

Trump hits out

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"Russia's hurting very badly right now because of sanctions, but I think something can happen that a lot of people are gonna benefit," said the president-elect, who has previously expressed admiration for Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Washington's European allies imposed sanctions against Russia over Ukraine in 2014. Those measures were renewed on December 19.

NATO OBSOLETE
In comments set to cause further consternation among eastern European NATO countries nervous about Moscow following Russia's annexation of Crimea and involvement in Ukraine, Trump said NATO was "obsolete".

"I said a long time ago that NATO had problems," Trump told The Times of London and Bild, Germany's biggest-selling daily.

"Number one, it was obsolete, because it was designed many, many years ago," he said.

"Number two, the countries aren't paying what they're supposed to pay." On the campaign trail, Trump said he would think twice about helping NATO allies if the United States were not "reasonably reimbursed" for the costs of defending them.

After Trump's victory, Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance had been a bedrock of transatlantic security for "almost 70 years" and was especially needed at a time of new challenges.

Spending has been a common source of friction within the 28-nation alliance over recent years.

The core military contributor to the alliance is the United States, which accounts for about 70 percent of spending.

In 2014, stung into action by Russia's intervention in Ukraine, upheaval in the Middle East and North Africa, NATO leaders agreed to reverse years of defence cuts and devote the equivalent of two percent of economic output to defence.

"The countries aren't paying their fair share so we're supposed to protect countries," Trump said in Sunday's interview.

"There's five countries that are paying what they're supposed to. Five. It's not much."

GREAT BREXIT
In other remarks, Trump said Brexit "is going to end up as a great thing" and said he backed a trade deal with post-EU Britain, which would be "good for both sides."

"We're gonna work very hard to get it

done quickly and done properly," said Trump, confirming he will meet British Prime Minister Theresa May soon after his inauguration on January 20.

The pound took a hit yesterday in early Asian trade after Britain said it might undercut the EU economically if it cannot obtain both single market access and immigration controls, with British media warning of a so-called "hard Brexit".

"Other countries will leave" the European Union in future, Trump prophesied, largely due to the pressure the bloc was put under following a significant uptick in migrants and refugees arriving.

"If they hadn't been forced to take in all of the refugees, so many, with all the problems that it... entails, I think that you wouldn't have a Brexit. This was the final straw that broke the camel's back," he said.

Trump also criticised Merkel for letting Germany admit undocumented migrants enter the country, insinuating that this posed a security risk.

"I think she made one very catastrophic mistake and that was taking all of these illegals, you know taking all of the people from wherever they come from. And nobody even knows where they come from," Trump said, adding he had "great respect" for the chancellor.

Suchitra Sen's house

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Suchitra Sen, one of the biggest cultural icons for Bangalees, died of a heart attack at a Kolkata nursing home at the age of 82, having been loved by people for three decades for her ethereal beauty and intense celluloid performance. She was born on April 6, 1931 at her grandfather's home at Vangabari of Belkuchi upazila of the then greater Pabna, but her first home was in Gopalpur, her father Karunamoy Dasgupta's house.

Named Roma Dasgupta, she grew up in the small district town and went to school way into her teens. Her family moved to Kolkata a few months after the 1947 partition. But next to no evidence remains of this glamorous person in Pabna.

"This is surprising that the historic house of Suchitra Sen is poorly maintained," said theatre artiste Mustafizur Rahman Russel, one of the key organisers of the movement demanding the house be freed.

Imam Gazzali Trust, a Jamaat-Islami backed organisation, had run the primary section of an education institution named Imam Gazzali Institute at the house at Gopalpursince 1987.

The institute was moved from there after the SC order paved the way for establishing "Suchitra Sen Smriti Sangrohashala", a museum to archive memories of Suchitra.

The government freed the house from the grabbers but it is yet to comply with the order of establishing a

museum, said Jakir Hossain, another activist who led the movement against the occupation.

People in Pabna will go for agitation again if no step is taken for proper maintenance of the house, he added.

The house is under the cultural affairs ministry that has not given any directive regarding its maintenance since the court order, said Pabna Deputy Commissioner Rekha Rani Balo.

The district administration sometimes does some work of maintenance on its own, she added.

Against this backdrop, cultural activists said their agitation and the long legal battle that led to the removal of the grabbers would fail if the house continues to lie in ruins.

Tangail AL to expel Rana

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"The decision to expel them from the party will be declared formally after getting the approval from the central committee," he added.

