



Nur Fatima, a woman who along with 14 other Rohingyas arrived in Bangladesh on Thursday, with a neighbour's baby at a UNHCR temporary camp in Cox's Bazar's Balukhali yesterday. PHOTO: PINAKI ROY

Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 1 them to any of the Rohingya camps as per their wish. Usually, they want to go to their relatives or friends who are already here," said the worker, wishing not to be named. Currently, the transit camp is accommodating some 200 Rohingyas of 50 families. All of them arrived last week. Earlier, 56 refugees were shifted to Balukhali Rohingya camp from the camp yesterday morning, said another aid worker. So far, the Bangladesh government has created a database of 923,000 Rohingyas, who have fled Myanmar to escape persecution in recent months. The database has their fingerprints and other necessary information. The refugees included 19,000 displaced orphans. As per an arrangement reached between Dhaka and Naypyidaw on November 23, the repatriation of the Rohingyas must start within two months of the signing. Under the arrangement, all Rohingyas who entered Bangladesh after October 9, 2016 would be sent back. The two countries have already formed a joint committee, which will sit in the next 10 days, in this regard.

US suspends \$900m aid

FROM PAGE 16 took decisive action against the groups. "Our hope is that they will see this as a further indication of this administration's immense frustration with the trajectory of our relationship and that they need to be serious about taking the steps we have asked in order to put it on more solid footing," a senior State Department official told reporters. "We're hoping that Pakistan will see this as an incentive, not a punishment," he added. The Trump administration briefed Congress on its decision on Wednesday. COUNTERPRODUCTIVE Pakistan is largely shrugging off the proposed US aid cuts but frets that Washington could take more drastic measures to deter what it sees as Pakistan's support for the Taliban. Pakistan is worried about the influence of old rival India in Afghanistan, and at the same time has been battling a Pakistani Taliban insurgency that Pakistan says was largely fuelled by its support for the US war on terrorism launched after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. "Arbitrary deadlines, unilateral pronouncements and shifting goalposts are counterproductive in addressing common threats," the Pakistani foreign ministry said in a statement. Pakistan was engaged with the US administration on security cooperation and awaited further detail, it said. Tense ties between the uneasy allies nosedived on January 1 when US

President Donald Trump lashed out on Twitter against Islamabad's "lies and deceit" despite \$33 billion in aid and the White House warned of "specific actions" to pressure Pakistan. Trump's frustrations are shared by some US lawmakers, who accused Pakistan of playing a double game by allowing militant groups sanctuary - which Islamabad denies - despite promising to crack down on them. "Pakistan is one of the most duplicitous governments I've had any involvement with," Senator Bob Corker, Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told reporters. "Their, in essence, support of the Haqqani network, or ... allowing them to have safe harbor in their country when they're the greatest threat to our men and women in uniform." South Asia expert Christine Fair of Georgetown University voiced concern that Pakistan might retaliate for the suspension by closing the highways from the port city of Karachi on which equipment is trucked to landlocked Afghanistan and the airspace through which supplies are flown to US-led international forces there. "What is the plan if they close the GLOCs?" she asked, using the military acronym for Ground Lines of Communications. "What if the Pakistanis shut down the ALOCs (Air Lines of Communications). How do you keep supplying the ANSF?" she asked, referring to the Afghan national security forces. "Pakistan could be within their rights if they tell us you don't have flyover rights anymore," she said.

Cold spell

FROM PAGE 16 "I tried to buy used woollen garments but traders have increased the price after the fall of temperature," said Soleman. In Thakurgaon, very few people were seen on the roads and public places. People in rural areas were seen arranging campfires with straw and wood in front of their houses to try and keep themselves warm. In Kurigram, about four lakh poor people living on the river bank and in the 250 chars of the district have been suffering badly for the last three days. Disaster management office sources said they distributed 57,000 pieces of blankets to all upazila administrations in the district. In Rajshahi, where temperature came down to 8.6 degrees Celsius, the cold wave has hit the low-income group and homeless people hard. The district administration has distributed 52,500 blankets among the affected people in nine upazilas, Md Helal Mahmud Sharif, Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi, said. In Patuakhali, the poor living in different shoal areas were also badly affected. Md Azahar Khan, a landless resident in Diarakachua in Baulal upazila, said and his six family members had nothing warm to wear. Baulal Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdullah Al Mahmud Zaman said they distributed about 6,000 blankets among poor men. [Our correspondents from Thakurgaon, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rajshahi, Patuakhali, Manikganj and Munshiganj contributed to this report]

