

US violated Doha deal

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government led by former President Ashraf Ghani, who fled the country after Taliban fighters swept through the country last month with little resistance from government forces.

Taliban's statement comes after the US had in the wake of the deal pledged to remove Taliban members from international sanctions.

Reporting from Kabul, Al Jazeera's Charlotte Bellis said the statement follows Pentagon officials commenting to the media that members of the Haqqani family are still legitimate targets and remain on US blacklists.

"The Taliban are saying this is very provocative, condemning it, saying that members of the Haqqani family must be removed from the US sanctions lists immediately. They say they will continue to demand that," said Bellis.

Many Afghans are sceptical that a leader of the Haqqani Network, known to be the most brutal and violent group associated with the Taliban, could bring security to Afghanistan after years of war and violence.

PROTEST BAN
The Taliban have pledged a more moderate brand of rule than in their notoriously oppressive 1996-2001 reign. However, the Islamist hardliners have shown clear signs that they will not tolerate opposition.

Earlier this week armed Taliban militants dispersed hundreds of protesters in cities across Afghanistan, including the capital Kabul, Faizabad in the northeast and in Herat in the west, where two people were shot dead.

Late Wednesday, they moved to snuff out any further civil unrest, saying protests would need prior authorisation from the justice ministry, adding "for the time being" no demonstrations were allowed.

One protest organiser told AFP

rallies in Kabul had been cancelled because of the overnight ban. At the site of another planned protest in the city, there were no signs of a demonstration.

The Taliban face a monumental task in ruling Afghanistan, which is wracked with economic woes and security challenges -- including from the Islamic State group's local chapter.

US' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director William Burns yesterday met Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) head Lt General Faiz Hamid during which they discussed issues related to regional security and the current situation in Afghanistan, the Pakistan military said.

Burns also met Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and discussed current situation in Afghanistan. Qureshi told Burns that the Taliban assets should be unfrozen so that they can use them.

The five-nation BRICS summit chaired by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday evening called for settling the situation in Afghanistan through peaceful means. The declaration at the summit said the leaders also sought an "inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue so as to ensure stability, civil peace, law and order".

CHINA EXTENDS EMERGENCY AID
A humanitarian crisis looms over Afghanistan, caused in part by the abrupt halting of international aid after the Taliban takeover.

The United Nations has said basic services are unravelling in the country with food and other aid about to run out. More than half a million people have been displaced internally in Afghanistan this year.

China has announced that it is offering at least \$31m worth of emergency aid, including coronavirus vaccines to Afghanistan.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Palestinian men gather while Israeli soldiers guard along a fence leading to the Israeli-occupied West Bank, as part of search efforts to capture six Palestinian men who had escaped from Gilboa prison earlier this week, by the village of Muqeibila in northern Israel yesterday.

Service from Dec 2022

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The project was taken up in November 2012 for completion by December 2016 at a cost of Tk 2,037.9 crore.

But it got delayed due to various problems including changes in work scope and design, waterlogging in the project areas between Tongi and Joydebpur.

The project -- which is being jointly funded by the government, the Asian Development Bank, the French Development Agency and the Global Environment Facility -- went through four revisions, with its total cost now estimated to be Tk 4,268.3 crore.

The current deadline is June 2022, meaning another revision is in the offing.

In the meantime, passengers using the roads suffered immensely, especially during the rainy season, due to the construction works that battered the existing road and caused severe traffic congestion.

The overall progress of the project at present is 63.27 percent, said Shaiful Islam, managing director of Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company that would implement, operate and manage the BRT, during a press conference at the BRT office in Uttara yesterday.

As per the schedule, the project would be completed by September 2022.

"We are keeping a little margin and are hoping to start the service from December next year," he said, adding that commuters would not face further suffering for the construction works after December this year.

Asked about the delay, Islam said the contractors started the main physical work only in 2018 -- six years after the project's start -- after completion of detailed design and tender.

There were also delays in land acquisition

and shifting utility services. The lack of enough drainages, insufficient money flow of the contractors, the pandemic and the need to keep the road operational for current traffic also slowed down the project's pace.

After the completion of the project, dedicated buses would be operated on two central lanes of the highway, while there would have four lanes for mixed traffic; two more lanes for slow-moving vehicles; with footpaths on both sides.

The service would start with 100 new buses, which would be able to transport 20,000 passengers per hour from Gazipur's Shibbari area to the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA). There would be a total of 25 stations on the corridor.

