

BORDER TENSION

We're ready to deal with anything

Says home boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a high-level meeting against the backdrop of repeated mortar shells from Myanmar landing in Bangladesh, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the government was ready to deal with any situation.



"We got the country's independence by fighting, so we don't care," he said while talking to reporters at the secretariat. Top officials of army, air force, BGB, coast guard and other law enforcement agencies and the foreign ministry attended a meeting held at the home ministry's conference room.

After the meeting, the home boss said, "Our prime minister is not in the country. We are observing the situation of Myanmar where its military is fighting the Arakan Army." "The ammunition used in the fight are sometimes landing in our country," the home boss said.

Mentioning that there are some casualties due to the shelling, he said the people were in fear. That's why the meeting was held.

"After the meeting, we decide to follow our foreign policy -- friendship to all and malice to none. We never encourage any war," he said.

"... We don't have any hostile attitude towards Myanmar."

"What we see that they [Myanmar people] are fighting themselves," he said, adding that Bangladesh has no role in Myanmar's internal conflict.

Over the past few weeks, Myanmar military reportedly continued its air and ground assaults against the Arakan Army, an ethnic armed organisation based in Rakhine State.

The situation turned worse on September 16 night after a Rohingya youth was killed and five others, including two children, were injured when a mortar shell fired from Myanmar exploded in a Rohingya camp on no-man's land near Tambru Bazar.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi at Lotte New York Palace hotel on Tuesday morning. The PM is in New York to attend the 77th United Nation General Assembly.

PHOTO: BSS

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

PM seeks stronger UN, int'l community role

BSS, New York

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday reiterated her call to the international community and the United Nations to play a stronger role in solving the Rohingya crisis by repatriating the Myanmar nationals to their motherland.

She made the call when UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi paid a courtesy call on her at the Lotte New York Palace hotel.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen briefed journalists about the PM's activities on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

During the meeting, Hasina emphasised enhancing the UNHCR's activities in Myanmar on Rohingya issues. Grandi in reply said he would visit Myanmar soon.

The premier reiterated that the Rohingya crisis could only be resolved through the repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas. The UNHCR high commissioner agreed with her on this matter.

The PM and the UN envoy discussed in detail the UNHCR's present activities to help the Rohingyas sheltered in Cox's

Bazar and Bhasan Char of Bangladesh.

Later in the day, prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim AA Khan, called on Hasina at the same venue.

They discussed various aspects of cooperation between Bangladesh and the ICC.

The premier assured the ICC prosecutor of Bangladesh's continued cooperation with its efforts to ensure justice and accountability for the Rohingya victims in Myanmar.

Khan expressed his willingness to visit Bangladesh early next year.

Meanwhile, Executive Director of the UN-Habitat Maimunah Mohd Sharif also paid a courtesy call on Hasina.

They discussed Bangladesh government's steps considering the importance of sustainable urbanisation and the areas of future cooperation.

HASINA CALLS FOR ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Addressing a side event on "Sustainable and Affordable Housing" yesterday, the prime minister called upon all world leaders to form a strong global partnership to say goodbye to the curse of homelessness.

"Homelessness is indeed a curse. It affects people in both developing and developed countries. Our experience shows it is within our capacity to do something about removing this curse. All our friends and stakeholders gathered here can forge a strong partnership to make that happen," she said.

Hasina said Bangladesh being a densely populated country of 165 million people could successfully manage the issue of homelessness.

"We are providing houses to the landless-homeless people with land free of cost. I am here today to share my experiences of success in building sustainable houses for the underprivileged people across the country."

She also mentioned that her government was also addressing the problems of climate-victim families too. "We have already accommodated 5,000 climate-refugee families in 139 multi-storey buildings in Cox's Bazar."

President of Malawi, Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, and vice-minister of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Sanjay Verma, among others, also spoke on the occasion.

Two killed in Sirajganj road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two people, including a child, were killed and two others injured after a truck rammed into a CNG-run three-wheeler in Sirajganj on Tuesday night.

The accident took place in Kashihaat area of Sirajganj Sadar upazila around 10:00pm.

All the victims were passengers of the three-wheeler. Abdul Malek, 25, and six-year-old Yeamin died on the spot, said police.

Among the injured are Yeamin's father Hossain Ali and the driver of the three-wheeler.

Hossain was moved to Dhaka yesterday for better treatment.

Humayun Kabir, OC of Sirajganj Sadar Police Station, said police seized the truck, but its driver was on the run.

