

Workers collect clay from the bank of a swamp in Savar yesterday, at the end of the rainy season. This clay is used for making bricks in the countless kilns that surround the capital. The kilns go into full-swing production during the dry season. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

43 killed

FROM PAGE 16 smoke from several kilometres away. Many said that part of the road was known to be particularly dangerous.

The lorry driver was killed. The rest of the victims were passengers on the coach, officials said. "I am astonished at the force of the crash. It will take a lot of time to recover all the bodies,' said a fireman at the scene.

Eight people, including the coach driver, managed to escape the burning wreckage -- four of whom were seriously injured, according to a local official.

"The bus driver was lightly injured He had the presence of mind to open the doors to allow as many passengers as possible to leave the bus," said Sublett.

The crash is the deadliest in France since August 1982, when 53 people including 44 children were killed in a motorway pile-up.

"The French government has fully mobilised after this terrible tragedy,' President Francois Hollande said

from Athens, where he is on an official visit. "We are plunged into sadness due

to this drama."

Some 20 fire engines and 60 firefighters were dispatched to the scene yesterday, supported by helicopters. A trauma counselling unit and an information hotline were also set up.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls, Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and Transport Minister Alain Vidalies travelled to the site, and the National Assembly, or lower house of parliament, observed a minute's silence.

"It's a terrible shock for France," said Valls.

39 Jamaat, Shibir

FROM PAGE 16 The police official said they were interrogating the 39 men at the police station.

The detainees include Rajaul Karim Ansari, Jamaat Amir of Bandarban town, and Inranul Haque, president of Bandarban Shibir, said

Little John set

FROM PAGE 16

News that Big Ben may be silenced prompted an offer from Nottingham council that the BBC could broadcast the live chimes from its Council

House while London's set is repaired. Deputy leader Graham Chapman admitted it was a tongue-in-cheek gimmick" but it was "the only possi-

ble alternative for Big Ben". "This is an opportunity to have a bit of devolution, devolve the sound

The BBC moved out to Salford, now we can devolve the sound to Nottingham," he said.

Horologist Lyon was bursting with

pride at the sound of the bell. "It is considered to be the best set of clock bells in the country. The main bell here is Little John. It is 10.5 tonnes and on a clear day you can

hear it seven-and-a-half miles away down the Trent valley," he said. "It's got a beautiful tone - far better than Big Ben because Big Ben was

cracked when it was put in and has never been altered. It has rather a tinny sound unlike Little John which

is mellow." The BBC and parliament remain firmly tight-lipped on any decision on what could replace the bongs, although it did prompt a discussion

on PM on Monday.

Saudi Arabia tightens

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working hours without pay or making workers work during official weekends or holidays. Violation also includes forcing

workers to work in the heat or in bad weather without precautions. Ignoring safety measures and health standards will bring a fine of SR 25,000. Companies will be fined SR 50,000

for selling visas to expatriates and SR 45,000 for employing an expatriate without a licence. The Saudi labour ministry will also

fine unlicensed recruitment offices between SR 10,000 and SR 20,000. Recruitment companies will also be fined the same amount if they do not register their services with the ministry. Meanwhile, summary courts in employers.

Jeddah and Makkah have charged 24 people with human trafficking and each of them was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, 1,000 lashes and fines ranging between SR 20,000 and SR 100,000.

