

Play objective role in all spheres

Quader urges media

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has called upon media to play objective role in all spheres and sought media support in taking the country ahead.

He was addressing a view-exchange meeting with journalists arranged by information and broadcasting ministry at the Dhaka Club last night.

Information and Broadcasting Minister and AL Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud delivered the welcome speech while Bangladesh Press Council Chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq and Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque was also there.

Prime Minister's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) Managing Director and Chief Editor Abul Kalam Azad, daily Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Prothom Alo Editor Matuur Rahman, Kal Bela Editor Abed Khan, Ajker Patrika Editor Prof Golam Rahman, Jatiya Press Club (JPC) former president Muhammad Shafiqur Rahman, Jugantor Editor Saiful Alam, Bangladesh Pratidin Editor Nayeem Nizam, Manabzamin Editor Matuur Rahman Chowdhury, New Age Editor Nurul Kabir, Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta, Amader Natun Somoy Editor Naimul Islam Khan, Bangladesh Post Editor Sharif Shahabuddin, Ekattor Television Chief Executive Officer Mozzamel Babu, Channel I Director and News Editor Shykh Seraj, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) former president Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and incumbent President Omar Faruque, JPC President Farida Yasmin, BFUJ General Secretary Dip Azad, Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Sohel Haider Chowdhury and Journalists Welfare Trust Managing Director Subhash Chandra Badal were present among the media personalities.

Hasan Mahmud, in his address, said any government in the world cannot be 100 percent flawless.

He urged media to showcase the bigger achievements of the nation without exaggerating the flaws.



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with China's President Xi Jinping at the G20 Leaders' Summit in Bali, Indonesia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Ukraine war dominates G20

Leaders condemn Russia's war, but some have 'different assessments'

REUTERS, Nusa Dua

The Group of 20 nations unanimously adopted a declaration saying most members condemned the war in Ukraine, but the document concluding their summit acknowledged some countries saw the conflict differently.

The leaders of the world's biggest economies also agreed to pace interest rate rises carefully to avoid spillovers and warned of "increased volatility" in currency moves.

But it was the Ukraine conflict, which started with a Russian invasion in February, that dominated the two-day summit on the Indonesian island of Bali.

As a G20 member, Russia was among the attendees, although President Vladimir Putin did not go himself.

"Most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine," the leaders said in their declaration.

The declaration recognised that "there were other views and different assessments of the situation and sanctions", signalling Russia's rejection of a unanimous condemnation.

The G20 leaders also said in the declaration that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was "inadmissible", alluding to what Western officials have called irresponsible Russian threats of a possible nuclear option since the Ukraine

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war began. Russia has in turn accused the West of "provocative" nuclear rhetoric.

"It is essential to uphold international law and the multilateral system that safeguards peace and stability," the declaration added.

French President Emmanuel Macron said G20 leaders also agreed to push Russia towards de-escalation in Ukraine and expressed hope China could play a bigger mediation role in the coming

months.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala told Reuters that several major economies faced a real risk of sliding into recession as the war in Ukraine, rising food and fuel costs, and soaring inflation cloud the global outlook.

Many participants said Putin's invasion of Ukraine had pummelled the global economy and revived Cold War-era geopolitical divisions just as the world was emerging from the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday repeated Putin's line that Nato's expansion had threatened Russia. "Yes, there is a war going on in Ukraine, a hybrid war that the West has unleashed and been preparing for years," he said. Lavrov was representing Putin at the summit but left on Tuesday evening. Russia was later represented by Finance Minister Anton Siluanov.

Russia spoke in favour of extending the Black Sea grain deal at the summit as long as more grain was sent to countries in the greatest need, Siluanov told Russia's state-run RT news channel.

Get PBI to probe Duronto murder: family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family members of deceased Awami League leader Duronto Biplob yesterday urged the Inspector General of Police to assign the Police Bureau of Investigation to probe the murder.

"We think my brother's murder was planned and that is why he was killed so brutally. So, I submitted an application to the IGP's office to transfer the case to the PBI which is a specialised investigation unit," said Duronto's younger sister Shashwatee Biplob.

Shashwatee filed a murder case with South Keraniganj Police Station on November 14. A sub-inspector of the River Police was tasked with the investigation immediately after the case was filed.

Contacted yesterday, Sub-Inspector Shahjahan said police could neither recover Duronto's phone nor arrest anyone in this connection.

Duronto's body was found floating in the Shitalakkhya river in Pagla area of Narayanganj's Fatullah on November 12, five days after he went missing. There was a severe injury to the back of his head and there were several injury marks on his chest.

He was the general secretary of Jahangirnagar University Chhatra League. His last location was tracked to Kamrangirchar in Dhaka.