The fare would initially be the same as the city bus service, with the lowest fare being Tk 5 and the highest Tk 55.

The BRT would introduce a shuttle service with MRT Line-6, the first-ever metro rail to be operated from Uttara to Motijheel; MRT-1, the first underground metro rail from the airport to Kamalapur; and the third terminal of HSIA.

As per the preliminary plan, the BRT Line-3 is supposed to connect Gazipur with Jhilmil in Keraniganj via the airport.

But last year, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said they have dropped the plan due to the bad experience of the under-construction BRT.

Asked whether an "incomplete" BRT Line will provide the desired benefit, Islam said: "Isn't reaching the airport from Gazipur within 40 minutes a benefit of BRT?"

He, however, hoped the authority would revive the plan to at least up to Gulistan to get the full benefits of the BRT service.

JS body initiates probe

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to the standing committee within a month, Mokbul Hossain, chief of the parliamentary watchdog, told this correspondent.

The Daily Star had run a report in May on widespread irregularities in the acquisition of land to build a PBI office in Kolatoli Bypass Road area, adjacent to the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway, he added.

"After going through the report, the committee thought that a massive forgery took place in the land acquisition process. We came to know that huge sums of money were misappropriated through the forgery in the land acquisition."

Mokbul further said the real land owners didn't get the acquisition compensation money while a syndicate embezzled huge sums through forgery during the land acquisition.

An investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission found that a syndicate in collaboration with land office officials embezzled around Tk 29.29 crore of public money against acquisition of 80 decimal of land on fake papers, keeping the real landowners in the dark.

The government had disbursed around Tk 31.13 crore for the acquisition, as per the documents seen by The Daily Star.

An ACC official with knowledge of the forgery told this newspaper that only one person had withdrawn compensation money using genuine documents while 15 others used fake powers of attorney and other illegal

means to siphon off the public money.

Standard government procedure was also not followed in the acquisition of the one acre (100 decimal), the ACC found.

The syndicate not only faked documents to grab the land but also threatened the genuine landowners to not raise their voice against the illegal acquisition, found the investigation.

Documents obtained by The Daily Star show the home ministry gave administrative approval for land acquisition for the PBI office on October 1, 2018.

An administrative building, barracks, and other structures are set to be built on the land in Cox's Bazar, according to PBI documents.

Standing committee members Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, Monoranjan Shil Gopal, Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Mohammad Shahjahan Mia, Umme Fatema Nazma Begum and Mohammad Aminul Islam, among others, participated in yesterday's meeting.

The meeting recommended the authorities concerned take necessary steps for speedy transfer of all employees who have completed three years in service in the offices of the assistant commissioners (land) across the country. It also suggested taking necessary measures to monitor whether the genuine allottees of the government's Guchhagram project are living in Guchhagrams and to investigate whether land taken over on lease for agricultural use is being used for other purposes.

Nine held in connection

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Billal, Nirab, Khairul and the girl were accused in the case as they abetted the rapists, added the police officer, quoting the case statement.

The other accused, Sabbir, is on the run.

All the accused are from different villages in Arahazur upazila.

The victim, a seventh grader of a local school, went to visit Sinra area in Arahazur with two of her friends, including the girl made accused in the case, on August 30, said the police official.

As it was getting dusk, some youths forcibly took the victim to a nearby secluded place. They then raped her and fled the place when the girl

became ill, said the OC.

Locals rescued and sent her home after providing treatment at a local clinic, he said.

Filing of case was late as the victim's family was in fear of social stigma and the girl was ill, said the OC, quoting the father, a resident of Ruppaganj upazila.

Five of the arrestees -- Jahid, Tajul, Siam, Robin and Rifat -- gave confessional statements before a local court, said Court Inspector Asaduzzaman.

The court also set September 12 for remand hearing of three others, while the 14-year-old girl was sent to a juvenile correction centre, he added.

The victim was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for medical tests.

Contagious, not more than

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make it difficult to open the eye in the morning.

Viruses, bacteria, allergies and exposure to chemicals may cause conjunctivitis. Most cases of conjunctivitis are typically caused by adenovirus (in Bangla, "chokh utha"), but it can also be caused by other viruses, including the virus that causes Covid-19.

Conjunctivitis is very contagious. It is spread through direct or indirect contact with the liquid that drains from the eye of the infected person.