A local Saudi daily reports that 10 of the accused -- nine expatriates and a Saudi -- were from Jeddah and the rest were from Makkah.

defendants with human trafficking after 14 housemaids had accused them of forcing them into prostitu-

tion and other illegal work. Residents had earlier informed regulations.

police that a number of expatriate women living in houses in their neighbourhoods were engaged in illegal activities. The police later rounded them up

after closely monitoring the houses

and handed them over to the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution prior to sending them to courts. The women told the courts that

some men promised to find them jobs with Saudi families but forced them into prostitution, drug smuggling and other illegal jobs instead. Golam Moshi, Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia, welcomed the

new regulations and said these will

save the Bangladeshis from cheating

and exploitation by agencies and "The most epoch-making point is that these new regulations will stop trading with visas. This is a very serious problem for the Bangladeshis because they have to spend at least Tk 5 or 10 lakh to get a work visa in Saudi

Arabia. Now, this practice will be stopped," he told BBC Bengali Service yesterday. Hailing the Saudi government's

The courts last year charged the move, Sheepa Hafiza, director of gender, justice and migration at Brac, however, said the benefits will depend on the implementation and regular monitoring of these new

Well-equipped

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Savar and Gazipur's Tongi. Another prime goal was to provide teaching and training facilities to students and interns of the adjacent Armed Forces Medical College, hospital sources said.

During a recent visit to the hospital, these correspondents found an almost empty reception area around 8:00 in the evening. The male ward on the fifth floor was comparatively calm with a small number of patients and attendants.

According to the authorities, 260 patients are admitted at the hospital at present. There are eight different units -- medicine, gynaecology, ENT, burn, child, surgery, orthopaedics, dental and cardiology.

The hospital authorities claimed they provide treatment to around 2,000 patients at the outpatient department (OPD) each day. However, after talking with staffs

in different departments and some patients as well, it was learnt that not enough people were aware about the location of a public hospital in a place like this and also about the fact that it provides treatment like all the other public hospitals at a small cost.

"The place where the hospital is located is a matter here," said Rafiqul Islam, whose relative was

taking treatment here on Tuesday. Many people mistook it for an army-run hospital since it is located in the cantonment area. Another

reason is that it stands by a busy road with no link road to the hospital, he said.

Director Saidur corroborated that lack of publicity is one of the reasons why it failed to get people's atten-

tion. Ward Master Naharul Islam, also a warrant officer of Bangladesh Army,

said, "A patient gets all the facilities at the hospital, including meals and medicines, at an admission fee of Tk

He added the hospital was in need of around 100 more doctors and nurses and around 400 more staffs.

Two operation theatres including one at the emergency unit were out of service due to lack of doctors and staffs, Naharul said, adding the blood bank was also out of operation due to similar reasons.

The hospital has no mortuary, which is another shortcoming.

Mohammad Alam, a small trader residing in the city's Kalshi area, told The Daily Star that he was very happy with the way doctors here treated his relative who was suffering from kidney ailments.

"We are pleased the way doctors and staffs provide treatment here. There is no hassle, nor any broker and we are getting uninterrupted treatment," he said.

Nazmul, a patient admitted to the hospital on Tuesday, said it took his relatives barely 20 minutes to get him admitted -- from buying ticket to doctors' appointment to finally getting a bed on the hospital's fifth

Ershad, another patient from the city's Mohammadpur, said the food

they are provided is very good. "I was given six pieces of bread, an egg and a banana at breakfast; rice,

fish, vegetables and daal during lunch; and chicken, vegetables and daal for dinner," he said.

better treatment facilities."

Reshad, Ershad's brother, said, "There are many hospitals near Mohammadpur, but I brought my brother here as one of my relatives said it was comparatively new with

100 bombs recovered in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police have found 100 crude and petrol bombs abandoned at a graveyard in Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila.

Mullah Monir Hosain, officer-incharge of Madhabpur Police Station, told The Daily Star that on information they went to the graveyard and recovered 53 crude bombs, 47 petrol bombs and a locally-made gun around 10:00pm Thursday.7

Couple found dead at home in Netrakona

UNB, Netrakona

An elderly couple was stabbed dead by some criminals at Madhya Bazar in the district's Durgapur upazila yesterday.

The dead are Arun Saha, 75, a cloth shop owner, and his wife Hena Rani Saha, 65.

Neighbours of the couple found the door of their room closed in the morning. As they didn't get any response from inside till afternoon, they called in the police, said Rezaul Islam, officer-in-charge of Durgapur Police Station.

