

Democracy is in our blood, UK need not worry

Momen tells UK minister

DIPLomatic CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said that the UK does not need to worry about the elections and democracy in Bangladesh as arrangements for fair and transparent polls are already in place.

"You have no reason to worry. Democracy, justice, and human rights are in our blood. There is no scope for others to teach us..." he told journalists after his meeting with UK Minister for Indo-Pacific Anne-Marie Trevelyan at the foreign ministry.

He said Bangladesh wants transparent and fair elections and that many elections were properly held in the last 14 years. "We introduced photo IDs to prevent fake voting. We have introduced a transparent ballot box. We have formed a transparent and strong Election Commission. It can do whatever it wants..." the minister said.

The purpose of all these are holding transparent and fair elections. "Our belief is that the people will vote for us. We have confidence in people. ... Democracy and justice are in our blood, human rights and justice are in our blood."

The foreign minister at another programme yesterday expressed frustration over the slow progress of regional initiatives and said the potentials of the region are largely untapped.

He cited the example of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN), a sub-regional initiative taken years ago for promoting trade, connectivity, and electricity sharing, which is yet to be in operation.

Bangladesh wants to import hydroelectricity, initially 50MW, from Nepal, but things are moving very slowly, he said while speaking as the chief guest at a seminar marking the 50 years of Bangladesh-Nepal relationship yesterday.

He said Bangladesh and Nepal are graduating from LDCs in 2026 and they face similar challenges. The two countries should work together to ensure that the benefits they are now getting as LDC continue, he said.

Nepalese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ghanshyam Bhandari said India is positive about allowing Bangladesh to import 50MW of hydropower from Nepal.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Anne-Marie Trevelyan, minister of state for foreign affairs of the UK, met at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

BNP-Jamaat carried out attacks on Ahmadiyyas

Info minister says after visiting scene

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday claimed BNP-Jamaat leaders orchestrated the attack on the Ahmadiyya community in Panchagarh, monitoring it from Dhaka and London.

"They [BNP-Jamaat] wanted to spread chaos across the country based on Panchagarh's violence as they did in 2013, 2014, and 2015 when they attacked government establishments. Most of the attackers were from BNP and Jamaat who took part in the heinous attack using different banners," he told reporters after visiting the affected houses in Phultala and Shanshiri villages.

The minister also claimed that the attacks were instigated through the Facebook pages of Basher Kella, Oikya Parishad against Qadiani, former

BNP lawmakers Rumin Farhana, and Harunur Rashid.

He also said the attack was pre-planned and that the houses were marked ahead of time.

The attack was similar to the way Razakars burned people's houses during the Liberation War in 1971, the minister added.

Meanwhile, six more people were arrested over the attacks, taking the total number of arrestees to 187.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan, and Panchagarh-1 MP Mozaharul Haque Prodhann accompanied the minister.

On March 3, two people were killed and at least 30 others, including seven policemen, injured in a clash between law enforcers and supporters of Islamist organisations demonstrating against

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Iran's behaviour to be under microscope

Say Saudi columnists after rapprochement deal

REUTERS, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia will watch Iran's behaviour during the two-month window agreed upon to restore relations, Saudi columnists said yesterday, reflecting continued wariness in the longtime rivalry between the region's Sunni Muslim and Shia powers.

The breakthrough on Friday brokered by China, a major trade partner of both countries, followed several rounds of Saudi-Iranian talks held in the region in a bid to contain tensions, at a time of Gulf frustration over what they perceive as gradual US disengagement from the region.

EC totally free

FROM PAGE 1 economic development of Bangladesh, the Covid-19 pandemic and the post-Covid situation.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

About the next general election, the premier said Bangladesh follows the Westminster-type democracy. "Our main goal is the welfare of the people. The Election Commission is totally independent. It will conduct the election," the PM was quoted as saying.

Regarding freedom of expression, Hasina said the media enjoys total freedom here. There was only one television channel in the country, but her government allowed private television channels. Now there are 24 private TV channels and more TV channels are in the pipeline, she said.

The UK's Indo-Pacific state minister said the next stage of development is very important for Bangladesh on the way to its graduation from the status of a least developed country (LDC).