Rohingya man killed in Cox's Bazar camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya man was shot and stabbed to death by unidentified criminals at a camp in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya upazila early yesterday.

The deceased, Jafar, 35, was a volunteerguard of camp-18.

Faruk Ahmed, assistant superintendent of police of Armed Police Battalion-8, said some 20-25 criminals entered block H-51 of the camp around 3:30am and fired two shots at Jafar. They then stabbed him to ensure his death and fled.

Police later recovered the body from the spot and sent it to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Security was stepped up in the camp following the killing, said the ASP, adding that law enforcers were working to identify and arrest the killers.

6 return home after serving time in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Six Bangladeshis, including two children, returned home from India through Benapole land port yesterday after serving two and a half years in jail on charges of illegal entry.

The six are members of two families from Bagerhat and Narayanganj.

The returnees -- two men, two women and two children -- are currently staying in a shelter run by Rights Jessore, an NGO working to prevent human trafficking.

They were taken to the shelter after the Indian police handed them over to the Benapole Immigration Police around 6:30am yesterday.

Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge of Benapole Immigration Police, said human traffickers sent the Bangladeshis to India, promising them good jobs.

They had entered India through different borders and had to take odd jobs in Chennai from where the Indian police arrested them, the OC added.

US, Canadian warships sail through Taiwan Strait

AFP, Taipei

A US destroyer and a Canadian frigate sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Tuesday in the latest joint operation aimed at reinforcing the route's status as an international waterway.

Homecoming

FROM PAGE 1

footballers, all of whom were overwhelmed with the reception. They responded promptly to the thrilled crowd by waving their hands throughout the parade.

However, the long and arduous bus ride did hit a snag. Ritu Porna Chakma, a member of the champion side who scored two of Bangladesh's 23 goals in the tournament, hurt her head in a collision with an overhead banner near Nikunja.

The midfielder was taken to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and needed three stitches to her head. She joined the team in celebration at BFF later.

The footballers reached the BFF House around 7:30pm amid an overwhelming presence of hundreds waiting to welcome the champions. At the BFF House, the footballers were welcomed by BFF President Kazi Salahuddin, who held a press conference later in the evening.

The BFF house was packed with youth team members from different clubs, age-level footballers, BFF officials and fans in general, all waiting eagerly for Sabina and her troops.

"They are our inspiration. From now on, probably we will be encouraged by our family members to pursue a career in football and follow in the footsteps of the seniors and bring in more glories for the country," said Puja Rani Das, an age-level footballer from Brahmanbaria, who was awaiting the team's arrival in BFF for hours.

Another sentiment that was prevalent among fans yesterday was that this success of the footballers needs to be sustained.

Build a home

FROM PAGE 1

she gave the directive to build Rupna's house, said PM's Press Secretary Ihasanul Karim.

Hasina was in New York to attend the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

On Tuesday, Rangamati Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Mizanur Rahman visited the houses of Rupna Chakma and her teammate Ritu Porna Chakma with sweets, fruits, and flowers.

At least 50 hurt as BNP men, cops clash

FROM PAGE 1

Mohammad Mohiuddin, convener of Munshiganj Sadar BNP, said, "We were coming to the rally peacefully in small processions. Unprovoked, police barred us. As we still tried to join the rally, they attacked us with batons and opened fire."

Masud Rana, member-secretary of Munshiganj Jubo Dal, said Jubo Dal activist Jahangir Alam, BNP activist Shaon and Chhatra Dal activist Tareq were critically injured as they got shot by police.

A medical officer at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night said Shaon was unconscious and his injuries were critical.

Tareq told our DMCH correspondent that police hit him on the head with a firearm. Inspector Bacchu Miah of the DMCH police outpost said Jahangir was taken to Dhaka Dental Medical College Hospital.

However, Toriquzzaman, officer-in-charge of Munshiganj Sadar Police Station, said the demonstrators first attacked police.

"We were in the area to maintain law and order. The BNP men attacked us with local weapons. Initially, we only tried to defend ourselves. When they grew more aggressive, we had to fire rubber bullets and use teargas to disperse them," he said, adding

that he himself and an additional superintendent of police were injured.

The BNP men set fire to a few motorcycles parked in the area, he said.

Mohammad Rubel, 35, a correspondent of Daily Kalbela, was among the injured.

BNP REACTION

Speaking to the press at the party's central office in Nayapaltan, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi alleged the government was killing BNP men as if it was a game.

Several hundred BNP leaders and activists later marched in Nayapaltan protesting the attack in Munshiganj.