Reaching the house around 3:30pm, law enforcers broke into the room and found the couple's bodies in a pool of blood.

Police later sent the bodies to Sadar Hospital for autopsies.

The couple used to live in the house and their two sons live in Dhaka, the OC added.

The reason behind the murder could not be known.

Firm faces

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Narayanganj Palli Bidyut Samity-2 at Araihazar upazila, the state minister said engineers from other countries were working in projects in Bangladesh and that they do not raise questions about security.

Even diplomats in Dhaka, including those from Spain, said the security situation in the country was normal, he claimed. Foreign nationals in the country

had expressed their security concerns following the killing of Italian Aid worker Cesare Tavella on September 28 and Japanese national Hoshi Kunio on October 3.

Additional security measures were taken by law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of foreigners working in Bangladesh.

Cops come FROM PAGE 16

the ground floor of the building, the OC said.

However, relatives and neighbours during the operation surrounded the

DB team and threw petrol at them. No one was hurt in that attack, the OC said. More DB men joined the team and

left the spot with the arrestees, Monirul said.

Later, following information gleaned from Sohel, another 7.65mm January to September this year, accordpistol and a bullet was recovered ing to statistics of Ain o Salish Kendra from his house, he added. available on its website.

Hollande vows to help Greece

AFP, Athens

French President Francois Hollande yesterday pledged to help Greece carry out tough bailout reforms and to cope with a crisis on its borders where record numbers of migrants are arriv-

Hollande, whose visit was rocked by news of a coach crash that killed at least 42 people in southern France, is backing Athens as it grapples with reform demands from its European Union and IMF creditors.

The socialist French president is one of the few European leaders to have unabashedly lent support to young leftist Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras during months of fraught creditor talks earlier this year. "France must continue to stand by

Greece," Hollande told reporters after signing a strategic partnership with Tsipras, notably offering French economic management expertise, especially to tackle tax evasion. On his first visit to Athens since

2013, Hollande praised Greece's determination to stay the course of economic reform. "We must listen to Greek officials

all the way," he said. The French leader said such efforts had been instrumental in eliminating talk of a Greek exit from the eurozone -- or Grexit -- that dominated head-

when they tell us that they want to go

lines earlier in the year. In contrast, he said, it was now talk of a British exit from the EU -- or Brexit -- that would occupy European leaders in December. Brexit, Hollande said, was a "serious hypothesis" that could not be ignored.

The French leader promised, too, to stand by Greece as it grapples with rising numbers of migrants. "Greece is our frontier," he added,

pledging 60 French experts to rein-

force EU border agency Frontex, help-

ing it to staff emergency registration centres across the region. "We must cooperate to protect our borders," Hollande said, adding that those who did not meet refugee crite-

ria "should be turned back." The International Organisation for Migration said Greece had 48,000 migrants and refugees landing on its shores in the past five days, the highest number of weekly arrivals so far.

Hollande also vowed to support

Greece in an address to the parliament, becoming the third French president to speak before the chamber after General Charles de Gaulle in 1963 and Nicolas Sarkozy in 2008.

On his arrival in Athens on Thursday, Hollande recalled the "bold decisions" taken by Tsipras, who in July agreed to more public spending cuts in return for a threeyear, 86-billion-euro (\$96-billion) EU bailout to prevent Greece crashing out of the eurozone.

"We did everything, France and Greece... for Greece to remain in Europe and that Europe show solidarity with Greece.

"And today, that is the message that I will continue to carry."

Tsipras yesterday acknowledged that Hollande "was among those who persuaded me that I had to accept" the July bailout.

Hollande has also pleaded for a renegotiation via an interest deferral of the soaring Greek public debt, which is equal to around 200 percent of the country's entire annual economic output.

