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Algeria crisis ends in bloodshed

7 more foreign hostages killed; 30 remain unaccounted for

Islamists killed all seven of their remaining foreign captives yesterday before being gunned down at a gas plant in the Algerian desert, ending one of the bloodiest international hostage crises in years, state media said.

The 11 heavily armed men from a group known as "Signatories in Blood" had been holed up at the remote In Amenas complex near the Libya border since they took hundreds of workers hostage in a dawn attack on Wednesday.

Most of the hostages, including 573 Algerians and about 100 foreigners, had been freed after Algerian forces launched a rescue operation on Thursday, which was widely condemned as hasty, but some 30 remained unaccounted for.

In yesterday's final assault, "the Algerian army took out 11 terrorists, and the terrorist group killed seven foreign hostages," state television said.

It did not give the nationalities of those who died.

A security official who spoke to AFP gave the same death tolls, adding that it was believed the foreigners "were killed in retaliation".

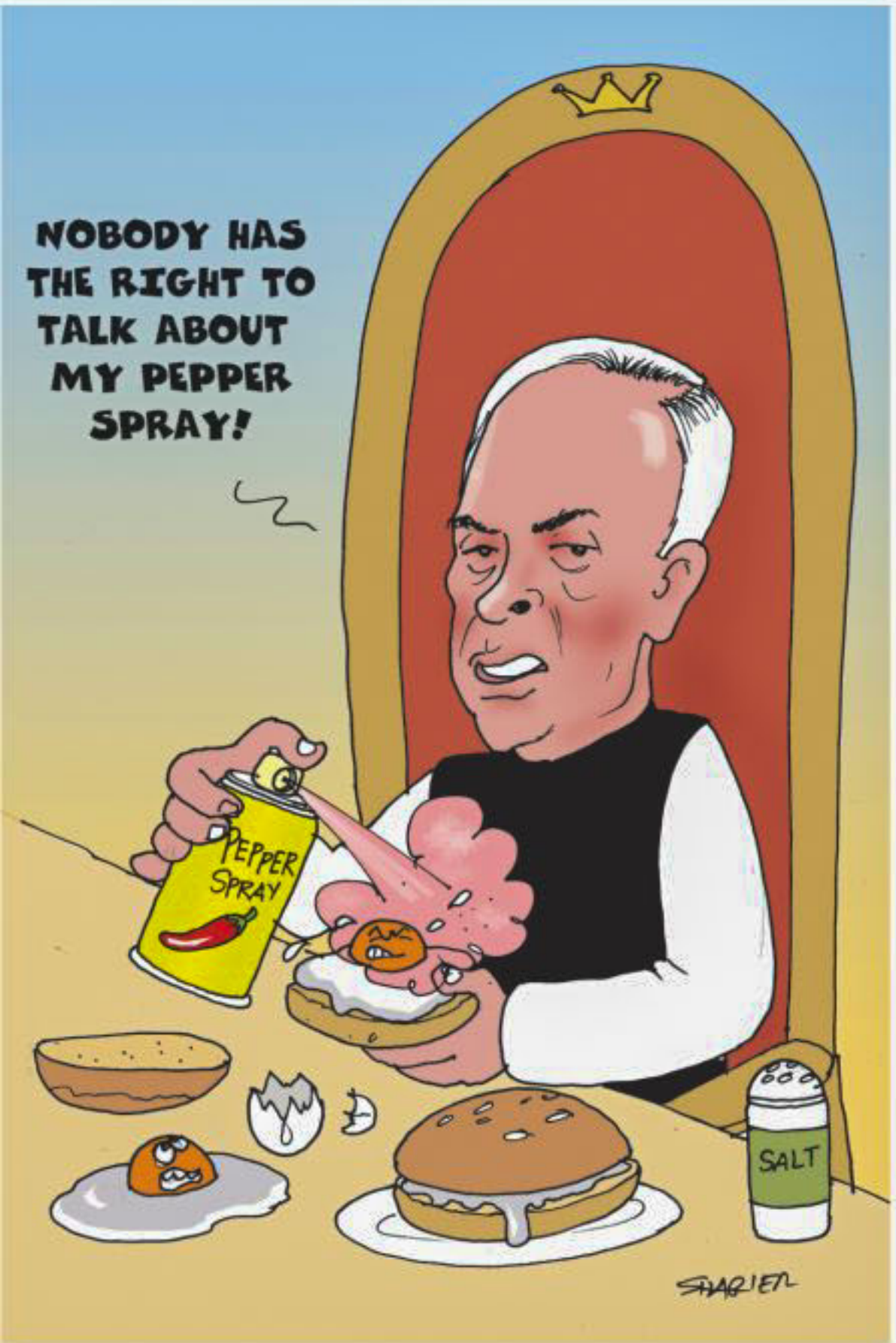
The militants themselves said before the raid that they

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

An impressive illumination of the Biswa Ijtima ground wipes away the darkness of night on the Turag riverbank yesterday. The Muslim congregation, one of the largest in the world, concludes today with thousands of devotees participating in Akheri Munajat in the belief that truly practised religion can light every corner of the earth. Story on page 5.