More teachers may get MPO

FROM PAGE 1 Talking to this newspaper, Javed Ahmed, additional secretary in the secondary and higher education division of the education ministry, said they would start the process of including new institutions in the MPO upon approval of the policy. He, however, said it is not possible to bring a large number of institutions under the scheme at one go, as it involves a huge amount of money. It would take more than Tk 2,400 crore a year to include around 5,000 institutions in the MPO. "The number [of institutions to be included] will depend on budget allocations," Javed added. The government now spends more than Tk 7,000 crore a year for the MPO-listed institutions. More than four lakh teachers and employees of 26,340 secondary schools, colleges, madrasas and technical institutes get the MPO facilities. According to the existing policy, in a rural area, no institution will be included in the MPO if it is situated within three to six kilometres of another MPO-listed institution. However, new institutions may get the facilities under special consideration. If the education minister wants, any of the provisions can be relaxed, says the policy. In 2010, the provision regarding geographic boundary was relaxed, and more than three institutions were included from every constituency under special consideration. This time, two to three institutions from each constituency may be brought under the MPO scheme, said education ministry sources. Meanwhile, the agitating teachers, who went on a hunger strike in front of the Jatiya Press Club five days ago demanding their inclusion in the MPO, called off the strike yesterday on assurance from the prime minister. AGITATION PROMPTED QUICK ACTION The MPO is the government's share in the payroll of non-government educational institutions. Under the scheme, the government gives 100 percent basic salaries to the teachers of non-government schools. The teachers also get a small amount a month as allowances through the MPO. As per the rules, an educational institution first comes under the MPO scheme and then the government includes the teachers of the institution in the payroll. After a suspension by the then BNP-led alliance government from 2004, the MPO facility was revived by the Awami League-led government in 2010

Three injured

FROM PAGE 1 arson and an exodus of some 650,000 Rohingya villagers to Bangladesh. The United Nations condemned the Myanmar military campaign as ethnic cleansing. Buddhist-majority Myanmar rejected that. But since August 25, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) insurgents, who claimed responsibility for the coordinated raids on 30 security posts, have mounted only a few sporadic attacks. The government did not identify the insurgents involved in yesterday's attack on a vehicle taking someone to hospital but the military said in a statement they were "extremist Bengali terrorists ARSA". "A vehicle ... was attacked by 20 insurgents from the mountain using homemade mines and small arms," the government said. The military said there were about 10 attackers. An ARSA spokesman was not available for comment. There was no mention of any incident on a Twitter account that routinely carries statements from the group. The Yangon-based Frontier Myanmar magazine quoted a resident of a nearby village as saying sporadic gunfire had been heard at the time of the ambush. The area is largely off-limits to reporters. Myanmar and Bangladesh have been discussing a plan to repatriate the Rohingya refugees but more insecurity in Myanmar is likely to raise doubts about how quickly that might take place.

OIC finds

FROM PAGE 2 resulting in torture, rape and extrajudicial killings that did not even spare women, children and elderly, according to a statement shared by the Foreign Ministry here. A detailed report of the findings of IPHRC delegation visit with concrete recommendations will be presented to the 45th session of the OIC CFM (Council of Foreign Ministers) for its consideration. Since August 25, more than 6,50,000 Rohingyas have crossed into Bangladesh in the face of an army offensive in response to an attack by Rohingya insurgents on police and military checkpoints.