Sometimes conjunctivitis may lead to severe complication, like involving the cornea, leading to decreased vision. In that situation, prompt evaluation and treatment are needed. Moreover, it may be an initial symptom of Covid-19 infection. So, if it persists for more than two to three days and the symptoms deteriorate, doctor's consultation is necessary.

As conjunctivitis is contagious, the

infected person should follow some measures to prevent it from spreading: don't touch the eyes with your hands, wash your hands often, use a clean towel and washcloth daily, don't share towels or washcloths, change your pillowcases often, don't share eye cosmetics or personal eye care items.

There are some serious eye conditions that can cause eye redness too. These conditions may cause pain, blurred vision and light sensitivity. If your red eye symptoms do not start to improve in two to three days, it is advisable to see a doctor. Remember, all red eyes are not conjunctivitis.

Keep in mind that conjunctivitis is no more contagious than the common cold. But to prevent its spread, stay consistent in practicing good hygiene and go to an eye specialist when symptoms worsen.

Prof Dr Md Shafi Khan is a cornea specialist and phaco surgeon at Bangladesh Eye Hospital.

HC criticises judge for giving cop

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and contradictory to law, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman observed in the full text of the verdict, which was released yesterday.

"We have no hesitation to say that such a conduct and action from a district-level judge is not expected. Such an order from him [the learned judge] means disregarding the High Court, which is similar to contempt of court," the bench said in the 11-page full text of the verdict.

The HC bench issued the highest caution to the trial court judge over discharging his responsibilities in future. "Judge Md Iqbal Hossain must be more careful in dealing with cases and in complying with High Court directives."

The bench also ordered the HC registrar to note down the warning against the judge in its dossier, saying that lower court judges must deliver verdicts and orders in presence of lawyers and parties of cases in the open court to ensure transparency and accountability.

On September 2, the HC bench, led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim, delivered a short verdict scrapping a lower court order that granted Partha bail in the corruption case in an unusual manner.

Delivering the judgment on an appeal, the bench also ordered the suspended DIG to surrender before the trial court concerned by September 20 in connection with the case.

At the same time, the HC directed the authorities concerned to transfer the case to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 of Dhaka from the special judge court and ordered the tribunal to finish the trial proceedings by February 28 next year.

The bench delivered the verdict following an

appeal filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission challenging the order of Judge Md Iqbal granting bail to Partha in the absence of the prosecution after the end of court hours, Deputy Attorney General Bepul Bagmar told The Daily Star.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told the HC that the judge on June 17 this year granted bail to Partha in an unusual manner although there were specific allegations against him.

He claimed that a copy of the bail order was sent to the jail authorities very secretly and expeditiously.

Private television station Channel-24 published a report on this.

Judge Md Iqbal Hossain has already apologised to the HC for granting the bail.

He offered the apology by submitting a two-page written explanation to the High Court last month in response to an earlier HC directive.

He also prayed to the HC to pardon him for his mistakes and to exempt him from any further proceedings.

In his explanation, he said an HC bench on November 2 last year ordered him to finish the trial of the case against Partha in six months from the date of receiving a copy of the order.

On June 17 this year, a lawyer for the accused submitted a copy of the HC order to the court of the judge, saying that the deadline of the HC directive had already expired, he said.

Judge Md Iqbal also said in the explanation that he found examining the documents that another HC bench on January 25 this year ordered his court to complete the trial of the same case in one year from the date of receiving the copy of the order. The lower court received a copy of the HC order on March 10.

The HC order is still in force, Judge Md Iqbal said in the explanation, adding that his court is always sincere in complying with HC directives.

Bangladesh to send team to UN

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MALIK WILLING TO MEET AWAMI LEAGUE LEADERS

East Pakistan's new civilian Bangalee governor AM Malik said today that he might seek a meeting with Awami League leaders in an effort at reconciliation. But, he added, the time had not yet come.

"There was no question of my being a tool of President Yahya Khan or of anybody else," he claimed.

US DOCTORS WARN AGAINST FAMINE IN BANGLADESH

Two US doctors today warned that 25 million of East Pakistan's poor inhabitants were facing famine, and said imports of nearly three million tonnes of grain were needed to prevent starvation.

Writing in the medical magazine, the Lancet, they said floods, the worst cyclone of the century and fighting in East Pakistan meant food production would be cut for two successive years.