Trevelyan said she visited the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and appreciated Bangladesh and Hasina for providing shelter to the displaced people.

She also praised the administration for its manner of handling the recent fire incident in the Rohingya camp.

In this regard, the PM said a huge number of babies are born in the displaced Rohingya community every year, intensifying the burden further on Bangladesh.

Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the whole world, Hasina said Bangladesh emphasised on growing more food and took steps accordingly.

PM's Ambassador-at-Large Mohammad Ziauddin, PMO Secretary Mohammad Salahuddin and UK High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson were present.

Cheetahs back in wild in India after seven decades

AFP, New Delhi

Two Namibian cheetahs relocated to India last year were released into the wild, more than seven decades after the world's fastest land animal was declared extinct in the South Asian country.

"Both cheetahs are doing good," India's Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav tweeted Saturday after the male and female darted from quarantine enclosures of Kuno National Park into the wild.

Counterfeit wires, cables wreak havoc

FROM PAGE 1 expensive brands in new packaging in shady factories, deceiving both the brands and customers and posing significant fire hazards.

Meanwhile, many low-quality products are also being imported from abroad.

The use of these products is rampant as customers can get them at cheaper rates and fail to realise that it is

thick but get thinner as they go along.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Abdul Hasib Chowdhury, an associate professor of the electrical and electronic engineering department at Buet, said when substandard cables and circuit breakers are used, heat is produced even during regular electricity flow.

If new power connections are added to the wiring of building, it will exceed

pieces and put into moulds made from old plastic, making the insulations not fire resistant, he said.

"The BSTI-approved cables have fire resistance at alternate voltage foot. Even if they melt from heat, it stops after a foot due to the resistance cap in the next one. But the fraudulent traders do not even have the capacity to maintain the quality of their products," Mazharul said.

"What's worrying is that they even use aluminium and acid-water to make it gleam or look polished," he said, adding that after manufacturing, these are supplied to Nawabpur – a hub for low-quality electric wires.

Rafiqul Islam Rony, director of marketing and sales at BRB Cable Industries Limited, said unless regulating agencies ensure frequent monitoring with proper action, the counterfeit market will keep running.

Reazul Haque, deputy director of BSTI, said, "We can't stop it alone. So, we take help from Rab and other law enforcement agencies."

BNP won't

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The BNP leader said they discussed the current situation of the country, democracy and the next election during the meeting.

He said the international community, and democratic countries in particular, are closely monitoring the situation in Bangladesh.

"As part of that they [diplomats and countries] are observing the state of democracy in Bangladesh, the state of human rights, the rule of law, freedom of expression, freedom of press in the country. There is particular concern inside and outside the country about the next election and certainly they have kept a close eye on the issue."

The BNP leader also said the diplomats wanted to know how the next election would be held and how the election would be a neutral and inclusive one.

Charles Whiteley, EU ambassador to Bangladesh, and envoys from Denmark, Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Sweden and the Netherlands attended the meeting.

The BNP delegation was led by party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

Other members of the BNP delegation included Amir Khosru, Organising Secretary (Dhaka division) Shama Obaid, and Human Rights Affairs Secretary Asaduzzaman Asad.

The BNP has been demonstrating to realise its 10-point demand that include the government stepping down and a non-partisan interim government stepping in during the next national election.

CHITTAGONG UNIVERSITY

16 teachers resign from admin posts

STAR REPORT

Sixteen teachers of University of Chittagong yesterday resigned from their administrative posts. Mentioning "personal" their reason behind the resignations, they submitted their letters to CU's acting registrar M Nur Ahmad.

Seeking anonymity, one of the teachers said, "We do not find any discipline in the vice-chancellor's activities... There are irregularities in various recruitments. We have been bearing responsibility for that."

As a result, 16 teachers out of 18 posts have resigned from different administrative boards, he said.

"Of them, six are assistant proctors. Besides, the provosts and resident teachers of various residential halls are among the posts," the teacher added.

2 cops land in jail over torture of trader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sent an inspector and a sub-inspector to jail in connection with a case filed over custodial torture.

