



Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim visiting a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar's Ukha yesterday as part of his two-day official visit to Bangladesh. PHOTO: PID

Woman, her 2 children found dead at home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police recovered the bodies of a mother and her two children from their house in Bhularkandi village of Moulvibazar's Barlekha upazila on Tuesday night. The victims are Mazeda Begum, 25, wife of Qatar expatriate Akram Ali, her daughter Laboni Begum, 5, and son Faruq Ahmed, 3. Quoting the local UP member, Abu Yusuf, additional superintendent of Moulvibazar police, said Mazeda was constructing a tin-roofed house. Every day, she used to help the workers. On Tuesday afternoon, she went to the spot to see the construction work. In the evening, a worker was looking for Mazeda for cement. But he found the door closed from inside. Without getting any response from Mazeda, he told locals of the matter. Breaking the door, the locals entered the room and found the bodies. The police official added that law enforcers found the bodies of mother and daughter hanging from the ceiling of the house, while the boy's body was found lying on the floor. The bodies were sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies yesterday. It could not be known immediately whether the three were murdered, police said, adding that they were investigating the incident.

Trump warns

FROM PAGE 20 across the Muslim world and drawing strong condemnation.

Key US allies Britain, France, Italy, Japan and Ukraine were among the 14 countries in the 15-member council that voted in favour of the measure and were expected to do the same on today at the assembly. Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki accused Washington of "threatening" member-states, saying it was "another mistake" following the US veto at the Security Council. Malki said the UN session would show "how many countries will opt to vote with their conscience." Turkey and Yemen requested the urgent meeting on behalf of the Arab group of countries and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The two countries circulated a draft resolution on Tuesday that mirrors the vetoed measure, reaffirming that Jerusalem is an "issue that must be resolved through negotiations." "They will vote for justice and they will vote in favour of that resolution that was presented by both Yemen and Turkey on behalf of the Arab group and OIC," Malki said. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has sought to lead Islamic condemnation of Trump's Jerusalem plan, calling a summit of the leaders of Muslim nations last week in Istanbul, who urged the world to recognise East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital. East Jerusalem was annexed by Israel after the 1967 war, in a move never recognised by the international community. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said his country expected "strong support" for the Palestinian Authority in the UN General Assembly. "Everyone with a conscience ... is against this decision that usurped Palestine's rights," he said. The foreign minister said any honourable country would not bow to US pressure, urging Washington to reverse its mistake. "God willing, I believe we will obtain a good result tomorrow (Thursday)," he added.

Govt, ministry not guilty

FROM PAGE 20 including university admission tests, in recent years.

In the latest incident, the final exams of mathematics for class-I and class-IV were suspended on Monday at all the 123 primary schools of Natore Sadar as leaked question papers of the tests were recovered from a primary school. A few days before the incident, the question papers of "Paribesh Parichiti" of class-I and "Bangladesh O Biswa Parichay" of class-IV were leaked during the final tests in Barguna Sadar, prompting the authorities concerned to postpone examinations in all 248 primary schools. On December 12, the deputy commissioner of Munshiganj also had to postpone tests for class-II and class-IV at 119 schools after the question papers had been leaked. This was the first time when questions of primary level students were reported to be leaked. Expressing concern and shock at the incidents, Sultana Kamal, a leading human rights activist and executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra, on December 13 told The Daily Star, "Children, who have not grown up mentally, are being subjected to corrupt process. Nothing could be more frightening than that. These shocking incidents are taking place as we have failed to stop corruption." In reply to a question, Motahar, also a ruling Awami League MP, yesterday told reporters that they actually don't know how the question papers of class-I to class-IV were leaked. He, however, said they have asked the authorities concerned to take effective measures to stop the repetition of such incidents. Claiming that leaking of question paper is "nothing new", Motahar said question papers were also leaked when he appeared for his matriculation examination in 1965. At the briefing, Motahar also talked about the ministry's different measures to recover grabbed lands of different primary schools.

Shakil touched many hearts

FROM PAGE 5 Mahbubul Hoque Shakil Sangsad organised the programme to mark his 49th birthday and to announce and hand over the first Mahbubul Hoque Shakil Award for literature at BanglaAcademy.

At the programme, Poet Rassel Raihan was given the first Mahbubul Hoque Shakil Award for his poetry book "Bibrato Mayur". He received a crest and Tk 1 lakh as prize. Shakil, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's special assistant, died of cardiac arrest on December 6 last year. The former vice president of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was only 47 at the time of his death. Finance Minister AMA Muhith said Shakil was his colleague while working for CRI, the research and information cell of Bangladesh Awami League. "He had a great quality of absorbing something within a very short time and could prepare reports on it very quickly... For this reason, I respect him although he was 34 years junior to me," Muhith said. "He [Shakil] had deep involvement with politics and his political thought was very high..." said Muhith. Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman, who presided over the programme, said Shakil was different from others because he was able to impress old and young alike. "The bondage of friendship he left behind will not end even after his death," he said, adding, Shakil had contribution in both poetry and prose of Bangla literature. Jahirul Hoque, father of Shakil, said Shakil first got involved with student politics, then national politics, literature and thereafter with cultural fraternity. "Your presence and speeches manifested that he... had been able to touch people's hearts," said the emotion-choked father. Habibullah Siraji, convener of the Sangsad, gave opening speech while Kamal Pasha Chowdhury, member secretary of the Sangsad, moderated the programme. Shakil's mother, wife, daughter, brother and other family members were also present there. Journalists, poets, former and current BCL leaders, his family members and friends commemorated him citing different aspects of his life. His poems were recited while a documentary on his life and works were screened at the programme.