Yesterday, Tangail AL made the decision in an urgent meeting chaired by district AL President Fazlur Rahman Khan Faruk at the Zila Parishad Auditorium.

The allegations brought against them include violation of party discipline, killing of local AL leader and freedom fighter Faruk Ahmed and attempt to kill Chhatra League leader Abu Sayeed Rubel, vice-president of Ghatail BGB College Students' Union, party sources said.

MP Rana, former religious affairs secretary of the district unit AL, and his three younger brothers -- Jahidur Rahman Khan Kakon, former president of Chambers and Commerce in

Tangail; Shahidur Rahman Khan Mukti, former mayor of Tangail municipality and former general secretary of Tangail city unit AL; and Saniat Khan Bappa, former vice-president of central unit of BCL -- are among the 14 charge-sheeted accused in Faruk murder case.

FARUK MURDER
Faruk, former publicity secretary of the district unit AL, was found shot dead near his College Para house in Tangail town on the night of January 18, 2013.

Three days after the killing, Faruk's wife Nahar Ahmed filed a case against unidentified assailants with Tangail Model Police Station.

In February 3 last year, the Detective Branch of police in Tangail submitted a charge sheet to a Tangail court in the case, accusing 14 people, including Rana and his three brothers.

The charge sheet says Rana and his family opposed Faruk's vying for the

post of Tangail AL general secretary in 2012. Rana's brother Mukti was a contestant for the position.

After failing to persuade Faruk to quit the race, Rana and his brothers assigned their accomplices to kill him, it says.

On April 6 last year, the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in Tangail accepted the charge sheet against 14 accused and issued arrest warrants for 10 fugitives, including Rana and his brothers.

Having remained fugitive for around 22 months, MP Rana surrendered before the First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court in Tangail on September 18. The court rejected his bail prayer and sent him to jail.

Of the 14 charge-sheeted accused, four, including MP Rana, are now in jail and three on bail. Seven others, including Rana's three brothers, are on the run, said Ashok Kumar Singha, officer-in-charge of Tangail DB.

When law enforcers turn law breakers

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Kanchpur Ghat area so that the Rab members could dump the bodies in the river secretly.

The information was revealed in the charge-sheet of the seven-murder case and confessional statements before courts by the three former Rab officials.

Nur Hossain bribed the accused ex-Rab men to kill his rival Nazrul over previous enmities and establishing supremacy in Siddhirganj.

As the charges against all the 36 charge-sheeted accused were proved, a Narayanganj court yesterday awarded death penalty to 26 of them, including Nur Hossain and three ex-Rab officials, and handed down different jail terms to 10 others.

Twenty-five of the convicts are former Rab men.

Following the murders, Tareque, Arif and Rana were withdrawn from duties. The trio, two deputed from the Army and the other from the Navy, were later sent back to their respective forces and subsequently fired from job on May 6.

The High Court on May 11 ordered their arrests. Tareque and Arif were arrested

at Dhaka Cantonment on May 17, 2014. The following day, Rana was arrested in the capital.

TAREQUE SAYEED
Hailing from Debatra village in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila, Tareque is the son of a retired army colonel. He joined the elite force as the commanding officer of Rab-11 in November 2013.

He is the son-in-law of Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

Tareque hardly visited his village home as he was brought up in Dhaka, said locals in Debatra village.

Although he was quite unknown to locals, he became the subject of discussion at the village after his role in the seven-murder case came to light, reports our Pirojpur correspondent.

According to media reports, he used his influence to stay at Dhaka Medical College Hospital for several months during his confinement, citing back pain. At the hospital, he enjoyed division facilities as a prisoner. However, he was shifted to jail following the media reports.

While testifying in the court, Tareque

claimed his innocence and blamed the media for running reports against the accused.

ARIF HOSSAIN
Maj (sacked) Arif Hossain is from Narsingdi's Monohardi upazila. However, his family moved to his maternal grandfather's home in Gafargaon of Mymensingh when he was a child.

Local Ward Commissioner Shahjahan Saju said Arif is the eldest among two brothers and a sister. He was gentle and polite and was a brilliant student since his childhood. He was also known as a good footballer.

"We still find it hard to believe that he became such a brutal murderer," Saju told our Mymensingh correspondent.

According to his confessional statement, he bought an apartment in Dhaka and Nur Hossain paid the money for him. From abduction to the killing of the seven, he maintained contact with Nur Hossain over the phone.