The accused are Inspector Morshed Alam, former officer-in-charge, and Sadhan Basak, former sub-inspector of Sonargaon Police Station.

The duo was on advance bail from High Court for four weeks. Yesterday, they surrendered before the District Sessions Judges Court and applied for bail extension.

Judge Mohammad Ash Shams Jaglul Hossain then sent them to jail, confirmed Mohammad Asaduzzaman, inspector of the court.

Anisur Rahman Alamgir, a trader in Sonargaon, filed the case to the court against the accused under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act on November 14, 2019.

Morshed and Sadhan were then OC and SI respectively of Sonargaon Police Station.

After investigating the case, the Narayanganj court issued arrest warrant against the duo on February 9 this year.

Complainant Anisur said he was one of the victims.

Jubo League activist Jahidul Islam Swapon and his associate Babul were also picked up and tortured by OC Morshed and SI Sadhan on October 7, 2018.

OC Morshed is now with Gazipur Metropolitan Police and Sadhan Basak with Bhola district police, according to police sources.

Angry protests at RU

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They cleared the road for a while after 1:30pm, but blocked it again and kept it closed to traffic for the rest of the day.

Meanwhile, another group of students went to the Senate Bhaban premises and kept Vice-Chancellor Prof Golam Shabbir Sattar and other top officials confined for almost three hours.

They left Senate Bhaban around 3:00pm after the officials promised to meet their demands of withdrawal of the proctor, ensuring justice for the students, treatment of the injured students and safety on campus.

On Saturday evening, several students of the university travelling to the campus by a bus from Bogura engaged in an argument with the driver and his assistant over a beat.

When the bus reached Binodpur Bazar near the campus, the students forced the driver and helper to get down from the vehicle and took them inside a nearby shop and began to beat them up, locals and police said.

As some shopkeepers tried to save the transport workers, a clash began between students and local traders. This escalated into a running battle that went on until late at night.

Students and locals said Chhatra League leaders and activists led the students after a motorcycle of the RU BCL President Golam Kibria was set on fire during the clashes.

Around 50 shops and a police outpost were set on fire. Police used firearms and teargas shells to disperse the mobs. Seven platoons of the were deployed to bring the situation under control.

Eighty-six of the injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. Of them, 20 students were injured by shotgun pellets. A student named Muhammad Rakib was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit with pellet injuries to his head and throat.

Three law students suffered pellet injuries to their eyes.

Yesterday evening, RU spokesperson

Rohingya camp fire

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commissioner office yesterday.

"The fire was originated around 2:30pm and it came under control around 6:00pm. We found evidence that the fire first broke out at a block of camp no-11 and then in five blocks of two other camps within a short span of time," said Sufian.

"A clash and an exchange of bullets took place between two groups of criminals in the Rohingya camp just a day before the fire incident," he added.

Besides, some people strategically barred Rohingyas from dousing the

blaze, saying that "Run quickly and save your life first. It is better to save your life than put out the fire."

"All these incidents prove that the fire was an act of sabotage," said Sufian.

The probe committee talked to 75 people to prepare the report. The interviewees include Rohingya people, staffers of camp administration and NGOs and local representatives.

It also placed a 10-point recommendation, including further investigation to identify the criminals, and steps for preventing such incidents.

Tigers down

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in the 17th, leaving England 100 for seven before Duckett departed in the 20th over, courtesy of a brilliant running catch by Shanto off the bowling of Mustafizur, and eventually England were restricted to a subpar 117.

The Bangladesh chase triggered nervy moments for the packed stadium amidst the ooohs and aahs. The wicket had slowed down enough for Liton and Rony Talukdar to mistime deliveries, while Towhid Hridoy looked good before he fell after scoring 17.

Miraz was promoted up the order and his vital 16-ball 20 produced the decisive partnership with Shanto to take Tigers from 56 for three to 97 for four. Shakib soon fell for a three-ball duck and Jofra Archer showed fearsome pace to leave Afif Hossain's bails flying towards the third-man boundary. Needing 13 off 12 deliveries, Shanto and Taskin found both courage and boundaries to ultimately seal victory with seven balls to spare as the Tigers, with a young side, ushered in a turnaround in fortunes in the T20I format.