Cops stick to pepper spray

Amid widespread criticism against the use of pepper spray on protesters, DMP Commissioner Benazir Ahmed yesterday said they will continue using it as an alternative to baton charge to minimise injuries and save the image of police.

He, however, said no expert opinion was sought on it before the import of the chemical compound from the USA.

"We are trying to avoid charging baton as journalists take photographs of such incidents and publish it in the media. As it tarnishes the image of police, we have bought pepper spray upon approval from the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Jute act largely not enforced

Workshop told packaging sector overlooks its mandatory use; growers suffer from price, seed, retting problems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over two years have passed since the enactment of a law for compulsory use of jute in packaging products, but the country's most gifted natural fibre still remains largely neglected in the local packaging sector.

"There has been no enforcement of the law passed by parliament two years back. There are polythene and polypropylene everywhere and hardly you'll find usage of jute in packaging products for the domestic market," said Director General of



Bangladesh Jute Research Institute Dr Md Kamal Uddin at a policy research dissemination workshop on jute in the capital yesterday.

Had the "Mandatory Jute Packaging Act" been enforced strictly, he said, it would have created demand for 15 lakh bales of jute in the domestic market alone and could thereby boost the otherwise sluggish jute prices.

The government enacted the law in October 2010 to increase the use of

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59 Rohingyas pushed back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Coast Guard members drove away 59 Rohingyas who came sailing on three boats up the Naf river on Friday night.

Trying to get to the land in Teknaf upazila, 45 of them were stopped near Jelepura at Shahparir Dweep when the members were patrolling the area around 9:00pm.

Thirty-three of them were males, 10 females and two children, said Lieutenant Badruddoza, officer-in-charge of the Teknaf contingent of the Coast Guard.

In another drive, a team of coastguards held 14 Rohingyas -- 1 male, 5 females and 8 children -- near Kerontoli in Teknaf around 9:15pm as they were heading to the shore on a boat.

The coastguards provided all the Rohingyas with food and water before sending them back to Myanmar on the three boats two hours later, said Badruddoza.

According to Coast Guard data, as many as 1,585 Rohingyas have been sent back to the country since June 11 last year.

The highest number of Rohingyas expelled from

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

Girl killed, kept in office toilet

Family says she went missing 5 days ago

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the decomposed body of a 10-year-old girl, who remained missing since Monday, from the bathroom of a commercial building at Topkhana in the capital yesterday.

Her family members alleged that she was raped and killed by the employees of three travel agencies situated on the third floor of the Tropicana Tower.

The victim Ritu Akhter used to live with her widowed

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Family members cry their heart out after 10-year-old Ritu was found dead in the bathroom of a commercial building at Topkhana in the capital yesterday.

21 move to div round

The Daily Star Spelling Bee yesterday visited seven schools -- three from Dhaka, two each from Barisal and Rajshahi divisions -- for the Online Round activations with a total of 21 qualifiers.

In Dhaka, the team from champs21.com visited Holy Cross School, Shahid Police Smrity School and College, and Lalmatia Housing Society School.

The qualifiers from this division are: Judith Kakon

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Billionaires' fortunes hinder poverty fight

Says Oxfam

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

The vast fortunes made by the world's richest 100 billionaires is driving up inequality and hindering the world's ability to tackle poverty, according to Oxfam.

The charity said the accumulation of wealth and income on an unprecedented scale, often at the expense of secure jobs



and decent wages for the poorest, undermined the ability of people who survive on aid or low wages to improve their situation and escape poverty.

Oxfam said the world's poorest could be lifted out of poverty several times over should the richest 100 billionaires give away the money they made last year.

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Integral Energy Limited ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with BNP leader Moudud Ahmed that pro-ruling Awami League student body Bangladesh Chhatra League's "violence and crimes" at different public universities would determine the government's fall?

☒ Yes (94%)
☐ No (5%)
☐ No Comments (1%)

TOTAL VOTES: 316

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Communications Minister Obaidul Quader that the opposition's claim that the Padma bridge will not be constructed during the present government's term is just propaganda?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net
YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT facebook.com/dailystarnews

PRAYER TIMING January 20

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:30	6:05
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:43	5:47
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation