



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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### HUMAYUN AHMED BIOPIC?

Farooki clarifies after reports that his upcoming film is based on the wordsmith's life

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### SHARBAT TO BE DEPORTED

Pakistan to send the famed 'green-eyed girl' back to Afghanistan

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## Fresh attack on Hindu houses

### 5 houses torched in Nasirnagar; local administration's findings show gravity of the attack while ministers play it down

RASHIDUL HASAN and WASIM BIN HABIB

Five days after the synchronised attack on the Hindus in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar, five Hindu homes were torched there in the wee hours yesterday, spreading panic among the already frightened minority community.

The arson attack by unknown people saw six structures burned down, including cowsheds and kitchens attached to Hindu homes in Banikpara, Akhrapara, Thakurpara, and Hashpatalpara in Nasirnagar between 3:00am and 4:00am, the local administration said.

There were no reports of anyone being hurt.

Later around 6:00pm, miscreants set fire to a pile of straw belonging to a Hindu family at Chotipara in the upazila of Gokarna union, said Mahiuddin Ahmed, sub-inspector of Nasirnagar Police Station.

It is a remote area, and so he could not give further details.

These fresh attacks came only two days after Fisheries Minister Sayeedul Haque, also a local Awami League MP, claimed that Sunday's hate attack over a Facebook post was "not that serious" and that "only one or two incidents of looting took place".

### LOCAL ADMIN FINDINGS

- 58 houses damaged
- 17 temples damaged or looted
- Total damage worth Tk 71 lakh

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The burnt remains of a Hindu family's home in Nasirnagar of Brahmanbaria yesterday hours after criminals torched several cowsheds and kitchens at four villages there. Five days after the hate attack on the Hindus in the upazila over an alleged Facebook post, this arson incident has heightened fear among the Hindus and created outrage all around the country.

## Who are the attackers?

RASHIDUL HASAN, back from Nasirnagar, Brahmanbaria

Many of those who attacked Hindu homes and temples in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar on Sunday were aged between 14 and 25, and they joined the rallies held by two Islamist groups that day.

Protesting a Facebook post "hurting the religious sentiment" of the Muslims, one rally was staged by Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat at Nasirnagar College intersection, while the other by Towhidi Janata at Ashutosh Pilot High School.

Both the rallies began around 10:00am and continued till 2:00pm. Many participants left midway through the rallies and took part in the three-hour attack starting from 11:00am, according to locals, police and sources in the administration.

Split into several groups, a mob from the rally of Towhidi Janata simultaneously attacked Namasurdrpara, Sarkar

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## Depression in Bay may turn into cyclone



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is having light to moderate rainfall from Thursday night as a tropical depression has been formed in the Bay of Bengal.

The depression may continue for the next 24 hours from 6:00pm yesterday, but it is still not confirmed weather it will turn into a cyclone, said Arif Hossain, an official at the Met office.

He said the depression will increase the intensity of rainfall in that next 24 hours.

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## FEAR OF FATAL FUNGAL DISEASE

# Wheat cultivation withheld in 8 dists

### Tight screening of seeds used in other districts

REAZ AHMAD

This season, the government is withholding wheat cultivation in eight south and southwestern districts to prevent the recurrence of wheat blast. The districts were hit hard by the fungal disease last season.

And some 60,000 metric tonnes (MT) of seeds, which are to be sowed in 23 other wheat-growing districts from early this month, are currently going through a screening process to check fungi resurgence in new areas.

Talking to The Daily Star, officials at the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Extension and Wheat Research Centre have confirmed that there would be no supply of seeds and demonstration plots of wheat in Jessore, Kushtia, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jhenidah, Magura, Barisal and Bhola this season beginning this month.

And wheat growers in these districts would be encouraged to go for alternative winter crops like maize, oilseeds and pulses, the officials said.

The first ever attack of wheat blast in Bangladesh

cost the country a financial loss of at least Tk 1,800 crore in terms of lost yield last season, said Prof Dr M Bahadur Meah, a preeminent plant pathologist who heads the national core committee of experts that the government had formed in the aftermath of the fungal disease.

