

It's unexpected, unfortunate

Says Oikya Parishad on communal attacks during AL tenure; seeks PM's intervention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attacks on religious and ethnic minorities at a time when the government that always upholds the spirit of the Liberation War is in power is really unexpected and unfortunate, said leaders of Bangladesh Hindu, Bouddha, Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday, demanding intervention of the prime minister in this regard.

They staged demonstrations in Dhaka, Chattogram, and other parts of the country protesting the recent communal attacks on minority communities including the arson attack on Hindu houses in Muradnagar of Cumilla.

Saying that the government's actions to tackle such atrocities are not enough, the minority communities demanded stern action against the perpetrators who are harming religious harmony in the country.

Criticising the role of the home minister, law enforcement agencies and vice-chancellors at different universities, they said arrest and expulsion of the students in the name of "hurting religious sentiments" must be stopped immediately.

They said what is happening in the country right now is against the fundamental principles of the 1972 constitution. They demanded putting a stop to attacks on minority communities, which they claimed were done through spreading rumours.

They also demanded that the government form a commission to investigate all the attacks since 2012.

Addressing the rally, Oikya Parishad leaders claimed that they are living amid uncertainty as the "government failed to protect them".

Hundreds of people from minority communities led by the Oikya Parishad gathered in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh around 10am for two hours and held a rally there.

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Protesting the attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, people from all walks of life demonstrate in front of National Museum in the capital. Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad organised similar events across the country yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

239 Bangladeshi workers leave for Uzbekistan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time, 239 Bangladeshis flew to Uzbekistan yesterday for work.

The group left in a special flight of Uzbekistan Air at 10:30am from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), AHM Touhid-ul Ahsan Director of HSIA, told The Daily Star.

In total, 888 skilled workers are scheduled to fly to the central Asian country on three special flights through four recruiting agencies, Bangladesh Ambassador to Uzbekistan Jahangir Alam said.

The workers are set to work for an engineering Company in Karshi, about 450km from Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile, overseas labour market experts are viewing this new connection with Uzbekistan as a positive development.

Experts in the sector said it is crucial for Bangladesh to look for new labour markets, especially as the

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DSCC's waste collection 'reform' raises questions

Residents unhappy with service from private contractors

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The recent move by Dhaka South City Corporation to "reform" the city's waste collection has not fared well with citizens, who say they are being charged excessively by the newly-appointed contractors, and the service is substandard.

DSCC started to appoint one primary collection service provider (PCSP) in each ward for collecting waste from all sorts of establishments under its jurisdiction from July this year. It has so far appointed PCSP in 69 out of its 75 wards.

According to the contract agreement, service providers will not charge more than Tk 100 per month from each household unit and other

establishments for their service.

However, residents of several areas said the service providers were demanding much higher from households. They apprehended that the imposed burden will only increase in the future and the whole system will promote a business interest group centring local musclemen.

The reformed system has replaced the general practice of local social service organisations managing the job of collecting wastes with vetting from the local ward councillor. Through that previous system, each household unit had to pay around Tk 40-50 to the service provider, while shops were not charged for that service since those generated little waste.

City planners say the informal, self-

funded service was introduced because of the city authorities' failure to install enough waste collection containers at convenient locations and developing the habit of city dwellers to drop off their daily waste themselves.

In DSCC area, waste containers are placed either too far away from each other or placed in an unplanned manner. For instance, in most wards, the distance between two garbage containers is at least two or three kilometres.

On the other hand, in Bamoil bazaar (ward 66), The Daily Star found three garbage containers in the same location. Residents from three nearby wards have to commute long distances to reach the containers.

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Three waste collection containers clustered at one place in the capital's Bamoil area, yet garbage is strewn all around it. Inset, another container in Old Dhaka's Siddiq Bazar overflows. These pictures, taken on Friday, support city dwellers' dissatisfaction with the new waste management system of DSCC.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUON, ANISUR RAHMAN

Only plans, no action

'High-level' taskforce to curb road accidents to meet second time in 1yr

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A high-powered taskforce, formed to reduce road crashes and bring discipline in road transport sector, is going to hold its second meeting next week, a year after its first meeting.

This meeting was supposed to be held two months after the maiden one in November last year. In the meantime, the taskforce, formed in October last year, could not start its work, except forming four sub-committees to chalk out plans.

Now the taskforce, led by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, will seat for the meeting on November 18, just days after Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has admitted their failure to ensure road safety and termed it "our main concern now."