YAHYA FINDS A QUISSLING TO LEAD TEAM TO UN

Pakistan President Yahya Khan found a second quissling in East Pakistan -- Mahmud Ali. He was due to head the Pakistan delegation to the

United Nations General Assembly in September, 1971. Mahmud Ali, a Bangalee, was vice-president of Pakistan Democratic Party. Earlier, his party chief Nurul Amin had declined the offer. Mahmud Ali had been miserably defeated in the 1970 elections by an Awami League representative.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

N Ireland leader says Brexit protocol could collapse govt

AFP, London

Northern Ireland's leader yesterday suspended cooperation with Dublin and warned he might collapse the province's devolved government in protest at a UK-EU protocol governing post-Brexit trade.

First Minister Jeffrey Donaldson demanded "significant and substantial changes" to the Northern Ireland Protocol, under which London agreed to checks on goods crossing the Irish Sea as part of its drawn-out divorce from the European Union.

WHO urges Covid vaccine

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Despite the call for a moratorium, some countries have been arguing for booster jabs not only for vulnerable people, but also for the wider population, citing signs of waning vaccine effectiveness against the highly transmissible Delta variant.

The WHO has acknowledged that an additional dose could be needed for immunocompromised people, but stresses that, for healthy people, the vaccines still seem very effective, especially in preventing severe disease.

Tedros said low-income countries were ready to run effective Covid-19 vaccination campaigns and it was now down to manufacturers and rich countries to deliver the pledged doses to ease global health inequalities.

About 80% of the 5.5 billion vaccine doses that have been administered globally went to high and upper-middle income countries, he said.

WHO has set a target to enable every country to vaccinate at least 40% of the population by the end of this year and Tedros said deliveries to poorer nations need to be boosted for this to be achieved.

Tedros said ministers of the 20 richest nations had assured him they would do everything to achieve the 40% target this year.

"Now is time for true leadership, not empty promises," he added.

We will in no way patronise

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Momen said Bangladesh has historic relationship with Afghanistan and it is observing the situation in that country which is a member of Saarc.

"We believe in democracy. We should ensure people's welfare and we're yet to make any decision on the Afghanistan issue," he said.

The Taliban on Tuesday announced an all-male interim government for Afghanistan.

The foreign minister said Bangladesh always believes in a people's government that comes through a political and democratic process and it always extends support to governments which reflect people's desire.

VACCINE SHARING

Momen reiterated Bangladesh's call for making Covid-19 vaccine a public good noting that there are incidents of date expiry of vaccine doses for not sharing those with other countries on time.

He said some are attaching conditions to sharing vaccine doses which he sees as an "indirect pressure" on countries like Bangladesh.

Talking about his recent visit to Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the minister said, "We had a very busy schedule with some positive outcomes."

Referring to his meeting with UNHCR, Momen said the UN will soon get engaged in Bhasan Char.

He said they also discussed the climate issues as Bangladesh remains very vocal on those.

The minister said they want actions and delivery with fulfillment of commitments on the climate front.

Earlier, Momen said a successful pandemic recovery must involve universal vaccination ending vaccine inequality.

In this regard, he referred to the unfortunate manifestation of vaccine nationalism and called the world to stand united against such vaccine inequity.

"It is time for the development partners to be more humane and help the deserving without discrimination. Vaccine should be a public good," the minister told the United Nations high-level Forum on the Culture of Peace held at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

Man arrested for comments

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The accused recently returned home from abroad and was jobless at the moment, he further said.

Contacted, none of the top officials of the district police said what Mizanur mentioned in the "derogatory remark".

Sources said policemen were also sent to Munshiganj from Dhaka to arrest the accused.

World's largest plant starts

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(CO2) out of the air every year, according to the companies.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), that equates to the emissions from about 870 cars.

To collect the carbon dioxide, the plant uses fans to draw air into a collector, which has a filter material inside. Once the filter material is filled with CO2, the collector is closed and the temperature is raised to release the CO2 from the material after which the highly concentrated gas can be collected.

The CO2 is then mixed with the water before being injected at a depth of 1,000 metres into the nearby basalt rock where it is petrified.

Proponents of so called carbon capture and storage (CCS) believe these technologies can become a major tool in the fight against climate change.

Critics, however, argue that the technology is still prohibitively expensive and might take decades to operate at scale.

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