



US President Donald Trump holds up his signed proclamation commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War during an event with US military veterans in Danang, Vietnam, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Vietnam vet thwarted in efforts to meet draft-dodging Trump

AFP, Danang

US war veteran Mark O'Connor raced across Danang on a motorbike yesterday hoping to come face-to-face with Donald Trump, a president who dodged the war-era draft but whose politics have won fast fans among some former soldiers for "making America great again".

After braving the searing sun, the 67-year-old's 8,000-mile journey from the US ended in disappointment as he was turned away by heavy security and failed to snatch a glimpse of Trump.

The president was meeting a cluster of other American vets in the Vietnamese coastal city yesterday. "We tried, we did our best," said a crestfallen O'Connor, who lives in South Dakota but frequently visits Vietnam for charity work.

Sadly, he left his trademark red Trump campaign hat back home, but had planned to don a replacement on his mission to see the man whose politics have captivated him.

O'Connor had wanted to deliver a simple message to Trump in Danang, a former airbase where US marines first arrived more than 50 years ago to support the fight against communist-backed Viet Cong soldiers.

"Thank you for making America great again and taking our country back," he had wanted to say.

Trump, who famously avoided fighting in Vietnam by taking several deferments, arrived with a message of his own for former servicemen.

"Our veterans are a national treasure, and I thank them all for their service, sacrifice, and patriotism," he said, signing a proclamation to honour veterans of the Vietnam War.

He committed to repatriating the remains of 1,253 missing servicemen from Vietnam and found solid support among the clutch of men he met yesterday.

"I just want to say what an honour and privilege it is to be with our president. I so admire what you're doing for our country," said one vet identified by the White House as Mr Hopper.

Trump had earlier remarked on the extraordinary turnaround in relations between Vietnam and the United States, from bitter foes to regional allies.

Train engine

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electric engine is swapped with a diesel engine as part of the onward journey (Wadi to Solapur). After switching the two engines, the loco pilot got off it and to his horror, the diesel engine began moving in the opposite direction.

What happened next is straight out of a movie as a railway staff member chased the rogue engine on a motorbike. The engine moved at a speed of 30km/hour, reported Times of India. Railway officials alerted the next few stations to clear the signals and tracks to avoid any accident. Trains from opposite direction were also halted, officials said.

After a 20-minute chase, the ghost engine slowed down which is when the bike-riding official managed to board it and bring it to a stop. The engine finally came to a halt ahead of Nalwar station, nearly 13 kilometres away.

A special probe has been launched into why the engine ran amok, railway officials said. No mishap was reported in the dramatic chase, reported The Hindu.

IS jihadists retake nearly half of Syria border town

AFP, Beirut

Islamic State group jihadists have retaken nearly half of Albu Kamal in eastern Syria in a counter-attack on what had been the last significant town under their full control, a monitor said yesterday.

"IS started counter-attacking on Thursday night and retook more than 40 percent of the town of Albu Kamal," Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP.

Syrian regime forces and allied fighters had recaptured the town, which lies on the border with Iraq in the eastern Deir Ezzor province, from the jihadists on Thursday.

Albu Kamal lies at the heart of what used to be the sprawling "caliphate" the group declared in 2014 over swathes of Iraq and Syria.

"The jihadists went back in and retook several neighbourhoods in the north, northeast and northwest," Abdel Rahman said. "IS is trying to defend its last bastion."

The jihadist organisation has in the space of a few weeks seen its caliphate shrink to a small rump and lost major cities such as Mosul, Raqa and Deir Ezzor.

Albu Kamal was the last town of note it controlled and losing it would cap the group's reversion to an underground guerrilla organisation with no urban base.

According to Syria state TV, regime and auxiliary forces had retake full control of it by Thursday.

Jubo League men attack

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welfare office, said the MP (women's reserved seat-28) attended a programme in Mirpur, marking the distribution of cheques and allowance cards among the elderly people from the Bede (gypsy) community in Mirpur. After the programme, the lawmaker visited the nearby Bede village.