At least two members of the taskforce found "lack of seriousness"

and "lack of proper approach" of the authorities concerned behind the delay and inaction, when the country continued to witness death in road crashes.

Despite the Covid-19-induced shutdown for two months, a total of 2,211 people were killed in 2,291 accidents till July this year as per police figures, which are significantly lower than that of road-safety organisations.

THE TASKFORCE

A committee led by transport leader and former shipping minister Shajahan Khan submitted their report to the prime minister in April last year, making a 111-point recommendation on how to reduce road crashes and bring discipline in the transport sector.

In October last year, the government issued a gazette forming the 33-member taskforce led by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

Among others, secretaries of 11 ministries and divisions were made ex-officio members of the taskforce.

In its first meeting held on November 24, the taskforce coopted three additional members and assigned four secretaries to recommend and plan how the recommendations can be implemented.

The sub-committees were given two-month time to submit their recommendations and then the taskforce was supposed sit again.

Although the sub-committees held several meetings but most of them did not submit reports within the stipulated time, officials aware about the development said.

Then, Covid-19 pandemic hit the country, making further delay, they added. And thus no meeting of the taskforce was held.

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Indigenous families in north need govt, social assistance: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The indigenous communities in the country's northern region have to be given government and social assistance for their miserable condition amid the coronavirus pandemic, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Despite their roles in the Liberation War and development activities, the indigenous people in Rajshahi and Rangpur regions are still left disadvantaged as their miseries remain untold to the policymakers, they said.

Atma o Samajik Unnayan Sangstha (ASAUS) organised the discussion at Rajshahi city's Shah Makhdom College auditorium, which was presided over by the local NGO Vice President Ashit Palon.

Most of the indigenous families are passing through a difficult time in poverty as only a few organisations care for them, the speakers said.

They said only 25 percent of the families received government relief during this pandemic which was even "insufficient" for those families while 75 percent remained deprived of this.

The government should announce special incentives for the indigenous communities while people should come forward to help them, they said.

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'LDC graduates need extended int'l support'

Says Rabab Fatima

UNB, Dhaka

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations Ambassador Rabab Fatima has said the graduating and graduated countries from LDC categories need extended international support to ensure their forward journey and prevent any possible slide back.

She urged for ensuring additional finance for LDCs and to ensure their access to low-cost and low-risk sources of funding. She was addressing a high-level presentation of the OECD publication, "Multilateral Development Finance 2020 (MDF)" held in New York on Friday.

Highlighting some silver linings of the pandemic, she stressed the need for reform for removing the persistent weakness of the global development finance system, said a media release yesterday.

For smooth functioning of the

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EC to resume NID card programme for expat Bangladeshis

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission is planning to issue National Identity (NID) cards to Bangladeshi expatriates in at least 40 countries in the next five years.

To start with, the NID services will soon be rolled out in several countries -- Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and the UK, according to a top official.

"We'll go to the 40 largest host countries of expatriates in phases within the next five years. We'll initially start the NID services in five to six countries," Brig Gen Saidul Islam, the Director General of the EC's National Identity Registration Wing, told the news agency.

To apply for an NID card, expatriates would need to attach six documents with the application form -- copies of passport and dual citizenship certificate or approval letter from the Bangladesh home ministry are the most important requirements.

Along with these, a copy of the passport of another Bangladeshi expatriate identifying the applicant as a Bangladeshi, the statement of a blood relative living in Bangladesh with name, phone number and NID card copy, would be required.

Also needed are a declaration from the applicant that they are not registered in electoral rolls anywhere in Bangladesh, and a certificate from the local Bangladeshi mission.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the EC had started online registration of Bangladeshi expatriates in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the UK, after CEC KM Nurul

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An august gathering

Vespa owners' club gets together

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vespa owners of Bangladesh held a meet and greet to mark the "Vespa World Days 2020" at the capital's Chef's Table Courtyard on Friday.

Organised by Vespa Club Bangladesh and sponsored by Petronas Bangladesh, the event was a communion for the owners of the iconic Italian scooters.

Over 140 vehicles were present at the event, with examples ranging from original and unrestored classics to brand new models in pristine condition.

Founded in 2013 as a Facebook group, the club has over 3,000 active members, and is dedicated to helping each other and well as accommodating new owners.

More on this on our tech publication Toggle this week.



Much to the delight of Vespa enthusiasts, over 140 scooters of the classic Italian brand adorned the event, ranging from vintage models to brand new hotshots.

PHOTO: STAR