



(From left) President of the European Council Donald Tusk, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US President Donald Trump, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, French President Emmanuel Macron, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker pose for a family photo at the ancient Greek Theatre of Taormina during the Heads of State and of Government G7 summit, in Sicily, yesterday.

'Toughest G7 summit in yrs' begins amid Trump fears

AFP, Taormina

G7 leaders yesterday held annual summit talks with divisions on trade and climate change, and fresh friction surrounding Donald Trump, threatening to undermine a show of unity against jihadist terrorism.

There is no doubt that this will be the most challenging G7 summit in years," European Union president Donald Tusk predicted, setting the tone for the two-day meet in Sicily's ancient hilltop resort of Taormina.

The meeting comes days after several children were among 22 people killed in a concert bomb attack in Manchester, northwest England.

British Prime Minister Theresa May was to lead a discussion on terrorism and issue a call for G7 countries to put more pressure on internet companies to ensure extremist content is quickly taken offline and notified to authorities.

With the Islamic State group on the retreat in Iraq and Syria, "the fight is moving from the battlefield to the internet," May would tell her colleagues, aides said, before flying home early to oversee the ongoing "critical" security situation in Britain.

US officials acknowledged they were expecting a difficult discussion on trade after reports that Trump had described the Germans as "bad, very bad" and vowed to stop them selling millions of cars in the United States, during a meeting with senior EU officials in Brussels on Thursday.

auto trade issue but sought to play down the language used, as Trump shared friendly words with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other leaders heading into the G7 gathering.

White House economic advisor Gary Cohn said that trade would be a "big topic" overall after Trump rode to power on an "America First" platform of protectionism.

"We are going to continue to fight for what we believe is right, which is free, open and fair trade, which the president has been very clear on what that means," Cohn said.

With May and Trump among four new faces in the club of the world's major democracies, the gathering in Italy was billed as a key test of how serious the new US administration is about implementing its radical policy agenda, particularly on climate change.

Senior officials are preparing to work overtime in a bid to bridge what appear to be irreconcilable differences over Trump's declared intention of ditching the US commitment to the landmark Paris accord on curbing carbon emissions.

Officials acknowledge the summit is effectively about damage limitation against a backdrop of fears among US partners that the Trump presidency could undermine the international order in place since World War II.

diverted attention from domestic concerns focused on alleged campaign collusion with Russia.

But that issue reared up again overnight as it emerged the FBI is examining his son-in-law Jared Kushner's contacts with the Russian ambassador in connection with the probe of alleged interference in the election campaign by Moscow.

US officials had hoped the globe-trotting trip would enable Trump to position himself as a more statesman-like figure and he enjoyed largely positive coverage on his stops in Saudi Arabia, Israel and the Palestinian territories, and at the Vatican.

But some of that has been undone by now-viral images of the billionaire tycoon shoving his way past other leaders at a NATO summit in Brussels on Thursday, and by his reported comments on Germany.

The other new face is France's youthful president, Emmanuel Macron, who has vowed to defend the Paris climate change deal agreed in 2015.

Macron met May just before the summit and promised France would do "everything we can" to help Britain in the fight against terrorism.

Attempt to kill pregnant housewife

Husband arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A pregnant woman suffered severe burns as her husband allegedly attempted to kill her by setting fire to her over family feud in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila on Thursday night.

The victim, Fatima Begum, 24, is undergoing treatment at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Doctors of Kalapara Upazila Health Complex, where the victim was first taken to, said she had burns on around 75 percent of her body.

Police arrested Fatima's husband Sobhan Gazi from Natun Bazar area in Kalapara upazila town.

Sobhan maintains the four-member family by catching and selling crab and frog.

Talking to this correspondent, victim's cousin Sumon said Fatima and Sobhan were going through a financial crisis.

Fatima is three months pregnant and their lone daughter Rupa is leaving with Sobhan's mother at Natun Bazar.

Seven migrants dead, 77 rescued at sea off Libya

AFP, Tripoli

At least seven migrants died and 77 were rescued off the coast of Libya on Thursday, two days after their rubber dinghy ran into trouble, the country's navy said.

