



A house burns after it was set on fire in a village of Rangpur as violence flared up over an alleged Facebook post "defaming religion". Top right, some unidentified people trying to dismantle a house that was torched in the attacks yesterday. Bottom right, an injured person is being taken to a hospital.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Two brothers hacked to death in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Two brothers died of injuries at Faridpur Medical College Hospital on Thursday night, around two hours after they were hacked by unidentified criminals in Barasori Shoshanghat area of Alfadanga upazila.

The victims, Edrish Mollah, 48, and Lablu Mollah, 42, were from Sotrokanda village in Boalmari upazila.

Edrish was the vice-president of Shakhor union Awami League and Lablu was the vice-president of Shakhor union Jubo League, the youth front of the ruling AL. The siblings had businesses of garment products and furniture at Alfadanga bazar.

Locals suspected that the brothers were killed over a longstanding political rivalry between Md Israfil Mollah, chairman of Shakhor Union Parishad, and Abul Kalam Azad, member of Faridpur Zilla Parishad. Both Israfil and Kalam are vice-presidents of Boalmari upazila AL.

The deceased were supporters of Israfil.

Quoting locals, police said a gang of 12-14 masked criminals intercepted the brothers in Shoshanghat area around 9:30pm on Thursday when they were returning home by a rickshaw van after closing their shops. The attackers beat up the van puller; hacked the two brothers indiscriminately and fled the scene.

The siblings were rushed to Alfadanga Upazila Health Complex around 9:45pm. Later, they were shifted

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## Mayhem over Facebook post

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The day the case was filed, a group of 20 to 25 locals met at Lalchandrapur and discussed the alleged Facebook post, sources said, adding that those people fixed November 10 for a demonstration.

Yesterday, thousands from several villages gathered in front of a mosque in Shayela Shah Bazar area after Juma prayers and then staged agitations on the highway, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded for

over an hour.

In Horkoli Thakurpara, the rioters, many of them carrying sticks, torched 20 houses of eight Hindu families, including that of Titu, and vandalised about 10 others.

"I could not understand why my home was burned down," said Titu's mother Jiten Bala.

The OC said as the mob went berserk, police fired teargas shells and rubber bullets to disperse them and restore law and order.

Later in the day, Saifur Rahman, assistant superintendent of police of Rangpur, said the situation was now under control.

The Rangpur district administration formed a three-member investigation committee headed by Abu Rafah, additional district magistrate. The committee has to submit its report within seven working days, said Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Wahiduzzaman.

In October last year, religious zealots

carried out a synchronised attack on the Hindus in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar upazila, destroying around 100 homes and at least five temples and looting valuables.

The violence was triggered by a Facebook post purportedly from the account of one Rasraj Das for "hurting religious sentiments of Muslims".

Rasraj, a fisherman, was freed on bail several months ago as police found evidence that someone else, not him, posted

the "anti-Islam" content through either hacking or faking his Facebook account".

In September 2012, fanatics attacked the Buddhist community in Cox's Bazar's Ramu, claiming that a Buddhist youth "insulted Islam" on social media. An investigation by The Daily Star found the Facebook page was photoshopped.

## BREXIT DIVORCE BILL

# EU's Barnier gives UK two-week deadline

AFP, Brussels

EU Brexit chief Michel Barnier yesterday handed Britain a two-week ultimatum to make concessions on a divorce agreement if it wants to unlock the next phase of talks in December.

Frenchman Barnier said it was "vital" for Britain to increase its offer on its exit bill -- a figure senior EU officials put at up to 60 billion euros -- to open up talks on a future trade deal.

The fate of the border between British-ruled Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has also thrown an unexpected spanner into the works, with British negotiator David Davis ruling out the EU's preferred solution.

"My answer is yes," Barnier told a press conference at the end of the sixth round of talks in Brussels, when asked if he would need "concessions" from Britain within the next two weeks to move on.

"On the financial settlement, this is absolutely vital if we are to achieve sufficient progress in December. It is just a matter of settling accounts, as with any other separation," the former European commissioner and French foreign minister said.

Barnier added that he was "following attentively" the political situation in Britain where a series of government resignations has further weakened the government of Prime Minister Theresa May.

### NO NEW BORDER

EU leaders decided at their last summit in October that there was insufficient progress on three main divorce issues - the bill, Northern Ireland and the rights of three million Europeans living in Britain -- to move on to the next stage.

They said they hoped to open talks on future relations and a post-Brexit transition period at their next meeting on December 14-15, but officials have warned that could now slip to February or March.

Hopes of a breakthrough at this week's Brussels talks -- the first since mid-October -- were so low that they were cut to just one-and-a-half days from the normal four days.