Bionic hand

FROM PAGE 16 However, the technology is now small enough to fit inside a backpack, making it portable. The prosthetic hand has sensors that detect information about whether an object is soft or hard. Those messages are linked to a computer in a backpack that converts them into a language the brain can comprehend. The information then gets relayed to Almerina's brain via tiny electrodes implanted in nerves of her upper arm. In tests, Almerina - who was blindfolded - was able to tell whether the object she was picking up was hard or soft. She told the BBC: "The feeling is spontaneous as if it were your real hand; you're finally able to do things that before were difficult, like getting dressed, putting on shoes—all mundane but important things—you feel complete." This represents another advance in neuroprosthetics, the interface between machine and the human body. "We are going more and more in the direction of science fiction movies like Luke Skywalker's bionic hand in Star Wars - a fully controlled, fully natural, sensorised prosthesis, identical to the human hand," Professor Silvestro Micera, a neuroengineer at EPFL in Lausanne and Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa told the BBC. The team believes that a robotic prosthesis better than the human hand may eventually become a reality. Professor Paolo Rossini, a neurologist at University Hospital Agostino Gemelli, Rome told the BBC: "Once you can control a robotic prosthesis with your brain you can think about creating one that allows more complex movements than a hand with five fingers."

Election will not wait

FROM PAGE 1 capacity to resist, show it. People under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina will resist you," he said. Addressing a discussion in the capital's Banani organised by the AL to mark January 5 as the "victory day for democracy", Quader urged the BNP to contest the next elections. BNP chief Khaleda Zia at a programme on Tuesday said no election would be allowed in the country without them and it would not be possible to keep them out of the polls. Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said the next election would not wait for anyone as time and tide wait for none. "The train of elections" will not halt for the BNP, he added. The AL leader said if the BNP did not contest the next national polls, the party's future would be threatened. "The existence of BNP will be at stake like the endangered species. Their fate will be worse than that of the Muslim League." Quader also spoke at another programme on the Bangabandhu Avenue on the same occasion. The last parliamentary election was

Mamata faces

FROM PAGE 16 Trinamool Congress (TMC) which said such an action would not stop her from fighting for the cause of the Bengalis while the BJP accused Mamata of trying to make an "issue out of a non-issue" for reaping political dividends. The BJP government in Assam condemned Mamata's statement, saying it was "derogatory, insulting to the people of Assam and against the Constitution as well as the spirit of the Supreme Court." Numerous groups staged protests across Assam condemning the statement by the TMC chief. At several places, including in Tinsukia and Biswanath, Mamata's effigies were burnt. At a meeting in Ahmedpur in West Bengal on Wednesday, Mamata Banerjee accused the NDA government at the Centre of "hatching a conspiracy" to drive out Bengalis from Assam by "excluding" their names from the first draft of the NRC, which was published on the midnight of December 31. "I warn the BJP government at the Centre not to play with fire ... This is a conspiracy of the Centre to drive out around 1.80 crore people from the state," she had said. The NRC of 1951 is being updated in Assam under the supervision of the Supreme Court to identify original residents of the state in order to check illegal migration. Deputy Commissioner (Central) of Guwahati Police Ranjan Bhuyan told PTI, "Latasil police station received a complaint regarding an alleged speech of the West Bengal chief minister. We have registered the complaint and will carry out the investigation as per law." The complaint was filed by Gauhati High Court advocate Tailendra Nath Das and the police have registered an FIR under Section 153(A) of the Indian Penal Code, he added. The section pertains to promoting enmity among groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony. Das also accused Mamata of contempt of the apex court as the update of the NRC is being done under the direct supervision of the Supreme Court.

Fresh US sanctions

FROM PAGE 16 On the streets of Tehran, a heavy police presence lingered though there were no reports of fresh protests overnight. There were some reports of small anti-government demonstrations in provincial towns, but these could not be verified. Police asked people to send photos and videos of "trouble-makers", local media reported, and to identify a number of suspects already caught on camera. It remains difficult to gauge who was involved in the unrest that began December 28, claiming 21 lives -- mostly protesters -- and leading to hundreds of arrests. President Hassan Rouhani's supporters have blamed conservative rivals for stoking anger over economic issues, which quickly grew out of control and saw attacks on security forces, government buildings and symbols of the regime. The conservatives deny the accusations and say Rouhani must do more to help the poor, with parliament already moving to repeal an unpopular fuel tax hike in his recent budget. The UN Security Council was set to hold an emergency meeting on the issue later yesterday at the request of the United States. Russia criticised the United States for calling the meeting and it remained unclear if other council members would try to block it via a procedural vote. CIA PLOT Chief prosecutor Mohamad Jafar Montazeri blamed the unrest on a plot dating back four years by the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia. "The main architect of this plan is

