

'Dhaka, Delhi are satisfied with bilateral cooperation'

Says PM's press secy after Jaishankar calls on Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and India have expressed satisfaction over the bilateral cooperation between the two neighbours in various fields.

This satisfaction was expressed when Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said the two leaders discussed the South Asian regional economy amid the situation emerging from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

They also discussed the 6th Indian Ocean Conference, to be held on May 12-13 in Dhaka, and the G20 summit to be organised in India in September.

Hasina hoped that India will make significant contribution for advancing the interests of the people of the developed and least developed countries.

She conveyed her regards to her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

Jaishankar thanked Bangladesh for hosting the 6th Indian Ocean Conference. He said Bangladesh's participation in the event is very important.

Ambassador-at-large Mohammad Ziauddin, PM's Principal Secretary Mohammad Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Kumar Verma and Indian Deputy High Commissioner Binoy George were present.

Jaishankar arrived in Dhaka yesterday evening on a two-day official visit to attend the Indian Ocean Conference.

Over 14kg crystal meth seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh seized over 14.77kg of crystal meth, commonly known as ice, in Cox's Bazar.

The officials also recovered 3,90,000 pieces of yaba and arrested three alleged drug traders during a drive, read a press release of BGB.

Details of the drive could not be known immediately.

On April 26, BGB members arrested three alleged drug traders and seized over 21kg of ice in the district's Ukhiya upazila.

Ten days later, Rab seized over 24kg of crystal meth in the biggest ever seizure of the drug in the country.



PHOTO: PID

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.



The city's Krishnachura blooms

MH HAIDER

Is Dhaka ugly? Admittedly, this is a rather inappropriate question. Dhaka is our home. We should not call our own city – nay, our own home – ugly. But for a moment, if we put emotions aside, one may dare say that compared to many cities of the world our capital is not exactly aesthetically beautiful or well-planned.

Naysayers will disagree, though. I shall too, let my scepticism rest for some parts of Dhaka, especially at this time of year, pointing out to the exorbitant Krishnachura blooms that have adorned our city.

Indeed, the Krishnachura trees dotted across Dhaka provide pleasant sights of beauty in the otherwise largely grey and dull concrete jungle that is our capital.

I am not a poet. Also, I reckon the pace and cutthroat personality of this city has killed the romantic in me.

Otherwise, I could have waxed lyrical about Krishnachura.

Nevertheless, even for an average citizen, we get stunned by the vivid orange and reddish flowers and mesmerised by the sights surrounding them – a day labourer rests under its shade to catch a breath in the unforgiving heat of a summer noon. A couple lazily strolls past a line of Krishnachura trees. A group of friends takes selfies whilst a photographer tries to capture the blooms in his DSLR.

Although such scenes can be spotted in several parts of the metropolis, my favourite area for Krishnachura has always been around Chandrima Udyan. The majestic Sangsad Bhaban and the waters and the relatively smooth and wide road provide a beautiful setting for the abundant Krishnachura trees and their flowers.

Krishnachura around Kuril Flyover

too, captures fascination.

Perhaps, the sight of this flower is so pleasing because of the very abundance of it. Bunks and bulks of bright orange together make up for much of its beauty. Sure, a bouquet of any flower looks pretty too, but I would argue that flowers look their best when in trees, especially when there is a lot of them together.

And as for Krishnachura, I reckon it is the perfect flower for Dhaka! This city is as fiery as the Krishnachura blooms, as ambitious as the bright orange, as flamboyant as the riches of the metropolis, and as blazing as the heat of this weather.

On a separate note, it is a sad reality that some trees have recently been cleared off in Dhanmondi in the name of development, in order to build various infrastructures. This has been met with a lot of criticism – a testament to the fact that even though Dhakaites busy themselves with the unforgiving pace of life, we still have an intimate connection with the city itself.

So, is Dhaka ugly? Maybe not? Its trees, for example, make us think otherwise. The authorities should keep that in mind when planning those so-called development projects.



OC withdrawn over 'custodial torture' of Jubo League leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The officer-in-charge of Thakurgaon Sadar Police Station was withdrawn and attached to Rangpur range police on Wednesday night over the allegation of torturing a Jubo League leader in police custody.

Thakurgaon Superintendent of Police Mohammad Jahangir Hossain told 'The Daily Star' about withdrawing OC Kamal Hossain yesterday morning.

Asaduzzaman Pulok, organising secretary of Thakurgaon district unit Jubo League, submitted a petition to the District and Sessions Judge's Court for filing a case on Wednesday, alleging that the OC and four other police personnel tortured him in custody on April 29.

The court the same day ordered the Thakurgaon civil surgeon to submit a report on Pulok's health in 24 hours.

It also appointed Judicial Magistrate Md Alauddin for a judicial enquiry into the incident and asked him to submit the report on May 17, the day when the court will decide whether it will record the petition as a case, said Pulok's lawyer Abdur Rahim.

According to the petition, police picked up Khalid Siraj Rocky, sports secretary of the Jubo League unit, from a Baishakhi fair on Thakurgaon Public Library premises on April 29.

They also picked up Pulok when he went to the spot and asked about the reason behind Rocky's detention. Then OC Kamal and several other police personnel took Pulok to the police station and assaulted him, read the petition.

Showing them arrested in a case filed under section 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the two were produced before a court that sent them to jail.

Civil Surgeon Nur Newaj told this correspondent that they checked Pulok's health and submitted the report to the court yesterday afternoon.

He, however, refused to comment on the report findings.

A conservative budget for next fiscal year

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And Hasina called for discouraging that well into the new fiscal year too, Mannan said.

"There would be no project or economic activity centring on the elections – the election is not relevant," he added.

The prime minister also called for shifting the focus away from infrastructure spending and towards social spending.

