

ROHINGYA CRISIS

Dhaka, Beijing discuss ways for early repatriation

UNB, Dhaka Bangladesh and China yesterday discussed ways for "early repatriation" of Rohingyas -- currently taking shelter in Cox's Bazar district -- to their place of origin in Rakhine State of Myanmar.

"Ambassador Li met Foreign Minister Dr Momen for further discussions on early repatriation of the displaced people [Rohingyas] and for an early date of return to their homeland," Yan Hualong, minister (counselor) and deputy head of mission of Chinese embassy in Dhaka told the news agency.

The Chinese envoy yesterday also met Chairman of Red Crescent Society of Bangladesh Hafiz Ahmed Mazumdar, and its Vice-Chairman Prof Dr Md Habibe Millat.

The two sides discussed humanitarian cooperation between Bangladesh and China, and early return of Rohingyas to their homeland.

Though Bangladesh stands ready to begin Rohingya SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



DHAKA AIR WORST ONCE AGAIN... Yesterday's hazy morning sky was not a result of fog, it was smog and dust. Once again, Dhaka had the worst air quality in the world, according to Air Quality Index (AQI). On November 25, the capital last saw the worst air quality, according to Air Visual. This prompted the government to take immediate measures such as sprinkling water on city streets as seen on Minto Road, right. The initiatives apparently are not enough as residents continue to suffer due to unplanned development work like that near Babubazar Bridge, left. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

3 expelled Buet students can sit for exams: HC

Results to be scrapped if ragging charges proven

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) to allow its three students, who were expelled for their alleged involvement in ragging, to sit for the term final examination.

The exams are scheduled to start tomorrow. It also issued a rule, asking Buet authorities to explain in four weeks why the decision of its academic council should not be declared illegal.

The court, however, imposed a condition saying that results of the expelled students will remain withheld till hearing of the rule, and if they are found guilty their results will be scrapped.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam came up with the order and rule following a petition filed by the three students including Shobayshachi Das Dibya, challenging legality of the academic council's decision to reject their appeals.

On December 24, the same HC bench issued similar orders and rules on 10 Buet students, who were expelled from halls and academic terms for their alleged involvement in ragging, Deputy Attorney General Md Noor us Sadik told The Daily Star.

He said the university authorities had earlier expelled them on charges of their involvement in ragging. They filed separate appeals with Buet's academic council against the expulsion orders. The council at its 450th meeting on December 18 rejected those, he said.

'Govt abetting India to turn Bangladesh a dumping ground'

Says Mirza Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday accused the government of "abetting India in turning Bangladesh into a dumping ground" only to stay in power.

"The foreign minister said they would accept if any Bangladeshi citizen returns from India, and will send back those who are non-Bangladeshi. This means they [government] admitted that push-in is happening," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

He further said, "The government is collaborating with India to turn our country into a dumping ground."

Fakhrul came up with the remarks while speaking at a press conference at BNP's Nayapalton central office.

Fakhrul alleged that Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader took a stance against the country's people by supporting the remarks of Indian Home Minister Amit Shah and External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Ravish Kumar -- incriminating BNP with the repression of women in 2002.

"We condemn and protest Obaidul Quader's comments," he said.

Fakhrul said the AL leader's comment is tantamount to threatening Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty, peace and security. "The entire nation is stunned and aggrieved as he [Quader] took a favouring position towards Amit Shah with his remarks about repression of minority communities," he claimed.

Fakhrul rejected remarks of Amit Shah, Ravish Kumar and Obaidul Quader -- accusing the BNP-led government of oppressing minority communities, saying that their comments were "absolutely false, baseless, discriminatory and motivated" to create division based on religion.

He said the comments of the trio are part of a "repulsive strategy to make gains in the internal politics of the two countries by BJP and Awami League".

By supporting Amit Shah's remarks, Quader not only took position against the interests of the countrymen, but also against Indians who will be affected following the enforcement of Citizenship Amendment Act and NRC.

He urged the ruling party to refrain from making any remarks that goes against the country's interests.

DHAKA BYPASS ROAD

Work for 4-lane upgrade begins



Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at the inauguration event yesterday. PHOTO: STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Work for upgrading the 48km Dhaka Bypass Road to dual carriageway was inaugurated yesterday, aiming to improve connectivity between the country's north and northwest parts and the Chattogram Port.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader inaugurated the work at a ceremony near Kanchan bridge in Rupganj upazila of Narayanganj.

This is the first public-private partnership project of the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), and vehicles will have to pay toll to use the four-lane highway -- Joydevpur-Debogram-Bhulta-Madanpur, commonly known as Dhaka Bypass Road.

Once completed, it would take around 40 minutes to cross the road from Bhogra intersection on Dhaka-Tangail Highway to Madanpur on Dhaka-Chattogram Highway, officials said.

Talking at the programme, Quader, also general secretary of ruling Awami League, said the initial problem over funding has been resolved and work will go on in full throttle now.

The work would be completed within the stipulated deadline of 2022, the minister hoped.

Last December, Roads and Highways Department and a consortium of three companies signed a deal for the Tk 4,000 crore project.

EC Mahbub's remarks 'deceptive': info minister

AGENCIES

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday criticised Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar for his comments about the election process, saying that his remarks were nothing but "deceptive".

"It would have been proper had Mahbub Talukdar made such comments after resigning from his post," the minister told a press briefing at his secretariat office in the afternoon, reports BSS.

EC Mahbub on Wednesday underscored the need for reforming the election process and said public representatives who are elected illegally have no commitment to people or democracy, reports UNB.

Yesterday, the minister said whatever reforms took place in the election process and Election Commission, were made following demands of Awami League.

"Awami League President Sheikh Hasina demanded a flawless voter SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Students spotted a live crude bomb lying in front of Dhaka University's Madhu'r Canteen area yesterday morning. A bomb disposal unit later recovered and disposed of it. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Sir Fazle Hasan Abed's qulkhani today

CITY DESK

The qulkhani of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed -- founder of Brac, one of the world's leading development organisations -- will be held today at Gulshan Central Mosque after Asr prayers, said a press release.

His friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

Sir Abed breathed his last on December 20 in Dhaka. He was laid to rest on Sunday at Banani graveyard.

KERANIGANJ BLAZE 5 survivors released from DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five workers, who sustained burns in Keraniganj fire on December 11, were released yesterday from the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). They are: Aslam, Sazid, Jakir, Basir and Lal Miah.

Five other survivors are undergoing treatment at the burn unit. Three of them are expected to be released tomorrow, said DMCH Director Brig Gen AKM Nasir Uddin.

Two others are still on life support, but their condition have improved, said Dr Samanta Lal Sen, coordinator of Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute.

Twenty-two employees of a factory have died in the December 11 fire.

"All the patients who were brought to the hospital had inhalation and deep burn injuries," said AKM Nasir Uddin. SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Oikyafont announces rally on Dec 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Oikyafont yesterday announced a rally in Dhaka on Monday (December 30), protesting "vote rigging" in the 11th parliamentary election held on December 30, 2018.

Oikyafont leader and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President ASM Abdur Rob came up with the announcement at a press conference at Oikyafont Convener Dr Kamal Hossain's Motijheel SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Qulkhani of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed to be held today

The qulkhani of Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, Founder of BRAC, will be held today, Friday, 27th December at Gulshan Central Mosque (Azad Masjid) after Asr prayers.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend and pray for his departed soul.

On behalf of his family

