



Children attend a war safety awareness class conducted by civil defence members, in the rebel-controlled area of Maaret al-Numan town in Idlib province, Syria, yesterday. Syria's conflict has killed more than 270,000 people and displaced millions since it started with the repression of anti-government protests in 2011.

PM flies to London today

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International Airport at 10:30am. The flight is expected to reach Heathrow International Airport at 4:15pm (London time). Abdul Hannan, Bangladesh high commissioner to the UK, will receive the PM at the airport. On May 18, she will leave London for the Bulgarian capital by a British Airways flight (BA 0890) at 8:20am (London time). The flight is scheduled to touch down at Sofia International Airport at 1:15pm (Bulgaria time). Vezhdi Rashidov, minister of culture of Bulgaria; Vanya Kaneva, executive director of the Council of Women in Business in Bulgaria; and Bangladesh Ambassador in Sofia Allama Siddiki will receive Hasina at the airport. During her visit to Bulgaria, the PM will stay at Hotel Marinela Sofia. She will attend the opening ceremony of the Global Women Leaders Forum on the afternoon of May 18 at the National Art Gallery, Sofia and deliver the keynote speech as the chief guest. During the visit, the premier will call on Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev at the Presidential Palace. Foreign ministry sources said the two prime ministers, after the official talks on May 20, will witness signing of some agreements. They will deliver a joint press statement later. Hasina will join a gala dinner to be hosted by Irina Bokova, the Unesco director-general, and Boriana Manolova, the CEO of Siemens Bulgaria and the chairperson of Council of Women in Business in Bulgaria, at Grand Hotel Sofia. Tsetska Tsacheva Dangovska, president of the National Parliament of Bulgaria, will host a working luncheon in honour of the Bangladeshi leader at the hotel. Hasina is scheduled to return home on May 21 at 6:30am (BST).

Two Indian reporters shot dead in less than 24 hours

AFP, New Delhi
Gunmen shot dead two journalists in 24 hours in separate incidents in eastern India, police and local reports said Saturday, the latest media killing in Asia's deadliest country for reporters. Rajdeo Ranjan, the local bureau chief for Hindi-language daily Hindustan, was travelling on his motorcycle late Friday in Bihar state when a group of unknown assailants shot him five times. "He was shot from very close range. We rushed him to a hospital where he was declared dead on arrival last night," local Siwan district police chief, Saurabh Kumar Sah, told AFP by telephone. Sah said police were yet to ascertain the motive behind the killing, but two people have been detailed for questioning. "We are focusing more on the professional angle since he may have written some things about certain people, which may have led to this," he said. Television footage showed villagers collecting firewood to prepare Ranjan's funeral pyre as family members and women sat on the ground wailing, holding their heads in their hands. Late on Thursday, television journalist Akhilesh Pratap Singh was also shot dead by unknown assailants as he returned home on a motorbike in restive Jharkhand state, which neighbours Bihar, according to local reports. "We have no eyewitnesses yet. But we suspect that the assailants too were on motorcycle," the Indian Express newspaper quoted Upendra Prasad, a senior state police official, as saying. "It is not immediately clear if the journalist had (received) any threat from anybody."

Children attending a war safety awareness class in a rebel-controlled area in Syria.

Monk killed in Bandarban

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350 Chak people, all followers of Buddhism. One can reach there only on foot or by motorcycles. He dedicated himself to the path of spiritualism a couple of years ago and took the present name. His previous name was Shwe U Chak. Police could not ascertain the motive behind the killing immediately but it resembles recent murders of people of different faiths and ideologies. Machete-wielding attackers carried out at least five such murders between April 6 and May 7. The victims are secularist online activist Nazimuddin Samad, Prof Rezaul Karim Siddiquee, a English teacher at Rajshahi university and a cultural activist; LGBT activist Xulhaz Mannan and his friend Mahub Tonoy, Hindu tailor Nikhil Joarder of Tangail, and Shahidullah, a practitioner of Sufism in Rajshahi. Law enforcers are yet to make any headway in these cases. About yesterday's killing, Sub-Inspector Kazi Ahsan of Naikhangchhari Police Station told BBC Bangla Service that the Bouddha Bhikkhu was murdered sometime between 8:00pm of Friday to 5:00am yesterday. The victim's daughter-in-law found him dead around 5:00am when she went to the Kyang (temple) to serve him food. No belongings were touched, said police and family members. The family members last saw him around 8:30am on Friday. "Like on every other day, I went to the temple in the early morning [yesterday] and found his dead body. No valuables or money were missing from the temple, where he had been staying alone for the last one and half years," said his daughter-in-law Manu Ching Chak. The victim's son, Aung Sa Thoai Chak, 35, said his father had no enmity with anyone in the area. But he added, "My father had been feeling unsafe since Thursday when two unidentified men roamed the temple area. He informed it to me that day and said 'something unexpected will hap-

