



A Rohingya girl plays with a jump rope at Thyingkhali refugee camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

4 more killed

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were brunt when they were warming themselves by the fire in different districts of Rangpur division, said Nure Alam, assistant director of the unit.

Four women are still on life support. Seven others have been referred to the burn and plastic surgery unit at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Nure Alam.

The patients are poor and those who have been referred to DMCH cannot go there due to their financial insolvency, said Maruful Islam, head of burn and plastic surgery unit at RMCH.

Mugger stabs

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village home in Gafargaon.

The mugger snatched his mobile phone, and Ibrahim chased the criminal when he was fleeing. At one stage, the mugger stabbed him indiscriminately, said the OC.

Hearing Ibrahim's screams, locals rushed to the spot and took him to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

After the incident, police arrested alleged mugger Saddam Hossain, 24, in the town's Boro Kalibari area. Saddam was being interrogated, the OC said.

Victim's brother-in-law Sarwar filed a case against Saddam with Kotwali Police Station.

Ban Jamaat

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a razakar-free parliament since 1996. The committee usually conducts campaigns ahead of the national elections at 50 parliamentary constituencies where a large number of religious minority people are voters, he added.

He said the communal forces have changed their strategy to inflict torture on the minority community people.

"In the past, they used to lead from the front. Now they engage civilian people to attack minority community members in the name of religion."

Journalist Shaheen Reza Noor called upon the government to attach special importance to ensure Jamaat's trial as an organisation.

Eminent historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon said the Nirmul Committee's movement played a key role in ensuring trial of war criminals.

He urged the government to engage citizens, who uphold the spirit of the Liberation War, in the process of ensuring trial of anti-liberation forces like the Jamaat.

Shafiqur Rahman, president of Jatiya Press Club, called upon the journalist community to come under one umbrella and uphold the spirit of the Liberation War through their writings.

Speaking about the Rohingya crisis, security expert Maj Gen Abdul Rashid (ret'd) said Myanmar has to solve the crisis for its own interest. For Bangladesh, it would be easier to work bilaterally on the issue, he observed.

Addressing the programme as chief guest, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said the government was committed to ensure the trial of war criminals.

He called upon the people to keep faith in the Awami League, saying that the government already ensured convictions of some war criminals and would continue trying the perpetrators of war crimes.

Former Supreme Court judge Justice Shamsul Huda also spoke at the programme.

Target bigger fair

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These are: single unit, double unit, triple unit, quadruple unit and pavilion, he said.

He added that around 100 organisations, including government institutions, research institutions, Bangabandhu Parishad, special organisations like braille, e-books, little magazine corner and Bangla Academy, will have space inside the academy.

The rest will be provided space in Suhrawardy Udyan, said Jalal.

Publishers and authors said the book fair is a place which helps create new authors and poets.

When publishers are busy with the final prints of new books, budding authors are hoping to have a good sale of their books at the fair.

War crimes researcher Mofidul Hoque said participation of more publishing houses and use of digital medium for publishing books were good signs.

However, the organisers have to think about more access of book lovers to the fair and ensure how people all over the country can get their books published at the fair.

Also the publisher of Sahitya Prakash, Mofidul said this year they would publish 15 to 20 books, mainly non-fiction, on the Liberation War and sociopolitical issues.

Farid Ahmed, publisher of Shomoy Prakashani, said alongside publishing some noted authors' books, they would promote young writers and poets by publishing their books.

It will bring to the fair around 70 new books in about 20 categories, including non-fiction, research work, Liberation War, Sci-fi, poetry and fiction.

He said the organisers should decorate the stalls in a way so that readers could easily find the books they want.

The most significant part of the book fair is that it creates new readership each year when the book-reading culture is declining. Another thing is that it helps readers get local writers' books, said academicien Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam.

"A book fair can reflect a society's reading culture. In this sense, Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has tremendous significance in our culture," he said.

He added that schools and colleges across the country should come forward and join the Bangla Academy in promoting reading habit of students.

The month-long fair will fulfill the expectations of book lovers, he hoped.

"The fair ground has to be easily accessible while sufficient meeting place has to be there for interaction of readers and authors."

BNP slams govt's 'inaction'

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months the DNCC mayoral by-polls after hearing two separate writ petitions.

As per the election schedule, the by-polls were slated for February 26.

The DNCC mayoral post fell vacant with the death of Annisul Huq on November 30 last year.

Fakhrul said the Election Commission also demonstrated its "incompetence and failure" by announcing the schedule for the by-polls without completing all the necessary activities.

About the 11th parliamentary polls, he said the government must reach an understanding through talks with political parties for holding the election in a fair and credible manner.

"If a level-playing field is not created and Khaleda Zia is not freed [from political cases], a credible election will not be possible," Fakhrul added.

Speaking at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club, Moudud said had the government been sincere for holding the by-polls, it would have moved to the Supreme Court's Appellate Division challenging the HC order.

"But they're inactive over the issue. It appears that the High Court order is a permanent one, and no appeal can be made against it. Their silence has manifested that the government and the Election Commission agreed on the stay order," he observed.

Jagpa Chhatra League arranged the programme.

