



The body of a suspected militant lies on the ground as security forces gather around, after a gunbattle that allegedly killed two militants and one Indian trooper at Lawaypora on the outskirts of Srinagar in Kashmir yesterday.

PHOTO:  
AFP

## EU states urge

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countries that requested the meeting on Myanmar, alongside France, Germany, Belgium and the United States.

China, an indispensable ally for Myanmar, opposed issuing a joint declaration by the entire council, according to a diplomatic source.

"Myanmar must address the root causes of its conflicts," the joint statement said, urging the southeast Asian nation to take "credible action to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations."

"Myanmar must also create conditions for and facilitate a voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of the Rohingya to Myanmar," they said.

A bloody military crackdown by Myanmar in 2017 sent around 740,000 Rohingyas fleeing into neighbouring Bangladesh.

Thousands of Rohingyas are suspected to have been killed in the crackdown, which has been described by UN investigators as a genocide.

Refugees reported widespread rape and arson in Rakhine state by Myanmar's military and local Buddhist militias.

## Five sentenced

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The court, however, acquitted six other accused in the case.

According to the prosecution, a gang of criminals abducted Parsha Saha while he was playing near his home in Kadimnagar village on November 11, 2015.

The abductors demanded Tk 10 lakh in ransom for his release. As the boy's family could not arrange the money, the criminals killed him and dumped his body at a graveyard in nearby Kazipara village.

Police recovered the body the next morning and sent it to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy. The killers gouged the eyes out, said the law enforcers.

The same day, the victim's father Kesham Saha filed a murder case with Ghoraghat Police Station. Later, police pressed charge sheet against 11 people.

## Pelosi rips

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Trump was still on the podium, having just completed the soaring finale to his speech when Pelosi, standing just behind him, raised the papers and demonstratively tore them to pieces.

"It was the courteous thing to do, considering the alternatives," she told a reporter afterwards.

The speech began with as much rancor as it ended, when Trump ignored past custom and declined to shake hands with Pelosi, who as speaker of the House of Representatives had overseen the push to impeach Trump for abuse of office.

She put out a hand and Trump turned away, leaving her arm in thin air.

Democrats responded to Trump's speech, where he proclaimed a "great American comeback" and touted his achievements, by refusing to follow Republicans in repeated standing ovations. There was booing and several Democrats walked out.

"The president has no class," House Democrat Jim McGovern told reporters afterwards. "I mean, he should have, out of respect, taken the speaker's hand."

"But after delivering what essentially was a campaign rally speech that was terribly dark and divisive, I think the speaker did the right thing ripping it up."

Underlying all the tension was the fact that after months of impeachment investigations in the Democratic-led House, the Republican majority Senate is now almost certain to acquit Trump later yesterday.

The finale to the trial won't mean an end to Democratic-led investigations, but it gives Trump momentum in his bid to win another four years after a tumultuous, scandal-filled first term.

But Trump's speech did not once mention the word "impeachment." Much of the address was taken up with proclaiming his successful economic policies and the "America first" outlook.

"We have shattered the mentality of American decline and we have rejected the downsizing of America's destiny," he said.

The Republican said his policies of deregulation and tax cuts -- criticized by opponents as damaging the environment and favoring the wealthy over the poor -- were responsible for "unparalleled" economic success.

He listed the North American USMCA trade pact, a trade deal with China, massive military spending, "unprecedented" measures to stop illegal immigration, and his bid to "end America's wars in the Middle East" as examples of fulfilling his commitments to voters.

He threw his conservative base strings of red meat -- tough talk on abortion, prayer in schools and the right to bear arms.

But flourishes that could have come right out of Trump's days as a reality TV show entertainer grabbed the real attention.

At one moment he paused his speech to praise Rush Limbaugh, one of the fathers of America's hugely influential conservative radio landscape, who disclosed this week that he has advanced lung cancer.

To the surprise of the packed audience, Trump announced that his wife Melania, who was alongside Limbaugh, was going to present the ideological star with the coveted Medal of Freedom -- the highest possible civilian award.

Later, Trump outdid even this stroke of theatrics by singling out a woman in the audience whose army husband had been away for months on foreign deployments, then telling her he had "a very special surprise."

It was her husband, in full uniform, coming down the stairs for a tearful, surprise reunion -- in front of a primetime national television audience.

A combative Trump had already spent the earlier part of Tuesday mocking the Democrats' shambolic kick-off to their primary season, saying that delays in the vote count in Iowa proved their incompetence.

Trump got yet more good news on Tuesday with a Gallup poll showing his approval rating at its highest ever: 49 percent.

Democratic White House candidate Pete Buttigieg seized a shock lead in the chaotic Iowa caucuses, closely trailed by leftist senator Bernie Sanders, according to partial returns released on Tuesday after the embarrassing delay in reporting the results.

Progressive standard-bearer Elizabeth Warren was in third place followed by Joe Biden, a disappointing showing for the former vice president who has claimed he is best positioned to defeat Trump in November.

## Dhaka-Bhanga

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cost of Tk 10,964.15 crore.

The construction work began in September 2018 and supposed to be completed in June 2020, according to project documents.