3 teenagers

pen to me and you should stay alert." Police have been investigating the incident keeping in mind possible militant links, among other things, said Superintendent Mizanur Rahman of Bandarban. Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said the killing of the Buddhist monk was a "stray incident." "It's a stray incident. Relatives might have been involved in it," he told reporters emerging from a programme in Rajshahi. He, however, did not say what made him reach the conclusion. Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, the Supreme Court lawyer who filed a petition seeking justice for the 2012 attack on the Buddhist community of Ramu in Cox's Bazar, said he heard that the monk had received death threats from anonymous persons recently. "I tried to know from locals whether he had any land-related dispute or personal enmity. But the locals said so far they know there was no such issue," he told The Daily Star. Mong Kyaw Hla Chak, the karbari (village head) of Upor Chakpara, said the elderly monk used to meditate most part of the day. "He was a great man. It is hard to believe that he was killed. Neither the monk nor the family members had any enemy." Hundreds of Buddhist devotees were seen with tearful eyes in the temple area after the brutal killing of their religious leader. Bandarban police chief Mizanur Rahman said they already collected evidence from the spot. "We found the footprints of the attackers who might have killed the monk at night." Panic spread among the locals as it was the first such incident in the area. Members of police and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) were deployed there to ensure security. Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Minister Bir Bahadur U Shwe Sing visited on the spot in the afternoon. The victim's son file a murder case with Naikhangchhari Police Station.

Five-year-old dies

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hole. I rushed there and saw my child's hand sticking out of a pile of sand at the bottom of the hole. I tried to throw my orna [scarf] towards him, but could not save him." Both Rummanur and Saidur had fallen into the well. "The seven- to eight-feet-deep well was dug two years ago for a water pump," said Akhtaruzzaman Liton, deputy assistant director of Gazipur's Fire Services and Civil Defence. "But when they couldn't get water, it was abandoned and closed with sand," he said, adding that the recent rain caused the well to become a sink-hole. Fire fighters had rushed to the spot but were able to rescue only Saidul, who too had slipped into the well and had suffered injuries. Rummanur's body was pulled out later and taken to a local hospital, doctors present there declared him dead, Akhtaruzzaman said. Rummanur's father Billal Hossain said the school authorities should have known about the well and the risks it posed. "If they had warned people about it, my child would not have died this way." Headmaster Ruhul said they had rented the campus in January and that they had no idea of such risks then. "I came to know about the hole after the accident and the owner said he had filled it up." Abul Hashem, owner of the school house, was detained by police after the incident.



Rummanur Hossain

Woman spends \$4.6m

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Cartier love bracelet and another \$2,500 on a pair of Christian Louboutin boots. Her real weakness appeared to be Hermes, with the Malaysian woman reported to have bought 13 of the iconic designer scarves, and a number of their handbags. The coveted Birkin bags range from the basic model in Epsom leather, which would have set her back almost \$20,000, to the elaborate Birkin Himalayan crocodile palladium bag with a \$158,225.67 price tag. The extensive list shows that on April 9, 2015, she spent \$220,200 at the Christian Dior Sydney store - her biggest recorded purchase. The next day she returned to spend a further \$94,520, the report stated. These purchases are only a small portion of Ms Lee's alleged \$4,653,333 overdraft debt. The chemical engineering student was arrested on May 4 after trying to fly home to Malaysia on an emergency passport. She was charged with dishonesty obtaining financial advantage by deception, and knowingly dealing with the proceeds of crime. Earlier this month, a court heard that, although the police fraud unit had started their investigation into the withdrawal of the money in 2012, they only issued the arrest warrant on March 4 this year. After her arrest in May, her release on bail was delayed after her boy-

Germany sees more arson at refugee centres

AFP, Berlin
German authorities on Saturday reported an increase in the number of arson fires at shelters for refugees who flooded Germany last year, raising concerns about anti-migrant violence. "This year, there have already been 45 arson fires," said Holger Muench, head of the federal criminal police (BKA). "What is particularly worrisome is the increasing scale of the violence," he said in an interview with the Funke newspaper group. In 2015, when Germany opened its doors to 1.1 million migrants mostly from war-torn Syria, 92 arson fires at centres for asylum seekers were reported, compared with only six in 2014, according to BKA statistics published in late January. Muench said he did not have any knowledge of large-scale far-right groups being behind the fires, adding the majority were set by men from the areas near the torched shelters.