The BNP leader also alleged that the government was unwilling to hold the DNCC by-polls in fear of losing the polls race.

Moudud, also a former law minister, said the government could still appeal against the stay order if it really wanted to hold the by-polls.

He also came down hard on Attorney General Mahubey Alam for not appearing before the HC during the hearing on the writs seeking stay on the by-polls.

"Our attorney general is a very active man to protect the interest of his party and the government. Even, he appears before the court over the issue of a ruling party-backed union parishad chairman or a member. But

he was not present at the court for two consecutive days during the hearing on the writ," Moudud said.

He said the attorney general avoided the hearing on a very important case as the government wanted the court to give the stay order.

The BNP leader also alleged that the EC lawyer also played an inactive role in this regard as it wanted such an order from the court.

Taiwan blocks China flights after route row

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan has blocked nearly 200 flights by Chinese airlines over the strait that separates the two rivals due to the carriers' use of controversial new travel routes introduced by China.

Taipei has repeatedly called for four new flight paths to be cancelled since China launched them earlier in January, but their complaints have fallen on deaf ears on the mainland.

Authorities on the island said they had not been consulted over the routes and described their introduction as "reckless", endangering flight safety, and politically motivated.

China Eastern Airlines and Xiamen Air have since requested to operate 176 additional flights between Taiwan and China during the Lunar New Year period in mid-February.

But Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) said Friday it had refused permission because the two airlines had been using the controversial new routes, even though the extra Lunar New Year flights they requested would not have flown along them.

It is the first action taken against Chinese airlines over the row.

"The two airlines' requests are not approved for now because they are operating other flights using the M503 and related routes that are launched without a consensus between the two sides," a CAA official told AFP.

Elderly man

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There was a rooftop bridal party of a relative of another tenant, Altaf Hossain, of the building in RK Mission Road on Thursday night.

"As the music got louder around 12:00am, my father was feeling sick and told them to stop it immediately," she said.

Later, the victim's brother Nasimul Haque Nibir, a private bank official, went to request Altaf to stop the music. The two had an altercation, although Altaf later stopped the music, said Bashir Uddin, caretaker of the house.

Then around 11:30am yesterday, Altaf and his family members went to the victim's flat on the eighth floor to have a talk with Nibir. The victim's family asked them to go to the basement of the building, saying they will talk there.

An altercation broke out as soon as the two groups gathered and there was a lot of pushing, shoving and punching, said Bashir.

"At one point, Nazimul came down. But he too received some blows," he added.

He was taken to a nearby hospital after he fell down, but doctors there declared him dead.

Four people, including Altaf, have been arrested over the incident, said Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Wari Police Station.

"The CCTV footage shows Nazimul Haque falling to the ground after receiving punches and blows from Altaf and his relatives," he added.

Wari police said the victim's son filed a murder case with the police station against 10 people, including seven named.

Rise in attacks

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last year. Of them, over 104 were either murdered or found dead and 325 injured.

Besides, at least 15 women were gang-raped, 18 were raped, and 11 became victims of attempted rape that year, said the report prepared based on newspaper reports.

Terming such communal attacks barbarous, Sultana said, "On average, three incidents of violence took place every day last year. If there was no culture of impunity and delay in trials, such incidents would not have happened."

The main objective of the country's independence was to ensure the rights of all citizens irrespective of race, religion and cast as mentioned in the constitution, she told the programme while speaking as the chief guest.

"But the religious and ethnic minority people and those having differing views face severe violence from a group of people. It seems Bangladesh has been becoming shrunken gradually [due to the activities of that group]."

The minority community members, especially the women, should get united and raise their voice to resist such violence and ensure their rights, said Sultana, also an adviser of a former caretaker government.

Rana Dasgupta said communal forces and militancy have emerged in the country. "Many political parties formed unities with them at different times due to politics of vote."

Even the textbooks have been communalised under pressure from the forces, he complained, adding that thousands of people did not lay down their lives during the Liberation War in 1971 for these reasons.

The Mohila Oikya Parishad President Jayanti Roy, General Secretary Priya Shaha and its former president Sabitri Bhattacharya also spoke, among others.

Tigers reach new peak

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on the Sri Lankan bowlers to post 320 for seven in 50 overs, their second-highest against Sri Lanka.

Tamim and Anamul Haque added 71 runs for the opening stand, but the latter survived three chances -- two catches and a stumping -- before finally being dismissed on 35 off 37 balls when he was caught behind attempting to pull a Thisara Perera bouncer.

A compact Tamim did not lose his concentration, despite copping a couple of blows to his helmet from short deliveries, and started to pace his innings after a watchful start. He reached his second consecutive fifty, during which he struck two consecutive straight sixes off Asela Gunaratne in the 24th over.

After Anamul's dismissal in the 15th over, he paired up with Shakib and both batsman kept the attacking mode on, adding 99 runs for the second wicket before Tamim was caught behind off Akila Dananjaya on a review after the umpire initially turned down the appeal. The left-hander scored 84 off 102 balls with seven fours and two sixes.

