

US committed to advance justice for people of Burma: Blinken

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken yesterday said the United States is committed to advancing justice and accountability for all the people of Burma and will continue to stand with them in their aspirations for a democratic, inclusive, and peaceful future.

"We are deeply grateful to the government and the people of Bangladesh for giving shelter and refuge to nearly one million Rohingya, as well as other countries in the region hosting Rohingya refugees," he said in a press statement issued yesterday.

On August 25, the sixth anniversary of the genocide against Rohingya, the US reaffirmed its commitment to hold the Myanmar military accountable for the atrocities against Rohingya.

The US has provided over \$2.1 billion to assist those affected by the crisis in Burma, Bangladesh, and elsewhere in the region since 2017, remaining the single largest donor of life-saving humanitarian assistance to those whose lives have been upended by the violence.

The escalation of violence throughout the country has exacerbated the dire humanitarian situation, particularly for members of ethnic and religious minority communities, including the Rohingyas.

Since December 2017, the US has imposed sanctions and visa restrictions on individuals and entities most responsible for the ongoing violence, Blinken said.

In another press release, the US Embassy in Dhaka said, "Until conditions in Burma improve, we call upon the international community to continue providing humanitarian aid to one of the world's most vulnerable and marginalised populations."

In a statement, the High Commission of Canada, said "Canada remains determined to end impunity and to pursue accountability for perpetrators of serious human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, and justice for Rohingya survivors.

"We reiterate our intention to intervene in the Rohingya genocide case brought by the Gambia against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Canada also supports the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar's efforts to collect concrete evidence of crimes committed, and continues to call for the UN Security Council (UNSC) to refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court," reads the statement.

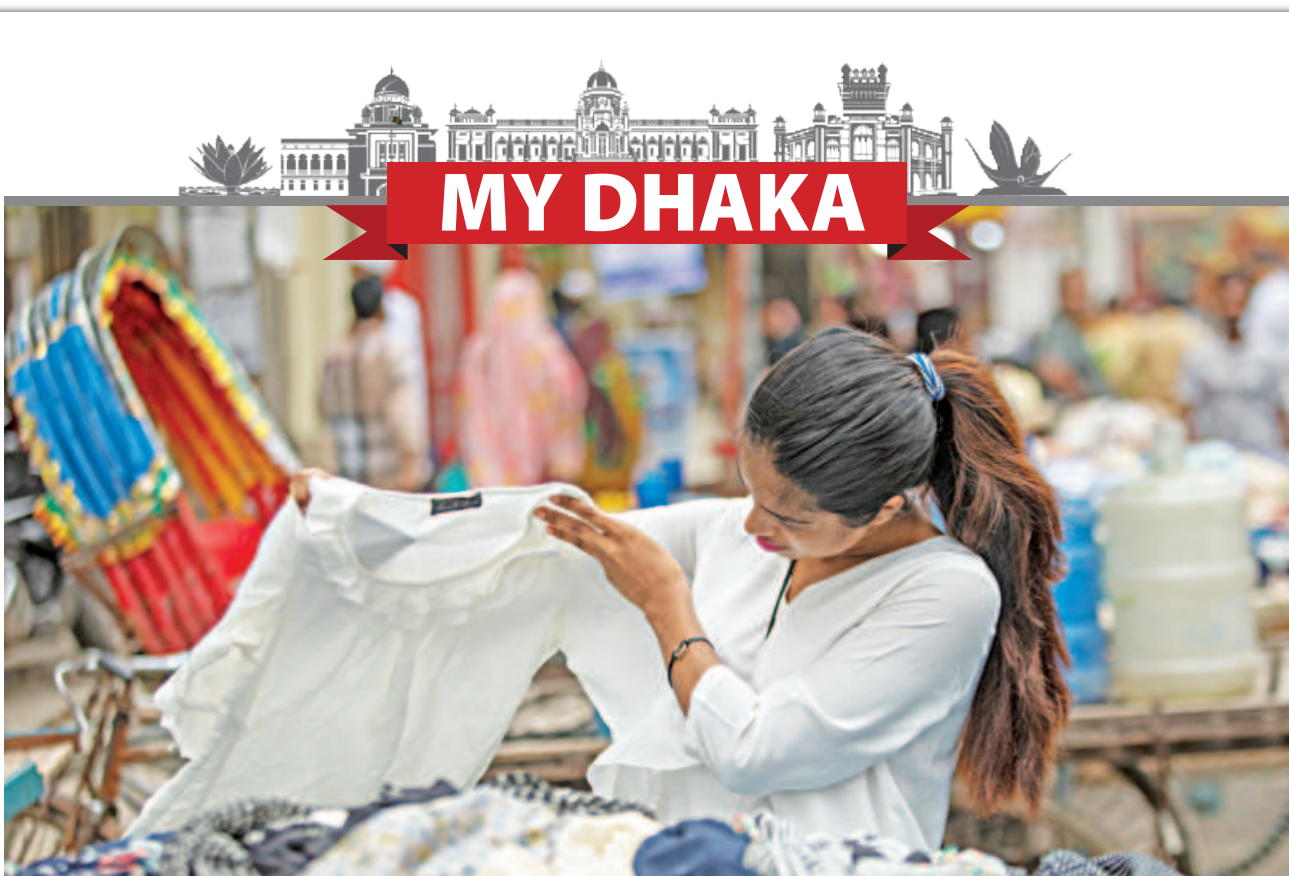


PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED/LS ARCHIVE

A HAVEN FOR CLOTHES Uttara's bustling shopping scene

RBR

Buying a trendy Zara shirt for just Tk 300 is only possible in Dhaka. Of course, one must take into consideration that the sleeves might be a little off or a stitch out of place. Brand clothes, thanks to our RMG sector, are no big deal for us, and we have learned to overlook the defects.

Having said that, the culture of shopping for such branded items at Bongo Bazar and Doza Market has now spilled over to vans in Uttara, among other places in Dhaka. The street

is the new hub for clothes, and frenzied shopping reaches its peak in the evening.

Uttara residents crowd the street every single day, as if it's "chandraat"—the evening before Eid. From oversized clothes to petite size zeros, one gets a freight full of a variety of products and buyers can haggle to their heart's content.

The clothes are trendy, and the fabrics soft, breathable, and of fine quality.

There are plenty of options available,



from ripped jeans to colourful jeggings, summer jackets or tops for casual officerwear, to maxi dresses for a friend's get-together.

Going back to the vans at regular intervals, thinking about what's new, or waiting for the call from the vendor when a new lot arrives — all these activities become quite a habit. Besides, reasonable and discounted price is an added attraction.

In our country, where the wardrobe for young girls and adolescents is stuck to just trousers or shalwar kameezes, the availability of dresses, maxis, midis, skirts, jumpsuits, or denim is such a boon. An added bonus is finding

oversized clothing.

Plus sizes have always been ignored by our local designers, but here one stall is dedicated solely to oversized customers. You can easily go over the top and buy maybe a dozen of them. Undergarments, kaftans, maxi dresses, nightwear — you can find almost everything in these vans.

If you venture to the underground stores of Rajlaxmi Complex, you are in for a delightful surprise. Beautiful chikankari tops, shalwar kameezes, trending co-ords, coordinated sets, cotton kurtis, or tassars scarves are all there at bargain prices.

I guess the final surprise is the jewellery vans lined up in front of the market. Oxidised trinkets that you see on expensive online pages are all replicated and available. The price starts at Tk 100 and goes up to Tk 500 at the Uttara vans.

The best part of shopping in Uttara is its van culture, meaning carts vending everything under the sky, from vegetables to curtains. Just imagine the wide range and the best buys are perhaps the clothes; and a single cart is almost like a supermarket in itself!



Woman gang-raped in Pirojpur, 2 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested two men for allegedly confining a woman in an empty house and gang-raping her in Pirojpur.

Amin Khan, 42, and Sohag Meer, 34, were arrested in separate drives, said Abir Mohammad Hossain, officer-in-charge of Pirojpur Sadar Police Station, reports UNB.

Quoting locals, police said two men abducted the woman around 11:00am on Thursday from Kadamtala area.

She was kept confined in an empty house for two hours and during then she was gang-raped, said police.

The woman filed a case the same night after she was freed.

"We are trying to arrest the other accused and the case is under investigation," said the OC.