The survivors, who included four women and a child, spent two days holding onto what remained of their punctured vessel before they were pulled to safety, said navy spokesman Ayoub Kacem.

Seven bodies were recovered from the surrounding waters, 12 nautical miles off Sayad, about 40 kilometres

(25 miles) west of Tripoli, he said. But the number of lives lost could be much higher as it was unknown how many migrants were originally on board the vessel, he added.

Normally people smugglers squeeze up to 120 migrants onto such boats. Those rescued were in "critical condition" and suffering from hunger, thirst, fatigue and sunburn, said Kacem.

Another 2,300 migrants were rescued off Libya and two others were found dead Thursday in operations carried out by the Italian coastguard and commercial ships in the area.

Hefajat claims

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said Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha made the decision of removing the statue.

Removal

"Unfortunately, the debate has been diverted to sculpture versus statue. In actuality, this does not have any relation to religion. This reactionary step is unfortunate for the nation," the statement read.

The statement comes at a time when the social media is being taken by storm over the issue, and alongside, Islamists are demanding removal of all statues across the country.

The statue was taken down in the late hours of last night, a month after Islamist group Hefazat-e-Islam demanded its removal from the SC premises.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon, belonging to Workers' Party, termed the incident a "shameless surrender".

He made the remark at a discussion at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital yesterday organised by the Workers Party of Bangladesh marking 100th anniversary of "October Revolution in 1917".

Earlier on April 11, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with the Ulemas from Qawmi madrasas said she personally did not like the statue on the SC premises either.

Shyamal Kanti

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and punish those who insulted the schoolteacher and filed the "false" case.

The demands were made at two demonstrations organised by a group of students and activists -- Chhatra-Shikkhok-Shilpi-Sangskritikormi O Nagorikbrindo and Gaurab-71 -- in front of the National Museum in the capital's Shahbagh.

Shyamal landed in jail in the bribery case filed by one of his colleagues.

His bail petition is now pending with the Narayananj Sessions Judge's Court, and hearing on the petition is scheduled for May 31.

Removal

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Mango

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sell their products.

Asheful Haque, a mango trader of Masjidpara in town, said mangoes, especially gopalbhog, were available at the market, but presence of customers was very thin.

Another trader Sukumar Saha of Mistripara in the town came to the market with 32 maund of gopalbhog but could not sell those due to absence of adequate number of buyers.

Most traders say prospect buyers were unaware of the start of sale. They add they were selling gopalbhog at Tk 1,800 to Tk 2,200 per maund at Puraton Bazar market.

Sri Lanka floods

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INTERNATIONAL APPEAL Sri Lanka appealed to the international community, including the United Nations and neighbouring countries, for help as the numbers of dead and missing climbed.

The (foreign) ministry will continue to monitor the flood situation and seek assistance as required in consultation with the Ministry of Disaster Management, the government said in a statement.

The latest flooding was the worst since May 2003 when 250 people were killed and 10,000 homes destroyed after a similarly powerful Southwest monsoon, officials said.

In the early hours of the day a mountainside collapsed on a women's hostel at a tea plantation at Neluwa in the island's south, killing at least seven women, police said.

28 Christians killed

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of Saint Samuel the Confessor in Minya province, which is home to a sizeable Christian minority. An Interior Ministry spokesman said the unidentified gunmen had arrived in three four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Security forces launched a hunt for the attackers, setting up dozens of checkpoints and patrols on the desert road.

Coptic Christians, whose church dates back nearly 2,000 years, make up about 10 percent of Egypt's population of 92 million.

It's surrender

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exponent Sanjida Khatun, actor Hasan Imam, dramatists Ramendu Majumder and Mamunur Rashid, Panna Kaiser and Mofidul Hoque.

They termed the removal of the statue "an act against the culture of the country".

"We hope the people of Bangladesh won't be misled by the anti-culture campaign in the name of religion," read the statement, adding that the anti-liberation evil force had made a failed attempt to destroy Aparajeyo Bangla, a symbol of pride of the Liberation War.

Rival militias clash in Libya capital

AFP, Tripoli

Fierce clashes erupted yesterday between rival armed groups in the Libyan capital Tripoli, seat of the country's UN-backed unity government.