Hindu teacher

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that the punishment of doing sit-ups holding the ear in public was meted out in his presence. "There was no other way to save the teacher from the angry public," he told the BBC. Shyamal admitted to the BBC that he had indeed beaten up a student and locals used this incident against him. He denied the claim that he had used abusive language against religion. Shyamal claimed that people in the school management with grievances towards him had used the incident to take revenge.

Pakistan broke

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Diplomatic tensions between Dhaka and Islamabad seem to be escalating since, with each government summoning the other's envoy to lodge strong protests over the issue. After liberation, Bangladesh collected specific evidence of genocide against at least 195 Pakistani army personnel, who were in Indian custody as prisoners of war (POWs). After a long-drawn negotiation, a tripartite agreement was signed in Delhi in April 1974, and as per the agreement, Pakistan took back the POWs. However, the minister said there was nothing in the agreement about the local collaborators of the Pakistan army, who are now facing trial and execution. On May 13, Pakistan prime minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz said the country would raise the issue of hanging of Nizami before the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and other countries. Asked what would be the stance of Bangladesh if Pakistan did so, the minister said: "Our stance will remain the same. This [trial] is our internal issue. They are being tried and executed in line with our domestic law." "Pakistan shouldn't talk about our internal matters. It is better if they keep their mouth shut. If they fail to show such maturity, then, I think, the world will condemn them," he added. Tureen Afroz said the agreement had no validity as Bangladesh parliament did not endorse it. As per the section 53 of the Vienna Convention-1969 to which Bangladesh is a signatory, there are some crimes that cannot be forgiven by any government, and genocide is one of them, she added.

Superstores go on strike

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mobile court last week fined Agora, Meena Bazar and fast food chain Coopers for keeping expired and stale food items in their shops in the capital's Shantinagar. The mobile court of Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) under the food ministry sentenced Agora's Shantinagar branch manager Monirul Islam to two years' imprisonment for keeping stale fish, meat and expired food in the shop, said a food ministry press release last week. The court also fined the manager of the Agora outlet Tk 2 lakh and the in-charge of Meena Bazar and manager of Coopers Tk 3 lakh each on the same charges. Bangladesh Supermarket Owners Association (BSOA) said superstore chains have been flourishing in Bangladesh and thousands of people, including farmers, are linked with them. But the sector has been "affected by a discriminatory policy." "Mobile courts of different authorities have been raiding superstores regularly in the name of safe food," said the statement signed by BSOA General Secretary Md Zakir Hossain. "Mobile courts, with the help of police, Rab and media outlets, have been conducting raids repeatedly. This is happening at a time when supermarkets are playing a visible role in ensuring safe food. And they are being fined based on the results of tests carried out unscientifically," claimed the BSOA. It appears that the supermarkets are being targeted for such raids, said the association adding that a wrong message is being sent out to the buyers through these raids as if the objective of these stores is to sell rotten or adulterated products. The statement said supermarkets can easily be a partner in the safe food

Friendship

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necessary action against Aslam Chowdhury to send a clear message to the party members and its leaders that such a meeting is "forbidden" and it goes against the party's policy. About his meeting with BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, he said the BNP leader assured him that the party has no relations with Israel as it is very much supportive of the legitimate rights of Palestinians. "He [Aslam Chowdhury] didn't know the man from Israel and everything happened mistakenly," the envoy said quoting Fakhrul. He added that the BNP secretary general even made a press statement denying BNP's relations with Israel. Asked to comment on the ongoing trial of the suspected war criminals, he categorically said it was internal affairs of Bangladesh and nobody from outside should make a comment on the issue. "We, the Palestinians, are sorry for the killing and massacre that happened in Bangladesh in 1971.... Nobody should support atrocities and killings." On Bangladesh-Palestine ties, Ramadan said the relations between the two countries have taken a solid foundation over the years since 1971.

Imran Khan

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company in 1983 pre-dates anything found in the Panama Papers about other Pakistanis. Khan "is pioneer in offshore company formation, among Pakistanis. Not only the oldest, his company remained operational for the longest period," Cheema said on Twitter. Mohammad Zubair, the privatisation minister, said Khan should prepare to face parliamentary grilling. He added Sharif does not own any off-shore companies. Sharif's daughter Maryam, who is alleged to have owned an off-shore company used to buy a flat in London, also waded in. "The 'PIONEER' of offshore companies.... The TRAILBLAZER award goes to Mr. Khan. #Hypocrisy," she said on Twitter. One political analyst said the opposition was likely to keep using the Panama Papers to pillar Sharif but Khan's revelations will help blunt those attacks.