Indian woman stuck in Pakistan to return home

AFP, New Delhi

A mute and deaf Indian woman who has been stuck in Pakistan for more than a decade because she could not remember where she came from will return home on Monday after apparently identifying her family. India's foreign ministry said yester-

as Geeta, would undergo DNA testing to establish whether she is related to the people claiming to be her family. The prospect of a long-awaited reunion comes after Geeta indicated earlier this month that she recognised a photograph of a family from the

day that the young women, known only

eastern state of Bihar sent to her by Indian authorities. "Geeta has already identified one family as possibly being that of her parents," foreign ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said at a media briefing

in New Delhi. "We will be doing DNA tests to establish conclusive proof."

Obama, Sharif urge

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a prickly one, born of an interdependency peppered with mutual mistrust.

Ties were plunged into deep crisis when 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden was discovered to be living in a

Use Ashura's

FROM PAGE 4

duty to put up a strong resistance against any anti-people regime, its misdeeds and misrule," she said.

She claimed Bangladesh was passing a bad time amidst injustice and misdeeds as there was no possibility of being served justice here.

Man killed

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Masud, commanding officer of Rab-1, said the "shootout" took place after one of their patrol teams rushed to a road near Sun Valley Housing project around 1:30am. They had information that a group of criminals had gathered

Sensing Rab presence, the criminals started to fire indiscriminately at the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate with gunshots, triggering the "gun-battle".

At one stage, the attackers fled leaving one of their cohorts Jahir, who was critically injured, at the spot, claimed Tuhin. He was declared dead after being

taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Rab claimed to have recovered two bullets, a magazine, a pipe gun and a

machete from the scene.

Two Rab members, who were injured in the operation, took primary treatment at Kurmitola General Hospital, according to the crime bust-

Nilufer Yeasmin, sister of the "shootout" victim, said they identified the body at the DMC morgue around noon, learning about the incident on television.

"My brother lived in Damudhya upazila of Shariatpur but he used to come to Dhaka quite often. As far as I know, he was just a driver," she said.

Rab, however, claimed Jahir had been arrested several times before for his involvement in different types of criminal activities in Badda and Rampura areas.

At least 106 people were killed in such "crossfire" or "gun-fights" with law enforcement agencies from

major Pakistani garrison city. Obama on Thursday hailed cooperation on economic, scientific and education issues, even as security disagreements loomed large over the Oval

Office meeting. Islamabad's ties with the Afghan Taliban, support for terror groups that target India and the United States and its rapidly growing nuclear arsenal are seen by Washington as monumental

security headaches. And US officials see little change in the attitude of Pakistan's powerful

security services to these problems. In a telling sign of that power, Sharif's visit was bookended by US visits from Rizwan Akhtar, the head of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, and the upcoming visit of Chief of

Army Staff Raheel Sharif. Obama recently announced that US troops would be staying in Afghanistan longer than he had promised, but few believe a military solu-

tion is possible. The White House is keen to get the Taliban back to the negotiating table, after a first round of talks led to a dead end. The resurgent Islamists briefly captured a key northern Afghan city

this month. Kabul has accused Islamabad of harbouring and nurturing Taliban insurgents -- allowing them to launch attacks in Afghanistan before melting

back across the border. There are growing calls in Washington for the United States to limit the transfer of weapons and funds to Islamabad.

BNP won't let AL

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"If the polls are free and fair, BNP will win bagging 70 percent of votes," he told a discussion at the capital's Jatiya Press Club. However, BNP leaders did not say

anything till yesterday about participation of the party in the polls. They told reporters that the decision would be finalised after return of party chief Khaleda Zia from London. Warning the government,

Emajuddin, also a former vice chancellor of Dhaka University, said if the administration tried to snatch the victory of BNP, there would be repercussions in and outside the country. He said the government had

decided to hold the election under party banners to ensure the ruling party's victory in the polls. Partisan election will weaken the

local government bodies, he said.

He also demanded reform of the Election Commission before holding the polls.