MASUD RANA
Rana hails from Boira Colony in Khulna's Khalishpur upazila. He was not well known in his locality as he rarely visited his Khulna home.

From trucker's helper to mafia don

FROM PAGE 2
Locals claimed that nothing could deter Nur, as he had the blessing of influential AL lawmaker Shamim Osman and the local administration.

Before joining the BNP in 1992, he was involved in HM Ershad's Jatiya Party.

On behalf of the police, he collected illegal toll from vehicles plying in the Narayanganj area, alleged elderly people of the area.

After joining the BNP, he started extorting money from transport owners on his own, and gradually got involved in other criminal activities with support from local BNP leaders, they claimed.

Later, he became the chairman of Siddhirganj union parishad.

After the AL assumed power in 1996, Nur changed his political platform and joined the party in 1998 with the help of Shamim Osman. This allowed him to continue with his

criminal activities such as extortion, land grabbing and illegal sand trade, locals claimed.

As the BNP-led government assumed power in 2001, both Shamim and Nur fled the country. Nur was a listed criminal during the tenures of the BNP and the caretaker governments.

Interpol issued an arrest warrant for Nur in 2007. He returned to Bangladesh after the AL-led grand alliance government assumed power in 2009, and got Shamim's backing to run illegal activities again, according to locals and AL sources.

A total of 22 cases, including six murder cases, were filed against Nur with Siddhirganj and Fatullah police stations.

Using the influence of Shamim and his name, Nur occupied pavements in Narayanganj city and in Simrail in 2013. He illegally built ticket counters and passenger sheds, and launched a bus service, ABS Paribahan, on the Simrail-Narayanganj route, locals said.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority wrote to Siddhirganj Police Station 22 times after it failed to stop Nur's men from lifting sand from the Shitalakkhya and evict his illegal establishments on the river bank.

Nur, who held the post of vice-president of Siddhirganj AL unit since 2007, was elected ward-4 councillor of Narayanganj City Corporation in 2011.

Immediately after the seven-murder in 2014, he fled to India. However, he was arrested in Kolkata in June, 2015, and charged with trespassing and possession of an illegal firearm.

A West Bengal court on October 16 that year ordered that Nur be deported to face trial in Bangladesh.

The government on November 12, 2015, brought back Nur from India.

Despite repeated attempts, Shamim Osman could not be reached over the phone for his comment.

Flowers

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It isn't random seeds, either: they will be specialised for the local environment.

The surrounding wildlife will be able to "consume the plants without any ill effects".

Proposals will be considered until 8 February. After that, a prototype will be created and tested with training ammunition.

Bullets will range from 40mm - 120mm training rounds.

Who knows? If successful, this scheme could be rolled out to live ammunition.

Rasraj Das

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Studio, shared an anti-Islamic post the previous day alleging Rasraj Das had posted it on Facebook.

Alam made copies of it and distributed those to mobilise people against the Hindu youth.

Rasraj, a fisherman with a background of little education, was detained after a Facebook post from a profile bearing his name had triggered the attack.

Now in police custody, Jahangir confessed his involvement. He told the police during interrogation that he had done it as per instruction of Haripur Union Parishad Chairman Dewan Atiqur Rahman Akhi.

Police arrested Akhi, one of the alleged masterminds of the attack, on January 4.

On November 8, a bail petition of Rasraj was rejected.

Two police probes said internal conflict of local Awami League resulted in the Nasirnagar attacks on the Hindus, while an investigation by Brahmanbaria district administration found no such links.

The district administration probe also found no neglect on part of the local police or the administration.

The police probes have, however, mentioned neglect of duty on part of the UNO and the OC concerned as a reason for the attacks being successful.

Two police probe committees -- one formed by the Police Headquarters in Dhaka and the other by Brahmanbaria district police -- investigated the attack of the religious zealots.

A few days ago, Amnesty International called for action for immediate release of Rasraj from "unlawful detention".

"On November 28, a public report by the district police stated that the image had not been uploaded by Rasraj Das, and someone else had used his Facebook account," the Amnesty said.

'Top outlaw'

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The criminals opened fire on them, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate by firing back, leading to a gunfight, Bina said.

Razzak died after being shot but the accomplices escaped, the Rab official said, adding that two of the law enforcers were also hurt in the incident.

Rab also claimed to have recovered some fire arms and sharp weapons from the spot.

According to the force, Razzak, who was in hiding for long, was accused in six murder cases and also convicted in an arms case.

His body was sent to Pabna Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Actor Kalyan

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Masud did not hear Kalyan's bail petition after the IO had failed to submit the progress report. It said the hearing would be held after the submission of the report.

Another Dhaka court on January 11 allowed police to interrogate Kalyan at the jail gate for three days in connection with the case filed with Kalabagan Police Station.

During yesterday's hearing, defence lawyer said the charge brought against his client was bail-able while the prosecution lawyer opposed it.

Zia Islam suffered severe injuries when a speedy car hit his motorcycle from behind in front of Bashundhara City in Panthapath area of Dhaka on January 9. Kalabagan police arrested Kalyan the next day and sought a 10-day remand.

Zia was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and shifted to Apollo Hospitals the next day before undergoing a major surgery. He was kept under observation for 48 hours before being taken to Singapore for better treatment on Friday.

Obama doesn't regret 'red line' over Syria conflict

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama says he does not regret his speech drawing a "red line" over Syria's use of chemical weapons, a phrase critics say symbolizes the US failure to act over the country's conflict.

Obama made the comment in 2012 about possible US military action in Syria, saying "a red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized."

A few ruin the good

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classic of mental breakdown from Bangladesh's perspective.

History was made at the Basin Reserve but Bangladesh were on the wrong side of it -- when New Zealand chased down a paltry 217 courtesy of Bangladesh's second innings implosion to 160 for nine, the Tigers earned the inauspicious distinction of having the highest first-innings total (595) in a losing cause. It eclipsed Australia's 122-year record, set in 1894 when they lost the timeless Test to England by 10 runs after scoring 586 in their first innings in Sydney.

But this is not something new for Bangladesh. They lost against West Indies after scoring 556 in Dhaka in November 2012 when they took a 29-run first-innings lead but eventually lost by 77 runs.

But this particular defeat, after consistent performances at home for the last one-and-a-half years, has hardly anything to do with their skill or the lack of it. It also has nothing to do with their mental toughness or the lack of it.

It is all to do with the attitude and approach of some key members of the team at crucial junctures of the game. Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes went into bat for the second time with 23 overs remaining in the fourth day's play. They went in to bat knowing that skipper Mushfiqur Rahim would not be able to bat unless he was absolutely required and even if he came out to bat, he might run the risk of aggravating his injured thumb that kept him off the ground for two days after his sumptuous 159 in the first innings.

Both Imrul and Tamim started well, scoring 46 runs before Imrul got injured while completing a sharp single. And when Imrul was stretchered off the ground, it should have dawned on Tamim that they would have to play without two important batsmen.

But Tamim refused to curb his natural 'positive' instinct and barely one over after Imrul's departure played a

reverse sweep. Two deliveries later he went for a back-foot late cut, a dangerous option against a left-arm spinner. He was clean bowled. This was not positive cricket from a vice-captain and neither was it a responsible shot. There are times you are supposed to play for the close and with eight overs remaining he was supposed to switch off his natural attacking instinct.

Shakib Al Hasan came out in the final morning with Mominul Haque and they knew there was not much batting left beyond them. Shakib played four balls against Mitchell Santner and off the fifth he tried to loft over mid-on, almost a replay of his antics on the third morning of the Chittagong Test against England. He did get some bat to ball this time but it could only carry to the mid-on fielder. How is he going to explain this shot? Tamim came up with the lamest of excuses that the message from the team management was to be positive. Is it positive cricket? The world begs to differ.

Thankfully, it was New Zealand opener Tom Latham who won the man-of-the-match award for his fine 177. It would have been a crime had Shakib, who scored 217, been preferred for that award after what he did to his team when it needed him most.

At the press briefing Tamim said that they have a few positives that they will carry into the second Test in four days' time. Definitely there were a few positives. Shakib scored 217, which is the highest innings by a Bangladeshi. Shakib and Mushfiqur put on 359 runs, which is the fourth-highest fifth-wicket stand in the history of Test cricket. Bangladesh's 595 for eight is their second-highest Test total and so on.

But records and individual milestones mean little if those do not have a purpose. There was no devil in the wicket and unfortunately Bangladesh's second innings total of 160 for nine eventually became more important than all those records and personal milestones.

37 dead

FROM PAGE 16
a landing at the Manas airport in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek in thick fog.

Crushed cars, shattered homes and huge chunks of burnt debris littered the village, which was hit by the plane at around 7:30 am (0130 GMT), as many residents were still at home in bed.

