



"As we have always said, we will continue to defend the rights of Palestinians."

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu after Turkey and Israel decide to restore full diplomatic ties

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"I will do whatever it takes to ensure Donald Trump is never again anywhere near the Oval Office, and I mean it."

Republican rebel Liz Cheney after losing her US Congress seat



Allegations ALARMING

Visiting UN rights chief raises concerns over human rights issues, calls for independent, transparent investigation



BACHELET RECOMMENDS

- Strengthen institutions to improve governance
- Fully implement the CHT Peace Accord
- Protect minorities
- Review DSA, ensure media freedom
- Devise specialised mechanism to probe extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet has raised deep concerns over the allegations of enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killing and torture in Bangladesh -- many of which have been attributed to the Rapid Action Battalion.

She recommended an impartial, independent and transparent investigation into these allegations, expressing her office's readiness

to provide advice on how such a mechanism could be designed in line with international standards.

"There are continued, alarming allegations of both short-term and long-term enforced disappearances, and concerns about the lack of due process and judicial safeguards," Bachelet said during a press conference at a city hotel, concluding her four-day visit to the country since August 14.

The UN rights chief has met Prime

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Physical work of BRT Line-3, a dedicated bus service road from Dhaka airport to Gazipur, remains suspended after the authorities on Tuesday decided not to resume the work unless foolproof safety is ensured. Two children were among the five people crushed to death as a precast girder segment fell on a car in the capital's Uttara on Monday. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Rohingyas must return to Myanmar

PM tells Bachelet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet yesterday that the Rohingya refugees must return to Myanmar.

"The Rohingyas are the nationals of Myanmar and they have to be taken back," she told Bachelet, who had called on her at the Gono Bhaban.

PM's press secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed the media afterwards, reports UNB.

At the PM's residence,

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DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Special cell's nod must for filing case

ICT ministry says in proposal to law ministry

ZYMA ISLAM

No case can be filed under the Digital Security Act without the express approval of a special cell headed by the divisional commissioner, the ICT ministry proposed yesterday.

The proposal was sent to the law ministry for vetting, said sources at the ICT division.

According to it, this three-member cell will be set up in every division.

While the divisional commissioner will head the cell, the other two members will be the divisional cyber tribunal's judge and an additional district magistrate.

Prior to filing or accepting any case under the DSA, the details must be presented to this cell and a minimum of two members must provide consensus, said the sources.

The cell does not need to meet physically and can convene virtually to provide a decision.

These steps are to be followed when deciding to prosecute someone for the publication of false, offensive or defamatory information, instances of cyber-terrorism, breach of government secrecy and illegal transfers of data.

Law enforcers must notify the cell and seek its approval in cases of arrests without warrants.

The proposal came at a time when UN high commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said they were engaging with the government on the review of the act.

Speaking at a press conference at the Intercontinental Hotel yesterday,

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Top officials asked to explain girder accident



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department and the managing director of Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company Ltd were asked to explain Monday's incident that killed five people, including two children, in the capital's Uttara.

ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of Road Transport and Highway Division, also said the chief engineer was asked to issue show-cause notices to project officials.

The road transport and bridges ministry ordered issuing of show-cause notices to the director and two managers of BRT Line 3 project regarding their inaction in ensuring safety at the construction site, ministry sources said.

The tragedy happened as a crane toppled over, making a box girder segment fall on a car on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway. Two children were among the five people crushed to death.

Rab arrested the crane operator, his helper and seven others in Gazipur, Sirajganj and Bagerhat, said a message sent to the media by the law enforcers.

The RHD and Dhaka BRT Company Ltd are implementing the project under which a 20.50km dedicated bus service road from Dhaka airport to Gazipur is being built. Physical work at the entire project got suspended after the Asian Development Bank, the main financier, on Tuesday called for ensuring foolproof safety or suspension of work.

In another development, top officials of the ministry and other government agencies met a delegate from the ADB and requested the latter to continue funding the project, Nuri said.

The lender was assured that necessary legal action would be taken against the company or individuals responsible, he told The Daily Star.

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ASSAULT OVER ATTIRE

2 rights bodies object to the comments by HC bench

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Questions raised by the High Court during a hearing of a case filed over a woman being assaulted for the dress she was wearing will encourage further harassment of women, two rights organisations said yesterday.

In separate statements, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and Naripokkho strongly condemned and protested the comments made by a High Court bench on Tuesday.

Naripokkho demanded that the HC withdraw this statement and be more cautious in the future.

On Tuesday, while hearing a bail plea of an accused in the case filed over harassment of a female university student at Narsingdi Railway Station on May 18, the HC questioned the student's choice of attire and whether she should have gone to a railway station like that.

According to the case statement, the student was physically assaulted by people at the train station for wearing what they claimed were "indecent clothes".

The HC bench comprising Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain and Justice AKM Zahurul Haque made the observation before granting six-month anticipatory bail to the accused, Marzia Akhter alias Shila.

"If the statement of the High Court as published in various media is true, it goes against women's equality, constitutional rights, internationally recognised human rights standards and the current government's policies regarding women empowerment. Such comments will incite the radicals," ASK said in its statement.

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PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

Crooked traders to blame

Says commerce minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unscrupulous traders are using the price hike of fuel as an excuse for increasing the prices of daily essentials, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday said.

Criticising the traders heavily, he cited the example of rice prices. "Due to the increase in fuel price, rice price should increase by Tk 0.50 per kg. But it has increased by Tk 4 per kg. Is there any logic behind this? But they took the advantage," he said at a press conference at the Secretariat.

Citing the soaring price of eggs, he said, "If the price of eggs can be reduced by importing, we can do that too, if necessary. But it is not possible overnight."

Tipu said his ministry was monitoring the market. He hoped that the prices of essentials would be under control by October.

Responding to a query on hiking edible oil prices, he said no decision had been made. Globally edible oil prices are falling but the US dollar has become costlier here. The price would be fixed considering both the issues, he said.

At another press conference, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud warned that the government would take stern action if prices of essentials and transport fares are raised unnecessarily.

Echoing the commerce minister, he said some unscrupulous traders increased the prices of goods and transport costs to enhance their profits.

The government has been trying to cool down the overheated prices of essentials in the wake of the record fuel price hike earlier this month.

Yesterday's meeting of the cabinet committee on purchase, chaired by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, decided to buy 1.25 crore litres of edible oil and 5,000 tonnes of lentils from local suppliers for sale at subsidised rates under the Family Card programme of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

Of the 1.25 crore litres of soybean oil, 40 lakh litres would be bought from Super Oil Refinery at Tk 173.95 a litre, according to Abdul Barik, additional secretary to the cabinet division.

The remaining 85 lakh litres would be provided by Shun Shing Edible Oil, a subsidiary of Bangladesh Edible Oil Ltd; Bashundhara; and Sena Edible Oil Industry, a concern of Sena Kalyan Sangstha Bangladesh for Tk 171 a litre.

The government would buy the 5,000 tonnes of lentils at Tk 111 a kg, Barik said.

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