'Mango thief' beaten to death in Chapainawabganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A suspected thief was beaten to death at a mango orchard in Chapainawabganj's Nachol upazila yesterday.

The victim is Shukuddin, 53, said Mintu Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nachol Police Station.

Four men, including the victim, entered the mango orchard of one Shafiqul Islam at Khandura village.

The guards of the orchard held Shukuddin and beat him up indiscriminately, the OC said.

He was found in a severely injured condition around 8:30am.

Later, doctors at Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital declared him dead.

Police detained Asaduzzaman Shamim and Hasan Ali, guards of the orchard, in this connection.

Man killed in oil tanker blast in N'ganj shipyard

STAR REPORT

A construction worker died in an oil tanker blast at a shipyard in Narayanganj's Rugganj upazila yesterday.

The dead is Nur Jamal, 29, son of Jafar Bepari. The incident took place around 9:00am in Dorkandi area of Murapara union.

Some workers were welding on a T-Shanghai-8 ship that was carrying oil when the explosion happened," Sub-Inspector Mahbub Alam, in-charge of Ashapura Naval Police Outpost in Rugganj, told The Daily Star.

What is current forex reserve?

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the 77 million euro disbursed to Payra Port Authority against the 524.5 million euro loan sanctioned and the below-investment-grade securities are considered as gross international reserves.

"These don't count as reserve assets as per BPM6," said a finance ministry official involved in the meetings with the IMF staff mission. These components amount to about \$8.2 billion, he added.

Subsequently, the issue of reserve reporting was discussed at length during the recently-concluded IMF staff mission.

The IMF mission insisted on reporting on gross reserves as per BPM6. The Daily Star has learnt from people involved in the meetings.

Reserve assets "must be readily available in the most unconditional form"; it should be "liquid in that the asset can be bought, sold and liquidated for foreign currency (cash)

with minimum cost and time, and without unduly affecting the value of the asset", the IMF said in BPM6.

The mission also called for reporting on net reserves as gross reserves can provide a misleading view of the size of the country's precautionary buffers available to meet potential foreign exchange liquidity needs in adverse circumstances.

In this context, the concept of net international reserves – gross reserves minus short-term foreign currency drains – is useful to guide macroeconomic policy advice.

Short-term foreign currency drains include impending import bills and loan repayments.

For countries with less open capital accounts, import coverage is often seen as a relevant measure, highlighting how long imports can be sustained in the event of a shock.

Traditionally, the measure has been based on months of prospective imports, with three months' coverage

typically used as a benchmark, according to the IMF.

"There is still 3-3.5 months of coverage," Anand told a press briefing on November 9 after wrapping up the 15-day tour of Bangladesh.

Going by the IMF's number for Bangladesh's gross reserves, the import cover at present is for 4.2 months assuming that the average monthly import bill is \$6.5 billion, the finance ministry official said.

"If you include EDF and others, it would be 5.5 months of import," he added.

The central bank though is open to the IMF's methodology for reserve calculation and is planning on adopting BPM6 as early as January, according to officials working on the matter.

"The EDF would be slashed by half, so it would not be a problem to report reserves as per the IMF's methodology," said an official on the condition of anonymity.

their leaders and that the holding of a credible election was the job of the EC and the entire society.

The heads and deputy heads of the missions of the 14 countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development after a meeting with the CEC on July 3 said ensuring an electoral environment that is participatory and free from violence and intimidation is crucial.

Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman yesterday said, "I think, first it should be clear whether such comments were their personal comments, or if it was their country's comment. I can say a lot personally but as an election commissioner, I can't say much. They should think before making comments."

He said foreign diplomats work and speak in line with the Vienna convention and that every host country is unique which should be kept in mind.

On Monday, Shahriar Alam in a Facebook post said, "We summoned the Japanese Ambassador. We conveyed necessary messages to him. We do not think there is a need to say everything in detail in the media, so we do not want to make any further statement in any media on this matter."

Shahriar on Tuesday said the Japanese ambassador's comments on Bangladesh's election was "unexpected

and the government would take appropriate steps if any foreign diplomat crosses the line".

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque yesterday said any interference of foreign diplomats in the country's internal issues will not be tolerated.

"Persons who do this will be warned. The Japanese ambassador will also be warned," he said while talking to reporters in Meherpur.

"Bangladesh is an independent and sovereign country. We've liberated it through a bloody war. We'll not give any concession on the question of the country's dignity," he said.

An election commissioner said activities of many Bangladeshi politicians create the scope for foreign diplomats to make comments on internal matters of the country.

Another commissioner said some foreign diplomats were talking about incidents that might have happened during the tenure of the previous EC.

The previous two ECs were criticised for holding "one-sided" polls in 2014 in which 153 MPs out of 300 were elected unopposed amid polls boycott by major opposition parties and arson attacks on polling stations, and for failing to stop alleged ballot box stuffing the night before the 2018 polls.

