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Terror rocks French polls

Campaign halts; attacker named; IS claims responsibility for killing cop in Paris

AFP, Paris

The killing of a policeman on Paris's Champs Elysees claimed by the Islamic State group rocked France's presidential race yesterday with just two days to go before voting in the closest election for decades.

Bloodshed had long been feared ahead of tomorrow's first round of the election after a string of attacks since 2015, and the shooting propelled the jihadist threat to the fore.

A note praising Islamic State (IS) was found near the body of the 39-year-old French attacker, who shot dead one officer and wounded two others before being killed by police.

The note bolstered IS's claim that the perpetrator, named as Karim Cheurfi, was one of its "fighters".

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen -- who is locked in a tight four-way contest with centrist Emmanuel Macron, conservative Francois Fillon and Communist-backed firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon -- moved quickly to present herself as the toughest of the four on terrorism.

The 48-year-old National Front leader called for France to "immediately" take back control of its borders from the European Union and deport all foreigners on a terror watch list.

"This war against us is ceaseless and merciless," she said in a sternly-worded address, accusing the Socialist government of a "cowardly" response to the threat.

Fillon and Macron also hastily convened televised briefings, where they both vowed to protect the French.

"Some haven't taken the full measure of the evil,"

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Though the city corporation authorities have taken a number of commendable initiatives to ensure city dwellers' convenience and comfort, this public toilet in the capital's Jatrabari intersection is in extremely bad shape. Locals and commuters say there should be several clean and well-maintained public toilets in the busy area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

HAVOC IN HAOR Atomic energy experts to test samples

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is sending experts from Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission to probe the recent deaths of fish, ducks and other aquatic lives in the haor areas in the northeastern region.

"We are sending our experts to the haor area. They will collect samples and examine them to determine why fish died," Science and Technology Minister Yafes Osman told The Daily Star yesterday.

"However, I doubt that the deaths are linked with uranium mining [in India]," said the minister.

An official from the Atomic Energy Commission said they were primarily sending two teams, expected to be there in a day or two.

One team will run tests on samples to see if there is any radioactive material in them. The other team will conduct elemental analysis of the samples.

It will take some time to find out if uranium was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

NDB likely to add 15 new members

Says AMA Muhith

REZAUL KARIM BYRON from Washington

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has said the New Development Bank (NDB), a multilateral development bank set up by the BRICS states, is likely to take in 15 new member countries in the first phase.

"They [NDB] are not thinking of having a very large membership base. They are targeting to grant memberships to 15 states in the first phase. The process is yet to begin," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The minister made the comment after holding a meeting with NDB President KV Kamath in Washington DC.

The NDB was set up in 2015 by the BRICS nations Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Asked whether the bank

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

70 green groups slam power plants near Sundarbans

REUTERS, Mumbai

More than 70 environmental groups have warned the construction of power plants near the Sundarbans in Bangladesh, a mangrove forest that is home to the Bengal tiger, would damage the environment and affect the livelihoods of millions.

The coal-fired 1,320-megawatt Rampal power plant will be built on the edge of the Sundarbans forest, a Unesco World Heritage site. A smaller plant is planned a short distance away.

"There is no doubt that the proposed Rampal and Orion power plants will have serious and irreversible impact on the ecology of the Sundarbans," the groups from countries including Sweden, South Africa and Japan said in an open letter to the World Heritage Committee dated April 20.

"The planned coal power plants threaten the health and livelihoods of millions of people."

Signatories to the letter include the

Climate Action Network, Timberwatch, Global Forest Coalition and Friends of the Earth International.

The salt-tolerant mangrove forest of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands is known for its wide variety of bird and animal species.

The Rampal plant will directly impact the livelihoods of about half a million people - including fishermen, farmers and forest dwellers - and make millions more vulnerable to natural disasters, according to lobby group the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports.

Dhaka plans to set up 25 coal-fired power plants by 2022 in order to meet rising electricity demand.