Frantic efforts

FROM PAGE 20 heavy Australian breed. Firefighters were called about 9:40am.

Twelve firefighters rushed to the scene immediately and were able to rescue the animal about 10:30am, Forhad Hossain, senior station officer of Rajshahi fire service station, said. The firefighters and villagers manually lifted the beast to safety using ladders, poles and ropes while a huge crowd gathered on the bank to see the operation. The rescuers first placed bamboos and ladders around the cow to avoid stepping into the sand. Then they placed a ladder under the cow and tied her to it with water hose pipes and ropes. She was finally freed by the rescuers, who lifted her by pulling the ropes and hose pipes. The cow seemed tired, but unhurt as she grazed at her owner's farm later. Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan, professor of the geology and mining department of Rajshahi University, said the sandy and wet bank was conducive to formation of quicksand. It happens when ordinary sand is saturated with water to a point where it cannot hold any heavy object on it," he said. "Humans or animals stuck in quicksand worsen the situation by struggling to get out by themselves. In the process, they put more weight on the sand sink. The best option is to wait for assistance."

State agents, militia 'planned' DR Congo massacres

AFP, Paris

Security forces and an army-backed militia planned massacres in an opposition stronghold in the Democratic Republic of Congo, human rights activists charged yesterday, calling the killings "crimes against humanity". The southern Kasai region suffered "one of the worst human rights crises in the world" between March and July, the Paris-based International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) said in a report compiled with partner rights groups in the country.

All eyes on Rangpur

FROM PAGE 1 told journalists in the capital's Nirbachan Bhaban yesterday.

A total of 393,994 voters are expected to exercise their franchise to elect the city mayor and councillors in 33 wards. Many voters said the mayoral election will be a friendly one as they considered Jhantu and Mostafiz to be the frontrunners to win it. Jhantu had won the first mayoral polls in Rangpur in 2012, defeating his nearest rival Mostafa by 30,000 votes. The election was non-partisan. Although the Jatiya Party mayoral nominee is in a strong position, only 15 pro-JP candidates are running councillor polls. Besides, only 18-pro BNP ward councillor hopefuls are contesting the elections. According to experts, Rangpur city polls have become a prestige issue for the three major political parties ahead of the 11th parliamentary elections, scheduled to be held late next year. "It's not an election of compromise, but a friendly election between Awami League and Jatiya Party," said Aftab Hossain, secretary of the Rangpur chapter of Sujan, a civil society platform. State Minister for LGRD Mashiur Rahman Ranga, also a Jatiya Party lawmaker from Rangpur, said: "The election will be free and fair. I think the government is not putting any pressure on the local administration considering the future of the Awami League-led 14-party grand alliance." "If the AL candidate is defeated, it will not be considered as the party's defeat. Rather, it will be considered as a defeat of Jhantu as he was involved in corruption and misbehaved with people," he told The Daily Star. AL Presidium Member Abdur

RANGPUR POLLS	
In numbers	
VOTERS	3,93,994
WARDS	33
POLLING STATIONS	193
POLLING BOOTHS	1,122
MAYORAL ASPIRANTS	7
COUNCILLOR ASPIRANTS	276
LAW ENFORCERS	7,000

Razzak said holding a fair election is necessary for all, regardless of the results. About the public perception on a probable friendly election, he said it was a "baseless perception". He claimed that AL leaders were trying their best to ensure victory for the party's mayor candidate. All the candidates passed a busy day, finalising their strategies for the polling day. The candidates had meetings with their leaders and activists. Talking to this newspaper, Jhantu said, "Our victory is certain. People are not going to make any mistake like they did before. People will cast their votes for development and boat [electoral symbol of Awami League] will win." Mostafa said a "silent revolution" would take place in Rangpur as it is a stronghold of Jatiya Party. BNP nominee Babla expressed fear that the election might not be free and

Thirty flights

FROM PAGE 20 "The flight operations resumed for domestic flights at 9:30am and international flights at 10:15am this [yesterday] morning," Public Relations Officer of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh AKM Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star.