"She called for more projects on education, health and agriculture," Mannan said.

And taking up projects in these sectors will not be enough; their implementation must be brisk as well.

"Our implementation rate is not good," Mannan said.

In fact, she called for speeding up project implementation and ensuring that there is no duplication in projects, said finance ministry officials.

Projects with foreign aid must be implemented faster, she said, while instructing the finance ministry to take measures to this end.

The prime minister also instructed reining in subsidy expenditure.

Subsidy cannot be extended to new areas; subsidy arrears should be cleared, said finance ministry officials quoting Hasina.

The amount given under safety net programmes will be increased but the coverage will be expanded.

And allocation must be kept such that targeted subsidies can be given in the case of an emergency.

There would be no dearness allowance in the budget, according to finance division officials.

"We did not make any proposal and the PM did not bring it up," said one of the officials on the condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, at the NEC meeting, it was decided that a Climate Change Trust Fund would be formed. A guideline for that has already been formed.

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 51 Bangladeshi nationals evacuated from Sudan returned home from Jeddah Airport on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight yesterday.

They arrived in Dhaka from Jeddah at 10:20am via Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight BG336, according to a press release by Biman.

The Bangladeshi nationals from conflict-ridden Sudan took temporary shelter in Jeddah with the help of the Bangladesh Embassy and

Saudi authorities.

On May 8, Biman Bangladesh Airlines brought back 136 Bangladeshi nationals – escaping Sudan – from Jeddah.

Bangladesh is operating four chartered flights from Sudan, at its own cost, to evacuate the remaining Bangladeshi citizens to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Sudan plunged into a civil war last month that has so far claimed the lives of more than 600 people, including civilians, and displaced hundreds of thousands.

51 Bangladeshis return from strife-torn Sudan

Imran Khan's arrest 'invalid'

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custody of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and that he can meet and consult his friends and lawyers during his stay there," Khan's lawyer, Babar Awan, told reporters.

Pakistan's top judge had ordered police to bring Khan before him in response to a petition by his political party challenging his arrest on Tuesday on corruption charges, reports AFP.

Yesterday, Khan told the apex court he had been "treated like a terrorist".

After the top court passed the order, Khan, while still in the court, said that no harm should be caused to the country and asked his supporters to remain peaceful, reports Dawn.

"We only want elections in the country," he maintained.

Several thousand supporters of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party have for two days rampaged through cities around the country, setting fire to buildings and blocking roads.

At least nine people have died in the unrest, police and hospitals said.

Hundreds of police officers have been injured and more than 2,000 people arrested, mostly in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, police added.

At least eight leaders from PTI's

central leadership accused of orchestrating the protests were also detained, Islamabad police said.

Security forces have responded with tear gas and water cannon to quell the crowds and yesterday came equipped with batons and riot shields.

Supporters turning up to a protest venue in Karachi were swiftly rounded up while in Islamabad police beat handcuffed PTI supporters, AFP journalists saw.

Khan was arrested hours after the military rebuked him for alleging that a senior officer was involved in a plot to assassinate him.

The army has denied Khan's accusation.

Criticism of Pakistan's military establishment is considered a red line. Pakistani politicians have frequently been arrested and jailed since the country's founding in 1947.

But few have so directly challenged a military which holds significant influence over domestic politics and foreign policy and that has staged at least three coups and ruled for more than three decades.

Khan was remanded in custody Tuesday following a request by Pakistan's top anti-corruption agency, the National Accountability Bureau, one of his lawyers told AFP.

DSA CASE

Prothom Alo reporter Shams's bail extended till June 12

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended the bail of Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams until June 12 in a case filed with Tejgaon Police Station under the Digital Security Act.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Ahmed Humayun Kabir passed the order after Shams surrendered before it and sought permanent bail through his lawyer.

On April 9, Shams got ad-interim bail till today from another Dhaka court after his surrender before it.

Shams got bail from another Dhaka court on April 3 in another case filed with Shahbagh Police Station under the same act.

He walked out of jail the same day, five days after his detention from his Savar home.

On March 29, Shams was picked up from his home in Savar by law enforcers wearing plainclothes around 4:00am, triggering widespread criticism.

On March 26, the Prothom Alo made a "photo card" to post a report written by Shams on Independence Day on social media. The card had a quote from a day labourer named Zakir Hossain juxtaposed against a photo of an adolescent boy.

He was detained less than two hours after a Jubo League leader filed a DSA case with Tejgaon Police Station.

8-yr-old girl raped by madrasa teacher

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

An eight-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her madrasa teacher in Malandah upazila of Jamalpur on Wednesday evening.

The girl is currently undergoing treatment at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, said police.

The accused Shariful Islam, 35, is also the imam of a local mosque.

Quoting locals, Malandah Police Station OC Delowar Hossain said, Shariful took the child to his home next to the mosque and raped her there and fled the scene soon after.

Locals rescued the girl from his place and admitted her to Malandah Health Complex.

As her condition was deteriorating, she was shifted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

"A rape case will soon be filed in connection to this incident," OC said.

Cop, 4 others arrested with phensedyl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Five people, including a police constable, with 12 bottles of phensedyl in Habiganj Sadar Upazila on Wednesday night.

Constable Mustafiz Billah, of Sunamganj, was posted at the Habiganj District Police Lines.

The four others are suspected drug dealers Mukhlshur Rahman, Salman Miya, Shamsul Haque, and Nurul Haque, they are all from Baniachong upazila.

Habiganj Police Station Sub-Inspector Mominul Islam said, "Acting on a tip-off, police conducted a drive and arrested five people with 12 bottles of phensedyl. One of them is a police constable."

"They were sent to jail via a court order in a narcotics case filed against them yesterday," he added.