[A correspondent from Munshiganj contributed to the report]

We maintain 'zero tolerance'

FROM PAGE 1

cases of alleged enforced disappearances," reads Bangladesh's position paper, presented by Abdullah Al Forhad, second secretary at the permanent mission of Bangladesh to the UN in Geneva.

According to the working group's annual report, five new incidents of enforced disappearance in Bangladesh were reported to the group in the last one year, taking the number of cases being investigated by the UN body to 81.

The UN group wrote about the five cases to the government but is yet to receive a response. However, it welcomed the fact that Bangladesh provided substantive information on cases during the reporting period, which may lead to the clarification of eight outstanding cases.

The working group urged the authorities to redouble efforts to provide additional information, including replying to its related general allegation sent after its 125th session in September last year, with

a view to clarifying all outstanding cases.

It also urged Bangladesh to launch independent and impartial investigations into the conduct of Rab, particularly concerning allegations of enforced disappearances perpetrated by its agents.

It said the government must ensure that relatives of disappeared persons, and human rights defenders and civil society organisations working on their behalf are protected from any threat, intimidation or reprisals.

The working group reiterated its interest in undertaking a visit to Bangladesh, as expressed in several communications transmitted since 2013.

Luciano Hazan, chair of the working group, stressed on the need to implement the recommendations of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which include impartial, independent and transparent investigation into these allegations, accompanied by security sector reform.

Bangladesh, in its position paper, said in many cases the "perceived" victims reappeared, disproving the allegations of "enforced disappearance".

However, the government remains committed to ensuring that any individual reported missing be rescued with support and cooperation from their family members in due diligence with the legal framework.

"We further notice a worrying trend among 'miscreants' to use fake identity and disguise as law enforcement agency members to carry out criminal activities like 'abductions' or 'kidnappings'," it said.

The statement said Bangladesh regretted that there was a tendency by certain "vested quarters" to label all missing cases as enforced disappearance with a view to maligning the government and its positive achievements.

Hence, Bangladesh urged the working group to consider the complaints based on factual information and evidence.

Rising obesity projected to hamper developing economies: report

AFP, New York

Rising levels of obesity are set to cost the world economy 3.3 percent of GDP by 2060, slowing development in lower-income countries and making it hard for people to lead healthy lives, according to a new study published yesterday.

The peer-reviewed paper, published in BMJ Global Health, provides the first country-by-country estimate of the economic impacts of obesity, a major driver of other non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart conditions.

It also included projections for the numbers of people in each country who are overweight or obese -- defined as a body mass index in adults greater or equal to 25 and 30, respectively.

"Globally, nearly two in three adults are now living with overweight and obesity. And we project that will be three in four adults by 2060," lead author Rachel Nugent told reporters

at a briefing on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

The conditions currently cost 2.2 percent of global GDP, and the biggest increases are expected to be seen in lower-resourced countries.

China, the United States and India are projected to experience the highest impact in absolute terms -- costing the countries \$10 trillion, \$2.5 trillion and \$850 billion, respectively.

As a proportion of the economy, the worst impacted countries are set to include the United Arab Emirates, where obesity would account for 11 percent of GDP, and Trinidad and Tobago at 10.2 percent.

The report analyzed both direct costs, made up primarily of medical fees, and indirect costs from premature mortality and lost productivity. Previous papers had only focused on the former.

"Less visible costs constitute a drag on development," said Nugent, vice president of non-communicable diseases at non-profit research firm RTI International.

Dinajpur edu board

FROM PAGE 1

Handwritten copies of question papers of English first paper, held on September 19, and English second paper, held on September 20, were sent to examinees and their guardians via various instant messaging apps, including WhatsApp, the nights before.

The leaked questions were identical to the ones at the exam centre on the days of the tests.

Officials of Dinajpur education board, and the Bhurungamari upazila education officer, however, claimed that printed question papers were leaked around 30 to 45 minutes before the exams began.

After learning about the incident, Professor Kamrul Islam, chairman of Dinajpur education board;

Mohammad Rezaul Karim, deputy commissioner of Kurigram; Al Asad Md Mahfuzul Islam, superintendent of police; and Shamsul Alam, district education officer, went to Bhurungamari on Tuesday to talk to officials involved with the ongoing SSC exams.

They also quizzed the three accused teachers.

Seeking anonymity, an official of Dinajpur education board said some officials of the board might be involved with the question paper leak.

At least 1,73,961 students from 2,675 schools under eight districts of Dinajpur education board are sitting for the SSC examination this year.

(Our Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat correspondents contributed to this report.)