Rohingya woman killed in Teknaf camp

UNB, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya woman was stabbed to death yesterday, allegedly by her husband, over a family feud in a refugee camp in Teknaf upazila, Cox's Bazar.

The deceased Adiya Khatun, 23, was the wife of Nur Kamal of Block D in Camp 25.

Locals said the couple got into a heated argument, and at one stage, Kamal stabbed Adiya with a sharp weapon.

Sayed Jubayer, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Model Police Station, said on information police rushed to the spot and found the woman was taken to an NGO-run hospital, where physicians declared her dead on arrival.

Her body was sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, he said, adding that a process was underway to file a case in this connection.

"The accused is now on the run, and efforts are on to nab him," the OC added.

'Cattle thief' killed in mob beating

UNB, Pabna

A man was killed in a mob beating early yesterday after he was allegedly caught trying to steal cattle in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna.

The deceased Babu, 45, was a resident of the district's Bera upazila.

Locals said around 1:00am, farmer Idris Ali called for help, saying someone was in his barn trying to steal cattle.

Subsequently, neighbours rushed out, caught Babu, and beat him severely, leaving him dead on the spot, they said.

The incident took place in Goalbathan village, under the Muladali union.

Hasan Basir, inspector (investigation) of Ishwardi police station, confirmed the man's death, saying that the body would be handed over to his family after legal procedures.

Changes in law to streamline trustee boards

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UGC officials have pointed out that on many occasions the "profiteering attitude" of trustees created a "non-congenial" academic atmosphere. They have said most of the trustees at private universities are businessmen and politicians, and that some of them are educationists.

"I think the decision of having more academics at trustee boards is a good one. That trustees cannot hold offices of profit is also positive. Many trustee board members do not act responsibly; they want to take some benefits," said former UGC chairman Prof Nazrul Islam.

Contacted, Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB) Chairman Sheikh Kabir Hossain said, "If the educationists invest in the university, there are no objections regarding the matter. They themselves

can invest or the government can invest on their behalf."

About the appointment of observers, he said observers are usually appointed in companies when they face losses.

"But private universities are non-profit, there is no reason to appoint observers at these institutions. Each university has a syndicate with representatives of the chancellor and the UGC, who act like observers," Hossain said.

Usually, trustee board members do not take a sitting allowance. Trustees and their families should not hold offices of profit at universities as it is a conflict of interest, he added.

MORE SPACE, MORE RESERVE FUND

The draft amendment proposes that a private university will get approval if it has an area of at least

one lakh square feet, whether owned or rented. Currently, a private university can have approval if it has at least a 25,000 square feet space.

It says a private university should have at least five acres of land to establish a permanent campus. But this provision will not apply to universities that were set up before the proposed amendments are enacted. Currently, a university needs at least one acre of land for permanent campuses in Dhaka and Chattogram metropolitan areas, and two acres in other areas.

As for a reserve fund, the draft says a private university in Dhaka and Chattogram should have Tk 8 crore, a university in other metropolitan cities Tk 5 crore, and a university in other places Tk 3 crore. Under the existing law, reserve fund for universities in Dhaka and Chattogram is Tk 5 crore, for those

in other metropolitan cities Tk 3 crore, and for those in other places Tk 1.5 crore.

The new draft also proposes that maternity leave for female teachers, officers and employees should be fixed in line with the latest government order and there should be a guideline for study leave of teachers.

NO CHANGE OF TUITION FEES

Under the existing law, private universities can fix tuition and other fees taking into consideration the socio-economic conditions, after securing approval of the UGC.

The draft amendment retains this provision but adds that universities will need to take approval before bringing any changes to the existing fee structures. The universities will not be able to change fees that were fixed during enrolment of students to a course till the completion of the said course.

create awareness among the people about the risks of such investments," he added.

As things stand, the police's Criminal Investigation Department has not initiated any formal investigation into MTFE as no formal complaint was received, said a top official on condition of anonymity.

"But we have started a shadow investigation," he added.

Another official of CID said they are collecting information and documents regarding the MTFE issue.

"The main responsibility of investigation and taking action falls on the central bank or BFUI since banking channels, mobile financial services and crypto were used in the scam," he added.

(Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee and Md Mehedi Hasan contributed to this report)

'Looters' must not come to power: PM

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The premier, also Awami League president, sought votes for "boat", her party's electoral symbol, in the next general election.