Waliur Rahman, president of Bahubal Jubo League, said Upazila Vice-Chairman Tara Miah's driver along with some other people misbehaved with the MP and assaulted her at the card distribution programme. They also filmed the incident.

As the MP asked them why they were filming the programme, they started shouting at the lawmaker,

Chief justice's leave expires

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Contacted, Attorney General Mahbub Alam said he did not know whether the CJ extended his leave or where he is staying now.

According to a gazette notification issued by the law ministry on October 12, Justice Md Abdul Wahhab Miah, the most senior judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court after Justice Sinha, will carry out the duties of the CJ till November 10 or until Sinha rejoins office.

Amid backlash from the ruling quarters over the SC verdict on the 16th amendment to the constitution, Sinha left for Australia on October 13 night, months before his retirement on

The Observatory said most of the fighting was done by the Lebanese Shia group Hezbollah and elite forces from its backer Tehran, as well as militia groups from Iraq.

Indian city bans begging ahead of Ivanka Trump's visit

AFP, New Delhi

A city in southern India has banned begging in public places ahead of a three-day summit that Ivanka Trump is due to attend, police said yesterday.

The daughter of the US president will join India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Hyderabad later this month.

Hyderabad police commissioner M Mahendar Reddy reportedly issued an order this week that beggars should be taken off the streets because they cause "nuisance, obstruction to free movement (and) danger to vehicular traffic and pedestrians."

Yesterday, a senior police officer who asked not to be named said the notification was part of the city's "routine anti-begging efforts" and should not be linked to Trump's visit.

added Waliur, who was present there.

Tara Mia, a Jubo League leader, and Habiganj District Council member Alaur Rahman, a local AL leader, misbehaved with Amatul, said witnesses.

Talking to this correspondent, the lawmaker said Tara Mia along with his driver and several other people attacked her during the card distribution programme which left several people injured.

Brig Gen AK Mahubul Haque, director of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, said there was no injury marks on the lawmaker's body and she was out of danger.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach Tara Miah over the phone for comment.

January 31 next year.

The SC scrapped the amendment that empowered parliament to remove SC judges for incapacity or misconduct.

Before leaving the country, Sinha said he was not sick, contradicting the government claim that he went on leave on health grounds.

On October 14, a day after Sinha left for Australia, the SC said Sinha is facing 11 charges, including money laundering and corruption.

On the same day, the attorney general said Sinha's rejoining the office of the CJ after his return from abroad is "a far cry."

Only 48 seconds

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consultation length at less than five minutes, 25 countries with 5-9.9 minutes, 11 countries with 10-14.9 minutes, 13 countries with 15-19.9 minutes and three countries with less than or equal to 20 minutes.

Australia, the UK and the USA had sufficient data points to determine long-term trends. In Australia, the consultation length was relatively stable, in the USA it was increasing (by 12 seconds a year), and in the UK it was going up (by 4.2 seconds a year).

The research mentioned that 18 countries covering 50 percent of the world's population have a latest reported mean consultation length of five minutes or less.

The reasons for such striking differences may reflect a number of factors, including issues relating to governance, workforce, access, continuity, comprehensiveness and coordination, it added.

For example, in countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and China, there is no appointment system, and individual primary care physicians may undertake over 90 consultations a day with a considerable amount of time taken up providing repeat prescriptions.

The study was carried out to describe the average primary care physician consultation length in economically developed and low-income/middle-income countries, and to examine the relationship between consultation length and organisational-level economic and health outcomes.

Two brothers

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to Faridpur Medical College Hospital where doctors pronounced them dead around 11:30pm.

According to locals, there has been a longstanding rivalry between Israfil, chairman of Shakhor Union Parishad in Boalmari, and Kalam, member of Faridpur Zilla Parishad, over establishing political supremacy in the area.

