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ROHINGYA RELOCATION

Dhaka seeks help; diplomats sceptic

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday sought financial support from the United Nations and other international partners for relocating tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims, who had fled ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, to Thengar Char in Hatiya in the Bay of Bengal.

In response, the diplomatic community in Dhaka suggested that the Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar should not be moved against their will and that the place chosen for relocation was uninhabitable and prone to floods.

The exchange took place when Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali briefed diplomats on the relocation plan at the State Guesthouse, Padma yesterday afternoon.

Describing how people of the Myanmar's minority community are now living in the coastal areas of Bangladesh, the minister said the authorities were facing formidable challenges of providing them with humanitarian assistance.

Besides, the accommodation arrangements have adverse impacts on the overall socio-economic, political, demographic, environmental, humanitarian and security situations in Cox's Bazar and adjacent districts. That is in turn a setback for eco-tourism, said AH Mahmood.

Blaming what he deemed as the vulnerable nature of this population, he said networks have emerged in those areas who are involved in human trafficking and smuggling of narcotics.

Ambassadors/high commissioners/heads of various diplomatic missions and officials from UNRC, IOM and UNHCR attended the briefing.

After the briefing, an envoy on condition of anonymity told The Daily Star that the government seems to be going ahead with its "controversial plan" to relocate Rohingya refugees to the remote island despite warnings.

The government asked for financial assistance from the international community to develop the island and move the Rohingya population from Cox's Bazar to Hatiya, he said.

The foreign minister, however, said Bangladesh considers this as a temporary arrangement and requested the international community to take meaningful measures for their repatriation to their homeland Myanmar.

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The bench at this bus stop at Technical intersection in the capital used to have metal seats but those have been stolen. People tied ropes so that they could sort of sit there. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Inhuman in-laws

Housewife tortured, garlanded with shoes

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

In-laws have tortured a housewife for dowry and videotaped the incident in Rugganj upazila.

A loop made of shoes was also hung around the neck of Salma Akhter Sumi, 32, whose hair was cut to further humiliate her.

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AL WOUNDING AL

For gaining control, making money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The infighting of the ruling Awami League keeps taking place, often claiming lives, though its central committee on several occasions directed local units to stop recurrence of such incidents.

At least three ruling party men were killed and 20 others injured during a clash between two factions of a local AL unit over control of a Jolmahal (water body) in Sunamganj on January 17.

Two weeks later, Pravash Ray, president of a union unit of AL in Narail, was hacked to death. The family alleged it was a sequel to the AL infighting over the last union parishad elections.

On Friday, a journalist of Daily Samakal died after being hit by a bullet during a factional clash of AL men in Shahzadpur upazila of Sirajganj.

Insiders say local leaders want to establish supremacy within the party and also in localities for financial gains, leading to factional feuds. And experts believe perpetrators in many cases get away scot-free and this is a key reason behind the recurrence of such conflicts.

According to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), at least five men

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POLITICAL VIOLENCE FROM 2015 TO JANUARY 2017	PARTY	INCIDENTS	DEAD	INJURED
	AL VS AL (including its fronts organisations)	362	59	3859
	AL VS BNP, Jamaat, JP, JSD	50	11	480

SOURCE: ASK



Enamul Kabir

7-MURDER CASE

Condemned fugitive captured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A fugitive, who had been awarded death penalty in the Narayanganj seven-murder case, was arrested in Magura town yesterday.

Enamul Kabir, a sacked army sergeant deputed to Rab-11, had gone into hiding after Rab officials' involvement in the gruesome killings surfaced.

On information, a police team arrested Enamul near Bhaina

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Pakistan thanks India for returning boy

AFP, Muzaffarabad

Pakistan has sent a rare message of thanks to archival India after a five-year-old boy who was taken to India by his father nearly a year ago was reunited with his Pakistani mother.

Iftikhar Ahmed was handed over to Rohina Kiani by border officials in the town of Wagah in Punjab province on Saturday evening following a long legal battle seeking his return from his father, Gulzar Ahmad Tantray.

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GAS CYLINDER BLAST

2 balloon vendors killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two balloon vendors were killed and two others injured when a gas cylinder exploded in the capital's Jatrabari area yesterday.

The dead are Jhunu, 20, and Saiful, 18, from Habiganj. The injured -- Waliullah, 16, and Ekam

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PHOTO ON PAGE 11



PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 6
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-15 5-52 7-15
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-30 5-56 7-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A man at work at the mine of Madhyapara Granite Mining Company Ltd. Around 200 of the 600 miners joined work yesterday when the mine resumed operations after a year and a half. Story on page 13.

PHOTO: STAR

Grim days ahead for Sundarbans

Climate experts warn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, from Kolkata

Availability of river water in the country's coastal area, now at 41 percent, could drop to 17 percent by 2050 due to climate change and human activities, researchers have said.

This is a great threat to the Sundarbans, said speakers at a programme titled "Vulnerability of Sundarbans in a changing climate".

The programme was organised at Ramkrishna Mission Auditorium in Kolkata for understanding the physical and economic effects of climate change on the Sundarbans.

Rising salinity in soil and water would change not only the vegetation pattern of the Sundarbans but also reduce the availability of economically important fish. It would be a threat to the livelihoods of people living around the mangrove forest.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Rays of hope for Meherpur family

Mumbai hospital offers helpline to patients with rare disease



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

When Tofazzel Hossain wrote to Meherpur deputy commissioner a couple of weeks ago asking the civil servant to either bear the treatment cost of his terminally ill sons and a grandson or have them euthanized, he had no other options. But his emotional appeal to save his two sons and a grandson had not fallen on deaf ears, as an Indian hospital has now come forward to treat them free of cost.

The NeuroGen Brain and Spine Institute, a hospital in Mumbai, India, said it would bear the expenses related to the treatment and travel for the three Meherpur patients.

The institute has contacted Nur Khan Liton, acting executive director of rights body Ain o Salish Kendra, and Nur Khan already spoke with Tofazzel on February 2.

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