

## EU special envoy flies in To discuss human rights issues with govt officials, stakeholders

UNB, Dhaka

The European Union's Special Representative for Human Rights, Eamon Gilmore, began his visit to Dhaka yesterday.



Eamon Gilmore

"Great to welcome EU Special Representative for Human Rights Eamon Gilmore on his second visit to Bangladesh," EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whitley tweeted.

Earlier, acting Foreign Secretary Rear Admiral (retd) Khurshed Alam received Gilmore upon his arrival in Dhaka.

"Wide-ranging agenda ahead including meetings with the government, civil society and a visit to the Rohingya camps," said the EU Ambassador.

He will discuss issues of mutual interest, especially rights issues.

Gilmore is visiting at the invitation of the government of Bangladesh.

During his six-day visit, Gilmore will hold meetings with concerned government officials over the Rohingya issue and will visit refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In Dhaka, he will hold a series of meetings with government officials and other stakeholders to discuss human rights issues.

He is likely to hold meetings with Law Minister Anisul Haq, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam apart from his meeting with civil society members.

During his recent visit to Brussels, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam held a series of meetings, including with Gilmore, in the first week of May.

Shahriar invited Gilmore to visit Bangladesh at the time.

The tasks of the Special Representative for Human Rights are to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of EU human rights policy.

The special representative has a broad, flexible mandate, which provides the possibility of adapting to evolving geopolitical circumstances.

The Special Representative works closely with the European External Action Service, which provides full support to his work.

Gilmore was Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade from 2011 until July 2014 in a coalition government which succeeded in steering Ireland from an IMF bailout to become one of the fastest-growing economies in the European Union.

## A long stride for rail connectivity

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fast-track project, funded by the ADB, is being implemented dividing the line into two parts -- Dohazari to Chakaria and Chakaria to Cox's Bazar.

"About 90 percent of the work of our portion is done and we aim to submit the work [to the authority] by September 30," Chen Yongyi, project manager of China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), told this correspondent.

CCECC, along with Max Infrastructure Ltd, is building the Chakaria to Cox's Bazar section.

During a recent visit to the Cox's Bazar station, this correspondent saw most of the work completed.

More than 80 percent of the work for the six-storey station is complete, Yongyi said.

Project Director Mofizur Rahman told this newspaper yesterday, "The entire line will be ready by September and the authorities will decide when to open it."

Sources said three of the nine new stations -- Dohazari, Chakaria, and Cox's Bazar -- would be operational on day-1. The rest of the stations will be done by December.

The government in 2010 had decided to lay a metre gauge rail line from Chittagong to Gundhumi in Cox's Bazar spending Tk 1,852.35 crore. It later changed its mind and decided to have the dual gauge line down to Cox's Bazar town. The cost

shot up to Tk 18,034.47 crore.

Once the line is open, it will not only bring Cox's Bazar under rail network but also help connect Bangladesh with Trans-Asian Railway Network.

### DHAKA-BHANGA

BR is implementing the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project to build 169km of rail line from Dhaka to Jashore via Padma Bridge, which will significantly improve rail connectivity with the southwest and even with India.

"We have a target to open the Dhaka-Bhanga section within September ...," Project Director Afzal Hossain told this correspondent on July 13.

The length of Dhaka-Bhanga section is about 82km and the stretch will have seven new stations.

Of the seven new stations between Dhaka and Bhanga, Mawa, Padma (Janjira), and Shibchar stations would be ready for opening, Afzal said.

The rail line down to Jashore, via Narail, is expected to be completed by June next year at a cost of Tk 39,246.8 crore. It is being built with a loan from China.

This line will halve travel time to Jashore from Dhaka and Narail will have rail connectivity then.

Project Director Abu Jafor Mia told The Daily Star yesterday that initially freight trains would run on the line and if the countries decide, passenger trains could run.

This will be the sixth cross-border line with India.

"We hope to make the project ready for opening by mid-September," a project official said.

The line will have seven new stations.

Even though it was initiated in 2010, the physical work began around six years after approval, driving up the project cost to Tk 4,260.88 crore from Tk 1,721.39 crore.

The line is being built with an Indian line of credit.

### AKHaura-AGARTALA

The government in August 2016 approved the project for the dual-gauge line to improve rail connectivity and boost trade between Bangladesh and India.

The Tk 477.81 crore project to build the 7km line is being implemented with an Indian grant.

Once completed, it will connect Gangasagar in Bangladesh with Nisichintapura in Tripura state of India.

The Khulna-Mongla and the Akhaura-Agartala rail lines are expected to be inaugurated during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India in September, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma said recently.

"We hope that the Awami League and Juba League will avoid a terrible conflict situation and the government will ensure it," Fakhrul said, reports UNB.

He said they waged the one-point movement demanding the resignation of the current regime

with a huge participation of the country's people.

The government has been repeatedly talking about holding the polls as per the constitution that they amended completely unconstitutionally and illegally, Fakhrul said.

The general public and all opposition parties also want the next election to be held under a neutral government.

An application has been submitted to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police seeking permission to hold the grand rally either at Suhrawardy Udyan or the party's headquarters in Nayapaltan, Fakhrul added.

detained people had been living in the area for about 10 years after fleeing persecution in Myanmar.

Many had been doing manual labour including rubbish collection, Initiative director Saber Kyaw Min said. "They have been only demanding refuge," he added. "The community is requesting ... an end to detentions."