The blast affected over one lakh hectares of wheat fields in the eight districts, causing up to 40 percent of crop damage.

Caused by a fungus -- *Magnaporthe oryzae* -- wheat blast is one of the most fearsome and intractable wheat diseases in recent decades, according to the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT).

Mostly confined within the continent of South America since 1985, the disease's attack in Bangladesh wheat fields last season was the first case of wheat blast in Asia. The blast directly strikes the ears of wheat and can shrivel and deform the grain in less than a week from the first symptoms are

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### TOP! QUOTE

"If the incident [in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar] is taken lightly, there will be further crisis in the days to come."

ADVOCATE  
RANA DASGUPTA  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
BANGLADESH HINDU-BOUDDHA-CHRISTIAN OIKYA PARISHAD  
AT A DISCUSSION IN THE CAPITAL

## MALAYSIAN JOB MARKET

# Bangladeshis now majority of skilled expat workforce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshis make up the majority of the 1,66,817 foreigners working in Malaysia in managerial positions and jobs requiring technical skills, reports Malaysian newspaper the Free Malaysia Today.

The Bangladeshis account for 37 percent or 62,110 of the total expatriate workforce in the country, according to a report of the Malaysian home ministry.

There are also a high number of expatriates from China, India, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines, it adds.

By a Malaysian law, foreign employees must earn a minimum of RM 5,000 a month (1 RM = BD Tk 18.69) to be categorised as "expatriates". The country does not apply the term "expatriates" to foreign workers who earn less than that.

According to the report, most of the expatriates work in the services industry followed by the construction and IT industries. It, however, does not give the breakdown of expatriates in industries according to their nationalities.

The Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) has meanwhile said many of the Bangladeshis being brought into the country as expatriates are not getting the wages they deserve

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US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton greets supporters at a campaign rally in Raleigh, North Carolina on Thursday.

## Race tightens

### Clinton, Trump jostle for supremacy in battleground states

AFP, Raleigh

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump yesterday geared up for one final weekend to sway undecided voters and cajole supporters into turning out at the polls, slogging their way to the end of a divisive presidential campaign as the race continues to tighten.

As the candidates jostle for supremacy in the handful of battleground states that will decide Tuesday's election, two of the biggest prizes on the electoral map, Florida and North Carolina, are now dead heats, according to RealClearPolitics poll aggregates.

Democrat Clinton has unleashed top surrogates including President Barack Obama to bolster her case, while billionaire Republican Trump deployed wife Melania to soften his image.

North Carolina was suddenly in the eye of the political storm, with the candidates frantically criss-crossing the southeastern state where they are locked at 46.4 percent apiece.

The candidates' motorcades even passed one another Thursday on the tarmac at the Raleigh-Durham airport ahead of their rival rallies.

"You've got to get everyone you know to come out and vote," Clinton implored supporters in Raleigh, where she was joined by her onetime primary adversary Senator Bernie Sanders and "Happy" singer Pharrell Williams.

"The best way to repudiate the bigotry and the bluster and the bullying and the hateful rhetoric and discrimination is to show up with the biggest turnout in American history."

Williams, dressed in a hoodie, sought to pump up black voter turnout -- crucial to Clinton's White House aspirations -- which is down in early voting in several states.

"We're black! Beautiful! So if you've ever been called a minority ever in your life... go out and vote and show everybody that you're actually really in

## Fear, but also hope among Bangladeshis



RABIYA AHMED  
Writes from New York

With Election Day on Tuesday, being just three days away, campaign signs for Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are appearing on the autumn leaf-covered lawns of American homes and bumper stickers can be found on almost any car.

The 2016 Presidential election has seen an increase in voters of Asian descent since 2012, according to Pew Research Center, a fact tank in the US. Among the Asian population, Bangladeshis are anticipating a pivotal moment which can either make them or break them in their pursuit of the American Dream.

On Wednesday, President Obama warned a rally in Florida the fate of the world is teetering on the result of this election.

Ms Begum, a 54-year-old Bangladeshi-American



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PHOTO: REUTERS