AL nominee Kalam lost to Israfil in the last UP chairman election. Israfil had contested the election as an independent candidate.

A few days ago, some supporters of Israfil hacked a supporter of Kalam, locals alleged.

Israfil said Kalam's men might have killed the two brothers as one of his supporters came under attack from unknown criminals recently.

Refuting the allegation, Kalam, however, said, "I don't know anything about the killing of the two brothers."

Autopsies were carried out on the victims' bodies at Faridpur Medical College Hospital. Police handed over the bodies to the duo's families last evening.

Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Boalmari Police Station, some additional policemen were deployed in Sotrokanda village to avoid any further deterioration in law and order.

Alfadanga police said they picked up five people in the upazila's Tika Kheyaghat area around 11:00am yesterday in connection with the double murder.

IGP plays down

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Many of the 524 had returned to their families while bodies of some were found. Others were found shown arrested in different cases by the law enforcers. The ASK reckons the number of such people stood at 190 in the last seven and a half years.

Human rights activists

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"I think the gravity of this crime is more than that of a murder," she told The Daily Star. The government should take responsibility for such incidents and give highest priority to find those missing persons, she said.

Sultana said allegations have surfaced that members of security forces were involved in the mysterious disappearance of many people. "In many cases, it is seen that many are shown arrested after their families come up with statements [about the incidents]," she added.

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Kazi Reazul Hoque yesterday said free movement is one of the constitutional rights of the citizens and it is the duty of the state to ensure that.

"It is responsibility of the state to find the victims of abduction and enforced disappearance and return them to their families," he said, demanding exemplary punishment to those responsible for the incidents.

The latest victim of the fresh incidents of disappearance is Tanvir Yasin Karim, owner of Karim International and Darus Salam Publications. He was picked up by plainclothes men on Wednesday.

North South University teacher Mubashar Hasan went missing on Tuesday. Journalist Utpal Das is traceless since October 10.

Mithun Chowdhury, president of newly-formed Bangladesh Janata Party, and his associate Ashit Ghosh were picked up allegedly by law enforcers in the city's Sutrapur area on October 27.

Those who went missing in recent times include McGill University student Ishrak Ahmed Fahim, Bangladesh Kalyan Party Secretary General MM Aminur Rahman and BNP leader Syed Sadat Ahmed, also a businessman.

Kollol Hazra, a nephew of another victim, businessman Aniruddha Kumar, yesterday said they were yet to get the whereabouts of his uncle.

The case is same with Mubashar and Ishrak.

Moshiur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station, said they are now looking for a person with whom the NSU teacher had talked over the phone before going missing.

The SIM card is registered under the name of a person who lives in Tangail, he added.

BCL leader 'spreads clips'

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filmed a neighbour's wife taking a shower with a hidden camera. He later threatened the woman with sharing the clips online and assaulted her sexually.

Arif again secretly filmed the acts and continued to blackmail her, they added.

The clips started spreading on October 15 and were shared on social media many times in the following days.

Bhedarganj upazila BCL suspended him on October 19 on charges of "violating party discipline", said Wasim Talukder, general secretary of the BCL in the upazila.

The decision was promptly taken to avoid "his crime being linked to the organisation", he added.

Arif, a college student and a resident of Ferangikandi village, left the area soon after he was suspended from the pro-AL student body, his neighbours said.

The women's fear of public shame and mockery kept them from going to police, said their family members.

One of the victims, who is a college student, said, "He forced me into this. My life is ruined. How will I show my

Mubashar's sister Tamanna Tasmin said her parents fell sick as her brother is still traceless.

Contacted yesterday, Ishrak's father Jamal Uddin Ahmed said he wants his son back as soon as possible.

Turkey detains 82 foreigners planning to go to Syria

AFP, Ankara

Turkish authorities have detained 82 foreigners in Istanbul suspected of having links to the Islamic State group and planning to go to Syria, as Turkey's crackdown against the jihadist group widens.