Due to the fog, six passenger flights and one cargo aircraft were diverted to other airports including the ones in Kolkata and Chittagong. A Thai Airways flight was forced to return to Bangkok after failing to land at HSIA. It was scheduled to land at 12:40am. A Saudia flight scheduled to land at HSIA at 12:55am was diverted to Kolkata. A Unitop cargo aircraft from China was diverted to Myanmar around 12:50am. A Gulf Air flight was diverted to Kolkata around 4:00am and a US-Bangla flight was diverted to Chittagong, he added. Besides these, departing flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, China Southern, Emirates, Malindo Air, Qatar Airways and Air Asia were delayed for several hours. Those flights departed after 10:15am, Karim said. Apart from international flights, one Biman Bangladesh Airlines, four Novo Air and three US-Bangla Airlines domestic flights were also delayed.

London cafe

FROM PAGE 20 While the drink is placed in position. The picture is then scanned and reproduced onto the froth using a flavourless food colouring.

The process takes around four minutes before an image is presented on the froth, ready to be photographed and sent to all points via social media before drinking, and costs around 5.75 pounds. (\$7.5) "Due to social media, the dining experience has completely shifted," Ehab Salem Shouly, owner of The Tea Terrace told Reuters. "It's not enough any more to just deliver great food and great service - it's got to be Instagram worthy." Over 400 of the personalised drinks have been sold since they launched on Saturday, with the hash tag "Selfieccino" going viral across various social media platforms. The Tea Terrace hopes to trademark the term as they expand the service across their other two locations in London Victoria and Guildford, Surrey.

Trump, May host first call after Twitter dust up

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Theresa May spoke for the first time since a row over his retweets of a British extremist group, addressing vexing questions about Brexit and Middle East peace Tuesday. The call came nearly a month after the two clashed over Trump's tweets of "Britain First" anti-Muslim propaganda and hours after London took the unusual step of voting against Washington at the United Nations.

Campaigns go silent ahead of knife-edge Catalan vote

AFP, Barcelona

Catalonia headed into a 24-hour campaigning blackout yesterday on the eve of a knife-edge vote, a potential turning point in the Spanish region's hotly disputed independence crisis. Today's regional election pits leaders of the wealthy northeastern region's separatist movement against candidates who want to stay part of a unified Spain. Voters are highly mobilised and a record turnout is expected, but with pro-and anti-independence candidates neck-and-neck in opinion polls neither side is likely to win a clear majority. The election is being closely watched across a European Union still reeling from Britain's shock decision to leave and wary about any breakup of the eurozone's fourth largest economy. It has inflamed passions not just in Catalonia but across Spain, whose government took the unprecedented step of stripping the region of its autonomy after its parliament declared independence on October 27. "This is not a normal election," axed Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont told supporters Tuesday evening in a final, virtual rally via videolink from self-imposed exile in Belgium. "What is at stake is not who gets the most votes, but whether the country (Catalonia) or (Spanish Prime Minister

Save rivers from pollution

FROM PAGE 20 address the flaws of the relocated tanneries and enhance their technical capabilities.

From 2016, owners began to shift their tanneries to Savar from Hazaribagh but the relocation is yet to be complete. They pointed out that a huge quantity of dissolved salt is being discharged into the Dhaleshwari River from the tanneries as the central effluent treatment plant (CETP) does not have the components needed for desalinating wastewater. Saying that around 40,000 tonnes of salt is used in the tannery industry annually, green activists said even if all the other toxic materials are treated, the salt will kill biodiversity of the river. Joint secretary of BAPA Sharif Jamil said the CETP in Savar is a biological plant, so its effectiveness depends on the amount of waste and its timely release. He added that to prevent the river and adjacent canals from salinity, an additional Tk 500 crore needs to be spent. The current project took off in 2003. The plan was to complete it by 2005 at an approximate cost of Tk 175.75 crore. As it was rescheduled thrice, the cost went up to Tk 827.99 crore. Jamil also said the plant suffered from operational problems. "But it seems, the plant is not operated properly," he said. About 30,000 workers are needed to operate the plant but there are no residential facilities for them which is causing a manpower shortage, he said. He also alleged that many tanners are still clandestinely carrying out operations in Hazaribagh and as a result pollution of Buriganga River hasn't stopped. Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said tanneries' contributed well to the economic development of the country. The overall export earnings from the leather industry were US\$1.23 billion, including finished leather, leather goods, and footwear in the fiscal year 2016-17. However, he added "But it is not acceptable if the industry pollutes environment and harms hundreds of people of the country." He asked green activists to form a working group to find out the problems with the relocated plant and prepare recommendations for ministries to save both Dhaleshwari and Buriganga from pollution. Vice President of BAPA Syed Abul Maksud said river pollution is a life threatening problem which directly impacts a nation's future. "About 10-15 ministries are involved in the prevention of river pollution but it is yet to be solved," he said. To save the river Buriganga from being polluted, from 2016 the tannery industry is being set up on 200 acres of land, acquired from locals, along the Dhaleshwari River. Pointing out the shortcomings of the CETP, Bangladesh Tanners Association Chairman Shaheen Ahmed said locals are being affected due to the stench created from the tanneries. "They're getting furious. They may stand against us anytime," he warned.