New venue, same obstacles

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men and the colluding transport owners were calling strikes to foil the programme.

Just three days before the rally, Moulvibazar bus owners called a day-long strike for Friday and Saturday and Sylhet district bus owners for Saturday.

Meanwhile, at least 13 BNP men were arrested while distributing leaflets in different areas in the last 10 days. Besides, the BNP men were obstructed by police and Chhatra League activists in seven places in the division while campaigning, sources said.

Yesterday, Habiganj's Baniachong upazila unit BNP Joint Secretary Jahir Khan was arrested on charges of attacking police, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

Contacted, Abu Haniif, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Baniachong Police Station, said, "At 12:30am yesterday, some 30 to 35 leaders and activists of the BNP were holding a meeting for the Sylhet rally on a

school ground with explosives and firearms. When police went there, they launched an attack and exploded crude bombs."

Five police personnel, including Ajay Chandra Deb, OC of Baniachong Police Station, were injured in the incident, he claimed.

GK Gaus, senior joint convener of Habiganj BNP, contradicted the OC's statement.

After leaders and activists distributed leaflets, they went to a BNP leader's shop to have tea. All of a sudden, police raided the tea stall and arrested Jahir, he added.

Three Chhatra Dal men, including upazila unit BNP Joint Convener Faisal Ahmed, were arrested on charges of clashing with BCL men.

Abdul Quyum Choudhury, president of the Sylhet district unit BNP, said, "We plan to organise the rally in peace and our campaigning ahead of the rally is peaceful."

"Yet, some criminals and over-enthusiastic people are trying to

obstruct us by ignoring the fact that political activities are our democratic rights."

Irrespective of all the obstacles, the rally will be a grand success, said Quyum, who is also the convener of the rally sub-committee.

The BNP has been setting up camps at the rally venue – Alia Madrasa ground – so that party activists, who would come days before the rally, could stay.

Sylhet City Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury, also the convener of the rally sub-committee for the hospitality of the participants, said, "No matter what happens, we are prepared to make the rally a success. People who will come to the city do not care whether they get a place at a hotel or on a rooftop. They are ready to stay on the streets and fields."

In another development, at least 30 BNP men were injured in an attack allegedly by police during a BNP meeting in Habiganj's Lakhai upazila yesterday.

Dhaka to focus on food, energy supply

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Lavrov will visit Bangladesh to attend the 22nd Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) meeting on November 23-24 to be held at Hotel InterContinental at the invitation of Bangladesh, the current chair of IORA.

Ministers and top officials of 23 member countries, and 10 dialogue partners including the US, UK, Russia, China, Japan, Korea, Turkey will be attending the event, foreign ministry officials said.

Lavrov, who happily accept the invitation, will also be meeting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, officials have confirmed.

His visit to Dhaka draws significant attention as the Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent Western sanctions left energy, fertiliser, and food supply in disarray and caused inflation worldwide.

International relations analysts said Russia faces global isolation. The UN General Assembly has adopted several resolutions since March this year demanding end to the war, territorial integrity of Ukraine and Russia's reparation for the damages caused by attacks in Ukraine.

Bangladesh has abstained from voting in two UNGA resolutions and voted for Ukraine in one.

"It is only natural that Russian foreign minister will seek Bangladesh's support in the global stage," said Prof Syeda Rozana Rashid of Dhaka University's international relations department.

She said Russia is a trusted friend of Bangladesh and had strongly supported Bangladesh during the Liberation War when the US took the side of Pakistan. But global geopolitics has changed a lot.

The US and European Union are Bangladesh's major export destinations and they are supporting Bangladesh in the Rohingya crisis, politically and financially.

However, they frequently speak about the country's democracy, governance, freedom of press, and human rights situation.

On the other hand, Bangladesh's export to Russia is relatively small. Bangladesh imports wheat from Russia and is implementing Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant with Russian support.

Prof Rozana said while Bangladesh faces huge pressure for the Rohingya

crisis, Russia has been selling arms to Myanmar and has not played any role in addressing the crisis at the UN Security Council.

"The equation of diplomatic relationship with different countries, therefore, has become difficult," she said.

Still, she said, Bangladesh needs to strike a balance between its relationship with Russia and the Western countries.

"Obviously, we will seek Russia's support in addressing the Rohingya crisis," a foreign ministry official said.

Bangladesh has recently signed an agreement on importing 5 lakh tonnes of wheat from Russia, and its supply is ongoing, he said.

"... We will see how we can get Russian support on energy," the official said.

Bangladesh is facing problems in paying Russia for the equipment in Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, implementation of which has become slow due to sanctions against Russia. Fund from Russia also dwindled, the official added.

"We will discuss ways to address the issue and speed up the implementation of the project."