She said people achieved independence and a strong economy as they voted the AL to power.

"On the other hand, they [BNP-Jamaat] were involved in looting, corruption and killing."

Hasina said the government already brought back some money which was siphoned off by two sons of BNP chief Khaleda Zia and the remaining money was frozen.

"I don't know from where they are getting money with which they have again started destruction by setting police vehicles and buses on fire," she said.

The PM called upon the expatriate Bangladeshis to invest in Bangladesh to join hands in making the country a developed one.

She urged them to send money home through banking channels. She also advised them not to go abroad for jobs with fake certificates.

South African unit AL President Lutfor Rahman Rupok spoke at the function.

The PM joined the reception from Hotel Radisson Blu Hotel Sandton through videoconferencing.

PM MEETS HEADS OF STATE

Hasina held bilateral meetings with the heads of state of four countries on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS summit in Johannesburg on Thursday, reports BSS.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen briefed reporters about the PM's daylong engagements.

The premier said Bangladesh has attached priority to enhancing bilateral and trade relations with the African nations

She sought investments in various

sectors from the African countries.

The bilateral meetings between Hasina and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Mozambique President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, Tanzania President Saima Suluhu and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi were held at Sandton Convention Centre.

A meeting was also held between Hasina and Dilma Vana Rousseff, president of New Development Bank, at the same venue.

During the meetings, the five dignitaries highly praised Bangladesh's remarkable development under the PM's prudent leadership, Momen said.

The foreign minister said Brazilian President Lula assured Bangladesh of all sorts of cooperation. He invited the Bangladesh premier to visit Brazil.

After the bilateral talks with Hasina, Iranian President Raisi expressed his desire to visit Bangladesh again to see in person the massive development.

During the meeting with Mozambique President Nyusi, Hasina sought investment from the African country, particularly in pharmaceuticals.

President of New Development Bank Rousseff has expressed her organisation's eagerness to provide assistance to Bangladesh, particularly in women empowerment. She said the bank has already sanctioned \$700 million for two development schemes in Bangladesh.

Hasina reached Johannesburg on August 22 to attend the 15th BRICS summit at the invitation of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, also the current chair of BRICS.

The PM is scheduled to depart Johannesburg for home today. She is expected to arrive in Dhaka tomorrow morning.

Ensure safe return

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At last, they were expelled from their homeland by the junta in 2017.

"They burnt our houses, raped our women and committed genocide against us. We want justice," he said.

Zubair also raised a five-point demand, including repatriation, recognition of their ethnicity, safe zone for Rohingyas, and giving back their citizenship.

Another Rohingya leader Kamal Hossain said, "We want our citizenship back. We are citizens of Myanmar and it must be accepted by Myanmar. They will have to take us back with full dignity, safety and security. They should do it in coordination with the international community."

Shahid Win, a Rohingya woman, said, "Six years have already passed since we fled the country. We don't want to stay in Bangladesh anymore. We want justice for the genocide."

At least 12 more rallies were held at different camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

Whose responsibility is it, anyway?

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"Had they informed the BTRC, it would have acted against that platform. No one — conned customers, law enforcement agencies, Bangladesh Bank — informed BTRC about it," he added.

The central bank denied any responsibility.

"The Bangladesh Bank is not responsible for taking any measures concerning this matter," said its spokesperson Md Mezbaul Haque.

According to the law, the jurisdiction for addressing the matter of money laundering lies within the purview of BFUI, Haque said.

Over the past year, BFUI has been working with other law enforcement agencies to tackle online gambling, betting, foreign currency and crypto trading since the last year, said its chief Md Masud Biswas.

"We are always trying to raise awareness among people through

advertisements in newspapers. The agency created a study group to reform gambling-related acts. We closed nearly 1,000 apps, websites and YouTube links related to gambling through BTRC."

However, he hasn't said whether any specific steps have been taken regarding MTFE.

"MTFE is just like a trap. People are not learning from history — this is a big challenge," he added.

Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, thinks although the greed of the people was instrumental in falling victim to this scam, the government has a responsibility to prevent such incidents.

"Whenever a crime is committed, the government should bring those perpetrators to book," he added.

Abu Saeed Khan, senior policy fellow at LIRNEasia, echoed the same. "There was no social campaign to