home Minister Amit Shah, the government and the Delhi police, demanding withdrawal of the CAA.

The Delhi Police yesterday clamped prohibitory orders in Seelampur area following violent and arson protests and arrested two more persons in connection with the incidents, taking the total number of arrests to eight.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a blistering attack on the BJP-led government in protest against the act.

Participating in a street march from Howrah Maidan to Esplanade in Kolkata for the third consecutive day yesterday, she reiterated: "We will never allow NRC and the amended Citizenship Act in Bengal."

"No one will be asked to leave the state. We believe in the coexistence of all religions, castes and creed. All of us are citizens of this country, no one can take that away from us."

No fresh incident of violence was reported in West Bengal and Assam yesterday.

However, a senior police officer of West Bengal and two other police personnel were injured when a group of anti-CAA agitators hurled crude bombs at them in Sankrail area of Howrah district on Tuesday night.

In northern Uttar Pradesh state, more than 110 people were arrested over the protests, or for posting on social media, police told AFP.

Hostels at the state's Aligarh Muslim University, where police brutality was alleged by students on Sunday, were emptied after residents were told by the administration to start winter vacations early.

Thousands of people took part in a protest march against the NRC and the amended Citizenship Act in Mumbra, a predominantly Muslim township near Mumbai yesterday.

Most shops in the area downed their shutters and auto-rickshaws remained off the roads.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram yesterday pushed back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his Pakistan citizenship jibe at the main opposition party, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Chidambaram was responding to the challenge posed by Modi to the opposition to publicly declare that they are prepared to accord Indian

Musical chair at BTCL

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in 2010. In 2014, the BTCL managing director changed three times.

Md Rafiqul Matin was appointed as managing director in November 3 this year.

At least 18 MDs were either acting MDs or officials with the additional charge. Some even ran the company for about a week.

For instance, Absar Alam ran the company twice. His second stint started on November 28, 2010 and ended on December 6 the same year.

Absar had been acting MD for five months earlier that year.

Only in 2011 and 2017 the BTCL did not have a new MD.