Under the project, Bangladesh Army is upgrading the 55km-long Dhaka-Khulna Highway to four-lane.

There will be separate service lanes for the slow-moving vehicles on both sides from Jatrabari to Mawa (around 35km) and Pachchar to Bhanga (around 20km), project documents show.

An army official involved in the project said all the remaining works would be completed within this month, except a bridge on a branch road.

There will be 11 controlled access (entry or exit) points to the road, the official added.

Abdus Sabur, the immediate-past project director on behalf of RHD, said Padma bridge is an integral part of the expressway and the road would be fully functional once the construction work of the bridge is completed.

Although it would be a toll road, people unwilling to pay toll would be able to use the service roads, he added.

He said they would start taking toll once Padma Bridge becomes operational and then road users would start getting the real benefit of the expressway, he said.

A top RHD official said a committee was formed to deal with the toll-related issues of the project.

The committee has recommended that the toll collection starts after the construction work of Padma bridge is completed, he also said.

"People may feel aggrieved if we start collecting toll without offering the full benefits of the expressway," he added.

The new deadline to complete the construction of the country's largest bridge is June 2021. The overall progress of Padma Multipurpose Bridge project is 77 percent while the main bridge witnessed an 86 percent progress, Quader said yesterday.

He said 23 out of the 41 spans have already been installed while the construction of approach roads on both sides have been completed.

## Turnout under 20pc

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In DNCC areas, turnout was less than 10 percent at 59 centres.

The centre-wise lowest turnout in the DSCC polls was at Lily International School in Kamrangirchar. Only 4.12 percent of the voters cast votes there.

The data also shows that among the two BNP mayoral candidates, Tabith Awal won in more centres than Ishraque Hossain did. Awal won in 15.5 percent while Ishraque secured victory in 13.6 percent of the centres.

Both the BNP leaders, however, lost the mayor elections to their Awami League counterparts -- Atiqul Islam and Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh.

During the city polls, The Daily Star correspondents visited more than 200 of the 2,468 centres.

At Adarsha High School in Mirpur, they saw only a trickle of voters coming in during the voting hours from 8:00am to 4:00pm.

Only three people voted in the first hour. The number reached 18 at 10:00am, 37 at 11:00am and 54 by noon. At 3:00pm, only 100 votes were cast at the centre.

The EC data showed the turnout at the centre was 7.18 percent.

AL leaders are also apparently not happy with the low presence of voters in the election.

While talking to reporters at the Secretariat on Tuesday, the party's General Secretary Obaidul Quader, who is also the road transport and bridges minister, said voter apathy was not good for democracy.

"It's a matter of concern for us ... We had expected more votes in our favour. Considering the voters from the Awami League, the vote percentage was low," he said.

Speaking on the issue, Badiul Alam Majumder, election expert and secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujon), said, "A democracy cannot be run based on the consent of only 10 or 15 percent of the people. Such a low turnout is a serious threat to the democratic system."

The consequences of the election will be ominous, and everybody will have to shoulder the burden, he said, identifying four reasons for poor presence of voters.

"The common people had some reservations on the use of Electronic Voting Machines [EVMs] as it is a newly-introduced method," he said.

But the bigger reason was that the people had a significant lack of confidence in the EC's ability to hold a free and fair election, he said. "From previous experiences, they have reasons to believe that the election results are predetermined."

There were also security threats to the physical well-being of voters, he said, adding, "There were ruling party goons both in and outside the voting centres, while the absence of polling agents from other parties was significant. It created an atmosphere

of fear."

He also said, "Perhaps, the most important thing that deterred voters from going to the polling stations was the lack of guarantee that they would be able to cast their votes."

"Voters were afraid that polling agents would cast their votes on their behalf or they would be influenced to vote for a particular symbol."

At a press conference at a hotel in Gulshan yesterday, Tabith Awal claimed the low turnout was related to the ruling party's dominance over polling centres.

"Even before the elections, Awami League leaders had announced that they would be taking over the polling centres. On the election day, their goons were stationed outside the centres and they did not allow voters to enter polling booths," he said.

## Sudan leader says he met Israel PM to protect nat'l security

AFP, Khartoum

Sudan's leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan said Tuesday his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the previous day was driven by his responsibility to protect the country's national security.

Burhan's first remarks about the meeting in Uganda, talks that surprised even Sudan's cabinet, came after he briefed the northeast African country's ruling sovereign council which he heads.

"I took this step from the standpoint of my responsibility... to protect the national security of Sudan and achieve the supreme interests of the Sudanese people," Burhan said in a brief statement released after he met the council and top ministers.

On Monday, Netanyahu's office said he had met Burhan in the Ugandan capital Entebbe, in a previously unannounced move.

Israel remains technically at war with Sudan, which supported headline Islamists including Al-Qaeda during the decades-long reign of autocrat Omar al-Bashir, ousted amid mass protests last year.

The Palestinian leadership has denounced the meeting as "a stab in the back", just days after the Israeli leader and US President Donald Trump unveiled a controversial peace plan, widely seen as skewed towards Israel.

"I stress that examining and developing relations between Sudan and Israel is the responsibility of the concerned institutions, as according to (Sudan's) constitutional declaration" signed following Bashir's ouster, Burhan said.