Police officers have been conducting raids almost daily against IS cells across the country, with increasing intensity in the past few weeks.

The state-run Anadolu news agency said the suspects had previously been involved with IS fighters in "conflict zones", and were planning to try to reach Syria "in the coming days".

Separately, the privately owned Dogan news agency reported that nearly 800 alleged IS members had illegally crossed into Turkey from Syria, though it did not say over what period.

Police raided 14 addresses in Istanbul, and also detained 11 other suspects of Syrian origin in the southern city of Adana, Anadolu reported.

The detentions were reported a day after a series of anti-IS raids in Ankara during which at least 173 people were detained in operations conducted by 1,500 police officers.

Most of those detained were of Syrian origin, Dogan reported.

The agency added that authorities had carried out Thursday's raids over fears of an attack on November 10, the date on which Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, father of the modern Turkish republic, died in 1938.

Dozens of people had already been detained in Ankara late last month, some of whom were suspected of planning an attack on Republic Day on October 29.

According to the interior ministry, around 450 suspects were detained on suspicion of helping or being in contact with IS in October.

face around here? We demand exemplary punishment for this."

Sister of another victim said, "My sister was trapped and raped. Arif took large sums of money on multiple occasions from her by threatening to share the video... We have not filed a case yet for fear of disgrace."

Rawshan Ara Begum, chairperson of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha in Shariatpur, said social awareness has to be raised to stop recurrence of such heinous incidents.

She also demanded exemplary punishment for the crime.

When this correspondent called Arif and enquired about the allegations, he hung up.

Asked, his father Mintu Hawladar said, "The BNP-Jamaat men have circulated these personal things as part of a conspiracy."

He added that Arif had many adversaries as he was involved in politics.

Nazim Uddin Talukder, chairman of Narayanpur Union Parishad termed Arif's misdeeds "unthinkable".

Saifullah Al Mamun, superintendent of police in Shariatpur, said police were trying to arrest him on charges of committing cyber crimes.

BNP plans big rally

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concerned as of last night.

To make the programme successful, the party has already held a series of meetings with its front and associated organisations and also with the adjacent district committees.

Morally boosted after Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Cox's Bazar trip, the party wants to send a message to the government that the next parliamentary elections would not be left unchallenged and an election like January 5 won't be accepted.

It also wants to send a message that the party still has huge popularity.

"Through this programme we would like to send a message that democracy must be restored in the country and that we want a free, fair and inclusive election," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, BNP secretary general, told The Daily Star.

He added they were expecting a huge gathering, especially participation of the common people.

Khaleda, also a former prime minister, is expected to address the rally, which is scheduled to start at 2:00pm on the historic Suhrawardy Udayan.

"We have got verbal assurance from the authorities concerned and on the basis of that we are taking all-out preparations. We are expecting that tens of thousands of people will join the rally," Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint

secretary general of the party, told The Daily Star yesterday.

A BNP delegation led by party's standing committee member Mirza Abbas has meanwhile visited the meeting venue and told journalists that the party expected political manner from the government.

"We want cooperation from the government and also wish that it will refrain from triggering any modes of instigation. At the same time, we want cooperation from all political parties so that we can uphold public expectations," Mirza Abbas told journalists after visiting the venue.

He expressed the hope that the attendance of party leaders and activists would be huge if there were no obstacles.

The party is going to organise such a big programme in Dhaka after around two years.

Earlier on January 5 last year, BNP held a programme in front of its Naya Paltan headquarters in Dhaka to mark January 5, which the party termed "democracy killing day".

That time BNP wanted to hold the programme on Suhrawardy Udayan but did it get permission.

A joint meeting was held at Naya Paltan office on Wednesday where the presidents and secretaries of Munshiganj, Dhaka, Manikganj, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Narsingdi units were present.