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled Myanmar to countries including Bangladesh, which borders India. Myanmar's military denies committing crimes against humanity.

## 'Checking Aedes not our job'

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patients were hospitalised in 24 hours till last morning. Of them, 1,238 patients were admitted to Dhaka hospitals.

Some 7,463 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment. Of them, 4,395 are receiving treatment in the capital.

A total of 27,622 dengue patients, including 16,644 in Dhaka, were released from hospitals.

The total number of deaths from dengue fever was 281 last year, while a total of 62,382 cases were recorded throughout the year.

Experts have urged the authorities concerned to conduct extensive drives to identify clusters of Aedes mosquitoes as soon as possible.

## AL will not incite conflict

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movement to oust the government."

He further claimed that 70 percent of the people are eager to vote for "boat" -- the ruling party's electoral symbol.

Whenever the party holds a rally, the BNP turns their one into a "picnic," Quader said.

Three organisations affiliated with the AL -- Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Chhara League and Swechchhasebak League -- will hold a "peace rally" on July 27 to protest "violent activities" by the BNP's and its allies.

It will begin at the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 3:00pm, and the party expects to gather over one lakh people there.

To ensure the rally's success, Quader will hold a meeting with the presidents and general secretaries of the Dhaka district and city (south and north) units and its front and associate bodies at the AL central office at 11:30am today.



Cindy Hensley McCain, executive director of World Food Programme, calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the FAO headquarters in Rome yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## UN talks seek to fix 'broken' global food system

AFP, Rome

A three-day United Nations summit yesterday opened in Rome aimed at tackling a "broken" global food system where millions are starving, two billion are overweight or obese and the planet is suffering.

The food systems summit comes amid growing food insecurity around the world, with UN agencies warning of an increasing number of people suffering from chronic hunger.

"Global food systems are broken -- and billions of people are paying the price."

More than 780 million people go hungry even as nearly one-third of the world's food is wasted or lost, he said.

And while 462 million people are underweight, two billion are overweight or obese, he added.

The summit brings together representatives from the UN's three food agencies headquartered in Rome -- the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) -- alongside heads of states, government representatives and delegates.

Food systems include all activities related to producing, processing, transporting and consuming food, and making them more sustainable, efficient and equitable is a complex task.

Involving multiple sectors and actors, food systems are affected by varied trends such as urbanisation, climate change, technology and government policy.

Weather shocks, the Covid pandemic and conflicts including the war in Ukraine have helped push the number of people facing hunger up by 122 million since 2019, according to the WFP.

Between 691-783 million people faced hunger last year, with a mid-range of 735 million, WFP estimated in a report earlier this month.

Guterres reiterated his concern over Russia quitting the landmark grain deal that allowed cargo ships carrying Ukrainian grain to depart Black Sea ports.

"The most vulnerable will pay the highest price," of that move, he said, calling the previous agreement a "lifeline" for global food security.

The FAO has said that no less than a "radical transformation in how food is produced, processed, traded and consumed" is required to feed the world's growing population.

Guterres called for at least \$500 billion per year to help needy countries scale up long-term financing to invest in higher performing food systems.

## Jamaat to hold rallies in major cities on July 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami has announced rallies in major cities on July 28, marches in district towns on July 30, and another rally in the capital on August 1.

The party announced the fresh programmes yesterday demanding formation of a caretaker government, release of its leaders, including Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, and reduction of prices of essentials.

The announcement was made from a briefing at an undisclosed venue in the capital.

A select group of reporters was invited to the briefing, Rejaul Karim, publicity in-charge of Jamaat, told The Daily Star.

The demonstrations will be the party's first political programmes outside Dhaka since 2013.

On June 10, Jamaat held a rally in the capital demanding restoration of the caretaker government system and release of its arrested leaders. This was the party's first protest in the city since 2013.

## 74 Rohingya refugees arrested in India

REUTERS, Lucknow

Indian police said they arrested 74 Rohingya refugees yesterday for living "illegally" in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh -- a move activists condemned as an arbitrary crackdown on people fleeing violence.

The members of the Rohingya community were detained in six towns and cities in the state and 10 of the refugees were juveniles, police said, without giving ages.

The Rohingya Human Rights Initiative campaign group said the

detained people had been living in the area for about 10 years after fleeing persecution in Myanmar.

Many had been doing manual labour including rubbish collection, Initiative director Saber Kyaw Min said. "They have been only demanding refuge," he added. "The community is requesting ... an end to detentions."

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have fled Myanmar to countries including Bangladesh, which borders India. Myanmar's military denies committing crimes against humanity.

## BNP fears hostility

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we announced our programme, they rescheduled it to July 27. It is clear that they did it to create a conflict."

The party also warned that the government will be held responsible if any untoward incident takes place due to provocative actions of the ruling party and its associate bodies.

"We hope that the Awami League and Juba League will avoid a terrible conflict situation and the government will ensure it," Fakhrul said, reports UNB.

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The general public and all opposition parties also want the next election to be held under a neutral government.

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## 'Watch what you do or say'

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Mahbub told the secretaries to approve files after proper scrutiny and review so that no wrong message is sent about the government, said sources.

He also asked them to convey the messages to their subordinate offices.

The cabinet secretary asked secretaries not to embarrass the government with their deeds and to

remain extra cautious before making any statements, according to meeting insiders.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Mahbub said the meeting was a regular one and that there was nothing special about it.

Responding to a query, he said no instructions were issued at the meeting regarding the election or the field level administration.