Northern Ireland has reared its head in the discussions, with an internal EU paper for the talks suggesting that it should remain in the EU's single market and customs union after Brexit to prevent a hard border with Ireland.

Davis insisted yesterday that any Brexit deal cannot create a frontier between Northern Ireland, where a 1998 peace deal ended decades of sectarian unrest, and the rest of the United Kingdom.

"We recognise the need for specific solutions for the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland," Davis said. "But let me be clear, this cannot amount to creating a new border inside the United Kingdom."

### SOME PROGRESS

Barnier meanwhile welcomed a British proposal on protecting the rights of EU nationals living in Britain after 2019, but said there were still differences on key issues.

There appeared to be little progress on the main sticking points: the rights of EU migrants to bring their families to Britain, their ability to send welfare payments to their home countries, and whether the European Court of Justice would have jurisdiction over those rights.

"On citizens' rights we are making some progress although we need to move further on a number of points," Barnier said.

The Brexit bill has been the main source of deadlock in the talks since they began in June. The EU says it must meet budgetary commitments totalling 50 to 60 billion euros, but Britain puts the figure nearer 20 billion.

Britain voted to leave the EU in a shock referendum result in June 2016. The government confirmed Thursday that Brexit day will be 2300 GMT on March 29, 2019.

## Rohingya children face harsh reality

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"Parents of some of these children may well be somewhere in the refugee camps," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

### RISK OF TRAFFICKING, ABUSE

But finding their parents will not be easy. Many of these children are too young to tell their parents' names or any other particulars. Also, 4.5 lakh of the refugees have been registered biometrically so far -- less than half of nearly one million Rohingyas now living in tents and under tarpaulin sheets in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. It is not yet clear how many of the children have lost their parents to the military operation.

At the moment, most of these children are living with their relatives or neighbours or in centres run by aid agencies such as Save the Children.

But with so many children living without their parents, aid workers and government officials are worried about trafficking and abuse. They fear that some of these children may also be used to carry drugs, such as yaba tablets smuggled in from Myanmar, inside and outside the camps.

"Such risks are there, but we are alert. After we finalise the list and determine how many kids have lost their parents in the violence, we will decide on how they can be integrated with the Rohingya community. They should not be separated from the society," Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Md Abul Kalam said.

### NO ESCAPING THE PAST

In the orphanage set up by Beximco Pharmaceuticals and managed by Indian charity UNITED SIKHS, Radia talks little and made hardly any friends.

Nafiza Ferdowshi, assistant professor of educational and



Radia

counselling psychology at Dhaka University, said these were signs of trauma that would have long-term impacts on these children. Some may even start showing the signs five or ten years later.

Radia tries her best to follow the instructions as 10 teachers -- all of whom taught in madrasas in Rakhine until they themselves fled the violence -- take turns to give the children lessons on Quran and Hadith.

But all of this is new to her -- the place, the teachers, neighbours, everything. Back home, she used to go to school with her friends, with whom she would play marbles in the afternoon.

Does she have those marbles with her? She shakes her head. No matter how hard she tries to concentrate on her Quran studies to forget her past, some memories are constant.

She remembers, for example, how she fled for life as her parents lay dead or how hastily she buried them to avoid being seen by the army or the local vigilantes.

Nafiza warned that children like Radia would be in a life-long trauma if they did not get proper care, counselling and protection. Because they are vulnerable, it will be easy to exploit them and they will face problems in family bonding and trusting others.

Because they have seen things such as torture and killing at an early age, they will always be haunted by fear, even if they are safe or have food and shelter, she added. "Scenes of such violence may even appear in their dreams."

Radia is already showing some of these signs. And she has a recurring dream: her parents getting shot as Myanmar burns.

Every time she has this dream, she wakes up, shudders in panic, cries and tries to sleep again.

## US won't tolerate unfair global trade: Trump

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country pull itself from poverty to become a superpower in three decades, calling it an "irreversible historical trend".

But as gripes over trade imbalances, job losses and social inequality abound, he conceded that free trade philosophy needed to be repurposed to be "more open, more balanced, more equitable".

Ahead of his speech, China announced it will further open the country's financial markets to foreign firms, a key demand from the US and other global investors who have long complained about strict limits on access to the world's number-two economy.

Trump arrived in Vietnam from

Beijing, where he sought to build a consensus against North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

In China he was gushing in his praise of Xi, calling his host "a very special man" in a trip rich with photo opportunities but lacking concrete outcomes on tackling key issues such as North Korea.

### FREE TRADE ON THE RACK

APEC brings together the big hitters of business and politics, including Japan's Shinzo Abe and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

The rise of Trump as leader of the world's biggest economy risks unpicking decades of US-led economic diplomacy that webbed global economies together with free trade and low tariff pacts.