Michael D'Andrea," Montazeri said, referring to the head of Iran's CIA desk. "They launched (social media) campaigns with the theme of 'no to high prices', 'no to paying bills'," he said, adding that the plan was to start unrest in the provinces before moving on Tehran. Montazeri also claimed there were efforts to infiltrate the Islamic State group into the country. Nonetheless, many officials have recognised the genuine economic grievances of many Iranians, particularly a jobless rate at close to 30 percent for young people. "The people's main demand now is for the government and officials to deal with the economic problems," Ali Akbar Velayati, an adviser to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told the semi-official ISNA news agency on Thursday. Iran's economic growth rebounded to more than 12 percent last year after sanctions were lifted under a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, but analysts say much of the windfall has come from renewed oil sales that generate few jobs. The head of the army, General Abdolrahim Mousavi, thanked security forces for "putting out the fire of sedition". Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said 42,000 people had taken part in the unrest nationwide. It was higher than a previous figure of 15,000 given by the head of the Revolutionary Guards, but still far below the hundreds of thousands that took to the streets during the last major protest movement in 2009. years old. Intel (INTC) said that "for the average user," the performance impact on products using the processors from the last five years "should not be significant and will be mitigated over time." The bigger challenge appears to be for companies that deal with a lot of network traffic and considerable processing power -- things like cloud computing providers, retailers that process consumer transactions and medical systems that crunch data. Some experts say that to completely get rid of the risks created by the flaws, the affected processors need to be replaced entirely. But that's not realistically going to happen anytime soon. There aren't any processors available at the moment that can replace the vulnerable ones and still provide the same kind of functionality. Experts say that it will take years to bring to market new chips that can perform the same tasks both safely and effectively.

All iPhones, iPads, Macs

FROM PAGE 16 and tvOS 11.2. Apple will release patches in its Safari browser to help defend against Spectre "in the coming days," the company added. But it's still working on other fixes that users should look out for. "We continue to develop and test further mitigations for these issues and will release them in upcoming updates of iOS, macOS, tvOS, and watchOS," Apple said. Pointing out that the risks are likely to come from "a malicious app," Apple also advised users to download software "only from trusted sources such as the App Store." Like other big tech companies that are scrambling to deal with the problem, Apple sought also to reassure users. "There are no known exploits impacting customers at this time," it said. The Apple Watch isn't impacted by the Meltdown flaw. Researchers first announced the two flaws affecting virtually all computer processors on Wednesday. Here's the issue: Modern processors are designed to perform something called "speculative execution" to enhance performance. Data is supposed to be protected and isolated, but researchers discovered that in some cases, the information can be exposed while the processor queues it up. Researchers said almost every computing system -- desktops, laptops, smartphones, and cloud servers -- is affected by the Spectre bug. Meltdown appears to be specific to chips made by Intel. Other major companies rolling out fixes include Microsoft (MSFT), Amazon (AMZN) and Google (GOOGL). Fixing the problems will slow a computer's performance, experts say, especially on devices more than five

Comilla

FROM PAGE 16 Abu Salam Miah, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Model Police Station, said around 2:30am, the clash ensued at Sheikh Russel Hall between the supporters of Abdul Hannan, former president of the medical college unit BCL, and Habibur Rahman Palash, another former president of the unit. The college authorities formed a seven-member committee to investigate the incident and ask to submit the report within three days. They also decided to shut down the college until 11 January at an academic council meeting yesterday afternoon. Jahangir Hossain Bhuiyan, vice-principal of the institution, said tension had been prevailing between the two groups over holding a freshers' reception.