## Pluto has 'beating heart'

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understand what's going on there."

The new study helps illuminate the processes that have led to those different landscapes, and show how Pluto came to be such an unexpectedly interesting world.

The famous heart-shaped structure on Pluto became famous when New Horizons flew past and captured the romantic-looking feature on its surface. The structured, known as Tombaugh Regio, was one of the chief illustrations that Pluto wasn't the barren landscape that scientists had thought.

Such features appear to be formed because of the nitrogen heart on Pluto, the new study suggests. It also helps to demonstrate the similarities between Pluto and our own planet, showing the similarities and differences between the two worlds, sitting billions of miles away at the other end of the solar system.

Nitrogen gas is found everywhere in the air on Earth, but makes up most of Pluto's thin atmosphere.

The rest includes traces of carbon monoxide and methane.

Frozen nitrogen also covers the surface, much of which is found in the heart shape. At day, the thin layer of ice warms and is turned into vapour; at night, it condenses and turns back into ice.

That functions like a heartbeat, pumping winds around the dwarf planet and changing its surface.

The new study suggests that the cycle pushes Pluto's atmosphere around in the opposite direction that it is spinning. That phenomenon is thought to be unique, and is called retro-rotation.

It also whips air near to the surface, pulling heat and material across the surface which create the distinctive patterns that can be seen on Pluto's surface, the researchers say.

"This highlights the fact that Pluto's atmosphere and winds - even if the density of the atmosphere is very low - can impact the surface," said Bertrand.

## Bangabandhu's nation-building

FROM PAGE 16  
Bangabandhu and Indira Gandhi have had wide-ranging talks on various issues, including the future economic planning and review of the situation in the subcontinent, for a little over three hours.

Speaking at a huge public rally at Brigade Parade Ground in the afternoon Bangabandhu says that the bond between Bangladesh and India is not based on expediency. He maintains that the close bond between the countries exist because the peoples of both countries have unflinching faith in the principles of secularism, democracy, socialism and nationalism. He tells the gathering, "I bring with me the love and gratitude from the people of Bangladesh for the people of India." He is wildly cheered when he says that the liberation of Bangladesh would not have been possible if not for the gallant support of Indira Gandhi and the Indian Armed Forces. The venue of the public meeting turns into a human sea.

The banquet tonight is hosted by Indira Gandhi in his honour. Bangabandhu calls for peace and stability in the subcontinent saying, "Let there be an end, once and for all,

to the sterile policy of confrontation between neighbours. Let us not fritter away our national resources, but to use them to lift the standard of living of our people."

Referring to the growing cooperation between Bangladesh and India, Bangabandhu says that geography dictates that the two countries should cooperate in all possible fields, and particularly in the fields of economy, construction of barrages, flood control and taming of the mighty Brahmaputra and Ganges.

### MUJIB'S PORTRAIT IN CURRENCY NOTES

Bangladesh Bank governor discloses that Bangladesh's currency will bear the portrait of Bangabandhu. The currency will be available by the last week of this month.

### BHASHANI NAP EXTENDS COOPERATION

The extended meeting of the Bangladesh NAP (Bhashani group) working committee resolves to extend cooperation and give enough time to the Awami League government in materialising socialism, democracy and secularism in Bangladesh. The meeting also calls for immediate measures to arrest the price hike and

### stop the smuggling of goods. MASS GRAVES FOUND IN PABNA

Horrifying signs of barbarism by the Pak Army have been revealed in Pabna after several mass graves were dug open inside the WAPDA office compound. The site had been serving as Pak Army's headquarter in the district. The graves prove that more than 3,000 civilians were slaughtered by the Pak Army.

Sources: February 7, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

### 21 to get

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Prof Shamsul Alam and Sufi Mohammad Mizanur Rahman are getting the award for making contributions to economy and social service respectively.

Nurun Nabi, Sikder Aminul Haque (posthumous) and Begum Nazmun Nesa Piari have been selected for language and literature while Prof Sayeba Akhter for medical.

Each recipient will get a gold medal, a certificate and a cheque for Tk 2 lakh.



World Health Organization  
Bangladesh

## REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites Expression of Interests from the interested Companies/Institutes/NGOs in Bangladesh for Pre-qualification of Suppliers for the following services:

1. EOI/BAN/2020/001: To conduct nationwide Post Measles-Rubella (MR) Campaign Coverage Evaluation Survey (CES) 2020.

Deadline for the submission of EOI: 14:00hrs, 20 February 2020.

Interested Companies/Institutes/NGOs can view and download the relevant EOI documents from: <http://www.searo.who.int/bangladesh/procurement/tender/en/>.

This Request for Expression of Interest is not a solicitation and replying to it does not guarantee that a vendor will be invited to any solicitation by WHO. No further details of the planned solicitation will be made available to vendors prior to the issuance of solicitation documents.

Interested parties are requested to submit their EOIs in the prescribed templates in a sealed envelope as per the instructions provided in the EOI documents at the Reception of WHO- Country Office for Bangladesh, United House (Ground to 3rd Floor), 10 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.