"Our grandson said something was burning," Tajikan, a Dacha Suu resident who identified herself only by her first name, told AFP.

"We heard a roar and (what felt) like an earthquake. Many people were sleeping, everything around was burning. One of the parts of the aircraft fell on our neighbour's house. She and her whole family died," the pensioner said.

Zumriyat Rezakhanova, another resident of Dacha-Suu, said the plane fell "right on the homes" where residents were sleeping.

"My sister's home is badly damaged. Luckily she and her family survived," Rezakhanova told AFP.

DEEPLY SADDENED
The flight was travelling from Hong Kong to Istanbul via Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek.

ACT Airlines, a Turkish cargo air-

line, said in a statement that its Boeing 747-400 was involved in the crash.

ACT Airlines said it was "deeply saddened" by the crash and noted that "the cause of the accident is unknown."

Boeing, the plane's manufacturer, meanwhile extended its "deepest condolences" over the crash and offered to assist Kyrgyz authorities with the investigation.

Elmira Sheripova, a spokeswoman for the emergency services ministry, told AFP that 17 houses had been "completely destroyed" by the crashing plane.

The country's Manas airport has since opened despite air authorities initially saying that the airport would remain closed until the evening.

Prime Minister Sooronbai Jeenbekov was heading a specially-appointed government commission to probe the crash and the country's state prosecutor also opened an investigation.

Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev cancelled his visit to China to return to Bishkek, according to Kyrgyz media.

Authorities said the country will observe a day of mourning today.

Eight richest as wealthy

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poverty wages in precarious employment. Wage workers in Nepal earned just \$73 per month in 2008, followed by \$119 in Pakistan (2013) and \$121 in Cambodia (2012). Due to the low wage levels, the latter two countries are also among those with the highest incidence of working poverty worldwide.

In many countries, even the legal minimum wage fails to meet the wage required for a decent standard of living. The minimum wage for banana workers in the Dominican Republic is just 40 percent of a living wage; in Bangladesh it is nearer 20 percent of that required to live a decent life.

Over the last two decades the richest 10 percent of the population in China, Indonesia, Laos, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have seen their share of income increase by more than 15 percent, while the poorest 10 percent have seen their share of income fall by more than 15 percent.

Due to a combination of discrimination and working in low-pay sectors, women's wages across Asia are between 70 percent and 90 percent of men's. Many women struggle to survive as the national minimum wage in many Asian countries -- where it is paid -- is on average a quarter of the amount required for a decent standard of living.

Inequality has moved up the agenda in recent years, with the head of the International Monetary Fund and the Pope among those warning of its corrosive effects, while resentment of elites has helped fuel an upsurge in populist politics.

Concern about the issue was highlighted again in the WEF's own global risks report last week.

"We see a lot of hand-wringing - and clearly Trump's victory and Brexit gives that new impetus this year - but there is a lack of concrete alternatives to business as usual," said Max Lawson, Oxfam's head of policy.

"There are different ways of running capitalism that could be much, much more beneficial to the majority of people."

Oxfam called in its report for a crackdown on tax dodging and a shift away from "super-charged" shareholder capitalism that pays out disproportionately to the rich.

While many workers struggle with stagnating incomes, the wealth of the super-rich has increased by an average of 11 percent a year since 2009.

Bill Gates, the world's richest man who is a regular at Davos, has seen his fortune rise by 50 percent or \$25 billion since announcing plans to leave Microsoft in 2006, despite his efforts to give much of it away.

While Gates exemplifies how outsized wealth can be recycled to help the poor, Oxfam believes such "big philanthropy" does not address the fundamental problem.

"If billionaires choose to give their money away then that is a good thing. But inequality matters and you cannot have a system where billionaires are systematically paying lower rates of tax than their secretary or cleaner," Lawson said.

Oxfam bases its calculations on data from Swiss bank Credit Suisse and Forbes. The eight individuals named in the report are Gates, Inditex founder Amancio Ortega, veteran investor Warren Buffett, Mexico's Carlos Slim, Amazon boss Jeff Bezos, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, Oracle's Larry Ellison and former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg. (With details from Reuters)

Customs official

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The union President Kazi Khairul Bashar Milton said the staff were upset as the AC himself usually wanted to check all the containers he thought were suspicious, delaying the assessment process.

Sources in Chittagong Customs House said the AC was known for his honesty and he usually tried to run inspections in a systematic way.

Chittagong Customs House Commissioner AFM Abdullah Khan said he would investigate the incident.