

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. "Great to welcome EU Special Representative for Human Rights Eamon Gilmore on his second visit to Bangladesh," EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley tweeted. Earlier, acting Foreign Secretary Rear Admiral (ret'd) 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.



Eamon Gilmore

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.



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

PHOTO: PTD

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.

"In a world of plenty, it is outrageous that people continue to suffer and die from hunger," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said at the opening of the meeting. "Global food systems are broken -- and billions of people are paying the price."

More than 780 million people go hungry around the globe, 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.

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 Chattogram to Gundhum 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 Bhangra section within September ...," Project Director Afzal Hossain told this correspondent on July 13.

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

Of the seven new stations between Dhaka and Bhangra, 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 complete 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.

KHULNA-MONGLA

The 63.5km broad-gauge rail line between Khulna and Mongla is expected to boost rail connectivity in Bangladesh and boost trade with India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Honourable Court and unless they are properly dealt with, they will continue to disregard and disobey the order of the court," they said.

Mohammad Harun-Or-Rashid, one of the four petitioners, told The Daily Star that they filed it as a public interest litigation, which might be heard by the SC's chamber judge this week.

Khadija had secured bail from the High Court at one point, but the state had filed two petitions challenging the bail order. It was then stayed by a chamber judge of the Supreme Court.

"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 Nischintapur 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.

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.

Later, Khadija submitted two petitions seeking an order to vacate the SC chamber judge's stay order. However, the chief justice's bench stood over the petitions' hearing for four months.

While adjourning the hearing, the bench observed, "Why would you not take responsibility for what is being said by the guest of the talk show?"

The other members of the bench included Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice Md Ashfaul Islam and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim.

‘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.

JHALAKATHI CRASH

Bus driver, 2 others sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Three people, including the bus driver, were sued yesterday in a case filed over Saturday's fatal road crash that left 17 people dead in Jhalakathi.

The three accused are bus driver Mohon, 40, conductor Mizanur Rahman, 30, and helper Akkas, 17.

Jhalakathi Sadar Police Station Sub-inspector Shusankar Sarkar filed the case Sunday night.

Confirming the development, Nasir Uddin Sarkar, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station, said they were trying to arrest the three accused.

At least 17 people were killed and 23 others injured when the Barishal-bound bus of Bashar Smriti Paribahan plunged into a roadside waterbody in the district's Sadar upazila Saturday morning.

Jhalakathi district administration has formed a five-member committee to investigate the incident.

5 to die for raping, killing woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A Faridpur court yesterday sentenced five people to death for raping and killing a woman back in 2019.

The convicts are Chunnu Sheikh, 32, Islam Mir, 36, Atiar Mollah, 46, Nasir Khan, 44, and Nazmul Hossain, 36, said Sawpan Paul, public prosecutor of the district Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal.

They were also fined Tk 1 lakh each.

The victim Kajal Rekha, 32, was a jute mill worker in Madhukhali upazila. She lived in Rajdharpur village.

She was raped and later strangled to death by the convicts on the night of October 15, 2019.

2 killed in Feni road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Two people were killed when a CNG-run auto-rickshaw hit a parked road-roller truck in Feni Sunday night.

The deceased were identified as Maulana Eyar Ahmed, 70, of Purbo Ghania Mora village in Fulgazi upazila, and Abdur Rahim, 43, of Malipathar village under Parshuram upazila, said Abul Hasim, officer-in-charge of Fulgazi Police Station.

Both were passengers of the auto-rickshaw, he added.

Quoting eyewitnesses and locals, the OC said a Feni-bound auto-rickshaw hit a parked road-roller truck at Munsirhat Bazar area on Feni-Parshuram regional road under Fulgazi upazila last night around 11:30pm.

Locals rushed the auto-rickshaw driver and passengers to Feni General Hospital where the doctors declared the two passengers dead.

Their bodies have been kept at the hospital's morgue for autopsy, said the OC, adding that the injured driver is undergoing treatment at the hospital.

‘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 -- Jubo League, Chhatra League and Swechhahasebak 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.