The government has indicated it is unlikely to abandon its push to build more coal-fired power plants, despite growing opposition from local people and environmentalists.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

'Neo JMB' den busted in Jhenidah

Arms, explosives seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit claimed it busted a "Neo JMB" hide-out in Jhenidah Sadar upazila yesterday.

The special police unit also claimed to have recovered a huge stash of explosives and a 9mm pistol from the den in a house in Porahati village.

The explosives include three suicide vests, a pressure cooker bomb, around 20 plastic containers of bomb-making chemicals and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and detonators.

No one was arrested as the suspected militants inside the house had fled before the drive began, said CTTC officials.

"A team of CTTC unit along with district police

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

The 'saddest Minnie Mouse' of China



MAIL ONLINE

For most people, seeing Minnie Mouse evokes a happy feeling.

However in this Chinese woman's case, it's a necessity in order to try and raise enough cash to pay for her daughter-in-law's treatment.

Yin Pizhi, 70, puts on a Minnie Mouse costume every day and charges between one (11p) and five yuan (55p) for a group photo to help her daughter who was injured in a car accident, reports Huanqiu, an affiliation with the People's Daily Online.

The daughter-in-law named Wang Hai-mei has been at Ningjin County People's Hospital for over 50 days. She is still unconscious and has since been transferred to a larger hospital in Jinan.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Qawmi madrasa students can never fall prey to militancy

Says home minister

BSS, Dhaka

Students and teachers of Qawmi madrasas can never fall prey to militancy as the madrasa education in no way paves the way for breeding ground for militants, says Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

"People from Teknaf to Tentulia have stood against militancy. Members of our law enforcement agencies are fighting the menace, putting their lives at risk," he told a rally of Islamic scholars yesterday.

Bangladesh United Islami Party's Dhaka City North unit organised the rally against terrorism and militancy at Azampur Government Primary School playground in the capital's Uttara.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

'Drunk driving' claims one life in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man who was allegedly drunk ran a Mercedes sedan over a rickshaw puller leaving him dead in the capital's Dhanmondi Thursday night.

The incident happened when the victim, Razab Ali, 50, was having a cup of tea near Dhanmondi Kidney and General Hospital on Road 7 around 8:30pm.

Kazi Saddam Shahnewaz Prince, 26, ran him over with a silver sedan and tried to run away from the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



People of 40 villages join the repair work of the Shonir Haor protection dyke in Bagiani area of Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila on Thursday. To save Boro paddy land in the haor area, the villagers have been voluntarily doing the work since the dyke got damaged in early flood at the end of last month.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

ARMY CELEBRATION IN N KOREA S Korea, China on high alert

UN Security Council threatens new sanctions on Pyongyang

REUTERS, Seoul

South Korea said yesterday it was on heightened alert ahead of another important anniversary in North Korea, with a large concentration of military hardware amassed on both sides of the border amid concerns about a new nuclear test by Pyongyang.

US officials said there was a higher-than-usual level of activity by Chinese bombers, signalling a possible heightened state of readiness by Beijing, reclusive North Korea's sole major ally, although the officials played down concern and left open a range of possible reasons.

In Russia, a Kremlin spokesman declined to comment on media reports that Russia was moving military hardware and troops towards the border with North Korea, the RIA news agency quoted him as saying.

US and South Korean officials have been saying for weeks that the North could soon stage another nuclear test in violation of United Nations sanctions, something both the United States and China have warned against.

North Korea marks the 85th anniversary of the foundation of its Korean People's Army on Tuesday, an important anniversary that comes at the end of major winter military drills, South Korea's Unification Ministry spokesman Lee Duk-haeng said.

Top envoys from the United States, South Korea and Japan on North Korea are due to meet on Tuesday, South Korea's foreign ministry said, to "discuss plans to rein in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

SIBL
Social Islami Bank Limited

PRAYER TIMING APRIL 22

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-45 4-45 6-27 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-31 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION