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SHAH CEMENT

2009 PILKHANA CARNAGE Intent was to dislodge the AL govt

Observes HC in full text of its verdict in BDR mutiny case

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The intention of the massacre and atrocities at the BDR Pilkhana headquarters in 2009 was to depose the newly formed Awami League-led government, create a political crisis, and damage democracy, said the High Court in the full text of the BDR mutiny case verdict.

"From the facts and circumstances of the case, it appears that there was a plot and conspiracy to uproot, dethrone, and depose the newly formed government headed by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina following the general election held in 2008," the court said in the 29,059-page verdict released yesterday.

The verdict is one of the largest in the world, in terms of the numbers of pages and accused involved, 846.

On November 27, 2017, a three-member special HC bench delivered the verdict upholding death penalty for 139 of the 152 sentenced to death by a lower court. It also confirmed life imprisonment of 185 others for their involvement in the carnage.

The nation was shocked as details of the unthinkable cruelty perpetrated on February 25-26, 2009 at the Pilkhana headquarters of the paramilitary force emerged.

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) was later renamed Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

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A bus and a human haulier sideswiping each other near Khamar Bari area in the capital as they compete for passengers yesterday. Passengers in both vehicles are completely indifferent to the danger involved.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

KSA deports another 132 Bangladeshis

5 women workers among them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 132 Bangladeshi migrant workers, including five females, were deported by the Saudi authorities in the last two days.

Two flights of Saudia Airlines carrying the workers landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka early yesterday and Tuesday night, according to Brac Migration Programme.

With them, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has deported 767 Bangladeshi workers, including 40 females, in the first week of January, it says.

After arrival of the latest deportees, officials of Brac along with Prabashi Kalyan Desk set by the expatriates' welfare ministry at the airport provided them with immediate support, including food and drinking water.

Besides, Brac has taken an initiative to provide the returnees with counselling and financial support.

Of the deportees, many
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Remove all IEDs, landmines along the border

BGB asks Myanmar Police Force

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Border Guard Bangladesh has requested its Myanmar counterpart to remove landmines or improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from the Bangladesh-Myanmar bordering areas.

Myanmar Police Force, however, claimed they didn't use such IEDs.

"There are a number of insurgent groups along the shared border. The IEDs might be planted by those groups, not by the Myanmar troops," Police Brigadier General Myoe Than, chief of police general staff of Myanmar Police Force (MPF), claimed while replying to a query on the casualty of the landmine blast along Myanmar borders.

BGB Director General Major General Md Shafeenul Islam and Myoe Than were talking to reporters at a press conference yesterday at the BGB Headquarters in Dhaka centring the five-day Senior Level Border Conference, which began on January 5.

Major General Shafeenul Islam led the 14-member Bangladeshi team while the eight-member Myanmar team was headed

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Child rape almost doubled last year

Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum says at least 1,005 kids raped in 2019

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 1,005 children were raped in the country last year, according to a report by the Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum.

The incidents almost doubled compared to 2018, when about 571 children were raped, it added.

Between 2015 and 2019, at least 3,136 children were raped but only 164 of the cases had been disposed of, the BSAF said, observing that the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators was the reason behind the frequent incidents of rape.

The BSAF, a network of NGOs working on child rights, prepared the report based on news items published in 15 national dailies.

Other forms of violence including murder, sexual harassment and abduction have also increased last year, the BSAF said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

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Incident	Number of children		Increase
	2019	2018	
Rape	1,005	571	76.01%
Sexual Harassment	203	130	56.15%
Murder	448	418	7.18%
Abduction	187	150	24.67%

SOURCE: BANGLADESH SHISHU ADHIKAR FORUM

Man lands in jail for raping 6-year-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Habiganj court yesterday sent a man to jail in connection with the rape of a six-year-old girl in the district's Madhabpur upazila on Monday.

The accused -- Emran Mia, 27, a neighbour of the victim -- took the girl to a tomato garden by luring her with food and raped her, said Iqbal Hosain, officer-in-charge of Madhabpur Police Station.

Hearing the girl scream, locals rushed to the spot and rescued her but Emran managed to flee, he added.

On Tuesday, police arrested Emran from an abandoned house in the upazila, right after the victim's father filed a case in this connection.

Yesterday, Emran was produced before the court that passed an order to send him to jail.

Meanwhile, the girl was sent to Habiganj Sadar Hospital for medical tests.

China launches world's first driverless bullet train



CNN ONLINE

China has just hurtled past another milestone in its vast high-speed railway expansion plans.

As the countdown to the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics continues, the new 108-mile high-speed railway line connecting the capital with Olympic host city Zhangjiakou has just entered service, cutting the travel time between the two from three hours to 47 minutes.

But this isn't just another bullet train.

This beauty, part of China's Fuxing series, can run up to 350 kilometers per hour (217 mph) without a driver -- said to be a world first. It's also been dubbed the world's first smart high-speed railway.

Taking about four years to build, the line, also referred to as the Jing-Zhang high-speed railway,
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RIFAT MURDER CASE Trial starts at Barguna court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The trial of Rifat Sharif murder case began yesterday in Barguna District and Sessions Judge's Court with the first prosecution witness testifying.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman recorded the statement of victim's father Dulal Sharif, also plaintiff of the case, against 10 accused.

Rifat's wife Aysha Siddiqua Minni is among the accused. There are 37 witnesses in the case.

Plaintiff's lawyer Mojibul Haq Kislul said Dulal burst into tears while describing the murder of his son at the

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 9
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

COLD-RELATED DISEASES

4,000 fall ill in 24 hours

Dense fog disrupts traffic on Dhaka-Tangail highway

STAR REPORT

With the beginning of the second cold wave, people, mostly children and the elderly, are suffering from various cold-related diseases.

Over 4,000 people were receiving treatment in different government hospitals across the country in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the control room of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)

Most of them took medical services from outdoor departments of the hospitals, while some of them were admitted, said Dr Ayesha Akther, assistant director of the DGHS Health Emergency Operation Centre and Control Room.

The diseases include acute respiratory infection (ARI), pneumonia, asthma, diarrhoea and jaundice, she told The Daily Star

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Fog reducing visibility in Uttar Saptana area of Lalmonirhat town around 8:30am yesterday. The northern border town didn't see the sun until late in the afternoon. Little children and elderly people of poor families have been suffering the most in the cold spell.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Turkey, Russia unite, urge Libya ceasefire

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin called yesterday for a ceasefire in Libya after talks in Istanbul, where they also inaugurated a "historic" gas pipeline.

The leaders used a joint statement to call for a truce from midnight on Sunday "supported by the necessary measures to be taken for stabilising the situation on the ground" in Libya, where they are seen as supporting opposing sides.

Last week, Turkey sent its first troops to help defend the UN-backed Tripoli government and Erdogan has accused 2,5000 Russian mercenaries of supporting renegade strongman Khalifa Haftar -- claims denied by Moscow.

Earlier, they inaugurated the TurkStream pipelines, which will deliver Russian gas to Turkey and Europe via the Black Sea.

Erdogan described it as a "project of historic importance", while Putin noted the strengthening "partnership of Russia and Turkey in all domains".

TurkStream and the Nord Stream pipelines under the Baltic allow Russia to increase gas supplies to Europe without having to rely on Ukraine.

But Moscow's increasing domination of European energy markets has worried the United States, which last month sanctioned firms working on TurkStream and the almost-completed Nord Stream 2.

The ceremony in Istanbul reflected a dramatic improvement in ties between Russia and Turkey, who appeared on the verge of war less than five years ago after Turkey shot down a Russian jet.

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