He has pledged to wring a better deal from countries the US has large trade deficits with -- including China -- and bring jobs back to the hollowed out industrial heartland that voted for him.

But proponents of free trade, including many allies, have looked on aghast as the president tears up the rule book and anti-globalisation arguments ricochet through the US and Europe.

Trump has already pulled Washington's support from the sprawling 12-nation Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact and vowed to renegotiate NAFTA, a trade deal between the US, Canada and Mexico.

Yesterday, Asia-Pacific ministers were struggling to salvage the TPP deal, with

Canada denying reports that an agreement had been struck among the remaining 11 members to press ahead without the US.

Malaysian premier Najib Razak, whose country is among the so-called TPP-11 nations, lamented the change of tone.

"I see the rise of anti-globalisation, I see the rise of more inward looking (nations)... there's a lot of soul-searching we have to do during this APEC," he told a room packed with CEOs on the sidelines of the forum.

The annual APEC summit is one of the largest gatherings on the annual diplomatic calendar, bringing together scores of world leaders and more than 2,000 CEOs.

## Aid access still challenging

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could not conduct an independent comprehensive needs assessment in Rakhine, he told journalists.

According to a latest report of US Agency for International Development (USAID), the military operations in Rakhine since August 25 have caused severe food insecurity and mass displacement.

Meanwhile, several hundred more Rohingyas crossed into Bangladesh from Myanmar yesterday. According to the local administration, nearly 700 Rohingyas arrived in Cox's Bazar through Shah Porir Dwp point of the Naf river.

### ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

Four UN human rights experts have called upon ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) states, including Myanmar, to address pressing human rights issues during the 31st ASEAN Summit being held in the Philippines from November

10-14.

Recognising the important work of many civil society organisations across the region, the experts expressed concern about "a worrying deterioration in the environment in which they operate".

They expressed worries over the rising numbers of cases of serious human rights violations in ASEAN states. They also urged the countries to do more to protect all vulnerable groups, reminding governments that inclusion and meaningful participation are elements of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN experts are Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association Annalisa Ciampi, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions Agnes Callamard and Special Rapporteur on the situation of

human rights defenders Michel Forst.

### CONCERN OVER TERROR RECRUITMENT

ASEAN defence ministers have voiced concern that Rohingya refugees might be recruited by terrorists. They have urged the ASEAN states to do extra concerning the matter, said Philippines' Secretary of National Defence Delfin Lorenzana, reports Interaksyon, an online news portal of the Philippines.

He was speaking at a programme titled "ASEAN Leadership Amid a New World Order", hosted by the Stratbase Albert del Rosario Institute, at a Manila hotel on Wednesday.

Lorenzana said the matter was amongst a number of considerations raised throughout the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting and ADMM (ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting)-Plus -- a platform of defense ministers from Australia,

China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA.

"The consensus was for Myanmar to do more to resolve these issues. Because ASEAN says that the concern of ASEAN is that these refugees might find their way into some terrorist camps and train, and then they will train the other camps in the region, and it will become a problem," the Philippine defence secretary said.

### VACCINATION EFFORTS STEPPED UP

An increase in the number of suspected measles cases among the newly arrived Rohingyas and their host communities in Cox's Bazar has prompted the Bangladesh government and UN partners to step up immunisation efforts in overcrowded camps and makeshift shelters close to the border with Myanmar, according to a joint press

release of WHO and Unicef released yesterday.

It said nearly 360,000 people, aged between six months and 15 years, among the new Rohingya arrivals in Cox's Bazar and their host communities, irrespective of their immunisation status, would be administered measles and rubella vaccines through fixed health facilities, outreach vaccination teams, and at entry points into Bangladesh.

As of November 4, one death and 412 suspected cases of measles have been reported among the vulnerable population living in camps, settlements, and among the host communities.

As part of stepped up vaccination efforts, 43 fixed health facility sites, 56 outreach vaccination teams and vaccination teams at main border entry points will administer MR vaccine to population aged between six months and 15 years, along with

oral polio vaccine to children under five years and TT vaccine to pregnant women.

More than 70 vaccinators from the government and partners have been trained to deliver routine vaccination through fixed sites and outreach teams from tomorrow. The vaccination at the entry points at Subrang, Teknaf has been going on since November 1.

Earlier, Communist leaders from South Asian countries in a statement demanded increased involvement of the UN to ensure "dignified sanctuary" to Rohingya refugees.

"We urge all Communist and workers parties and political forces who support justice to raise their voice against the atrocities and to pressurise Myanmar government to stop brutal sectarian massacre against Rohingyas," reads the statement signed by seven leaders from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.