Shakib, dealing deftly with short deliveries and never holding back from scoring opportunities, also reached his fifty and added 57 runs with Mushfiqur for the third wicket before giving a return catch to Asela Gunaratne and departing for a 63-ball 67 which featured seven fours.

Mushfiqur continued, and added the fourth half-century stand of the innings with Mahmudullah Riyad, who scored a quick 24 before holing out in the 46th over. Having scored 62 off 51 balls with four fours and a six, Mushfiqur was bowled by Thisara Perera in an attempt to raise the run rate in the next over. Perera managed to pull the run rate back slightly with well-directed yorkers, before a cameo

from Sabbir Rahman, who struck a 12-ball 24 including 19 runs in the last over, helped take the Tigers to a sizeable total.

In defence, Bangladesh came out with a collective approach as off-spinner Nasir Hossain opened the bowling and, after a maiden from skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, removed Sri Lanka's highest scorer of the previous game Kusal Perera as the left-hander came down the track only to miss the line of the ball, which went on to hit the timber in the first ball of the third over.

Mashrafe opened the innings from the other end and bowled brilliantly, concentrating on a tight channel which unsettled Upul Tharanga as he went for a big shot in the 10th over but only found Mahmudullah at mid-off after scoring 25.

Kusal Mendis, who never looked comfortable dealing with the bouncers after one from Rubel Hossain struck his helmet, was the second victim of Mashrafe when he was caught at mid-off after scoring 19 as Sri Lanka were struggling on 62 for three inside 14 overs.

The batting side were never able to recover from the early damage and the rest was up to the player-of-the-match, Shakib, who first ran out skipper Dinesh Chandimal (28) with a direct hit and then picked up three wickets for 47 runs from eight overs. At one point the left-arm spinner was sitting on a hattrick, having dismissed Asela Gunaratne and Wanindu Hasaranga in consecutive deliveries in the 26th over.

Pacers Mustafizur Rahman and Rubel Hossain also played their parts, picking up one and two wickets respectively. Thisara Perera's 14-ball 29, with 20 of those coming off a Shakib over that ended in him holing out to long off, was the highest score in Sri Lanka's dismal 157 all out.

Ivy 'stable'

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said Prof Baren Chakraborty, senior consultant cardiologist at the hospital.

Asked about the cause of the haemorrhage, the doctor said, "It is very difficult to say. We are not going into that."

Replying to a query, he said Ivy's only problem is that she is having difficulties in recalling many past events.

Such patients remain stable. But the problem is that bleeding may start again within three to four days in some cases, he said.

Ivy will be kept under observation at the hospital for three to four days, Baren said, adding that she has no heart problems.

The doctors will conduct another CT scan on her today.

NO CASES Filed

No case has been filed in connection with Tuesday's mayhem even four days after the incident, reports Our Narayanganj correspondent.

On Wednesday, Ivy said she would take legal steps against the attackers, alleging that an attempt was made to kill her from just two yards away.

But she suddenly fell ill the following day, and was brought to the Labaid Hospital from Narayanganj.

Neither Ivy nor anyone on her behalf filed any case over the clash. Osman, or his supporters or even the hawkers didn't go to police to lodge any complaints either.

Police are yet to arrest anyone even though Jubo League leader Niazul Islam, loyal to Osman, and several others were seen brandishing firearms during the clash.

Police yesterday said they were examining the video clips and photos of those who carried firearms during the clash.

Narayanganj Additional Superintendent of Police (admin)

Big blow to AAP

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filed by lawyer Prashant Patel sought the disqualification of the MLAs on the grounds that they were holding an 'office of profit' as parliamentary secretaries.

The MLAs' pleas that the case against them be dropped were rejected by the EC in June 2017.

In August 2017, the MLAs appealed to the Delhi high court asking it to not allow the EC taking up the Delhi lawyer's petition. They argued that their appointments to the post of parliamentary secretary were already quashed, in 2016.

In turn, the Delhi high court said it couldn't accept the MLAs' plea, because the EC hadn't at the time begun to hear the issue.

With the AAP in crisis, the Congress and BJP promptly mounted stinging attacks on the Delhi government and asked Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to quit too.

Chief Minister Kejriwal will be firmly in the seat even after losing 30 per cent of his lawmakers when the presidential approval to the Election Commission's recommendation comes in.

So the opposition strategy in Delhi is to underscore the office of profit clause to dent the credibility of the national capital's ruling party.

"Arvind Kejriwal has no right to

continue", Ajay Maken, the Delhi Congress president who was also among the first to campaign against AAP lawmakers, accusing them of violating the constitutional provision.

"Half of his cabinet ministers were removed on corruption charges. Now, 20 MLAs who were enjoying ministerial perks would be disqualified," Maken said.

The lawmakers of the Aam Aadmi Party face disqualification after the Election Commission told the President that they had violated the constitutional provision that bars a lawmaker from holding any post in the government that is capable of yielding a profit. In principle, the office of profit provision seeks to ensure that legislators are not influenced by the executive and it does not matter if they profited from the office. An entitlement to get a salary or perks is enough for disqualification.

At the BJP's national headquarters a few kilometres away, a similar argument was presented by the BJP that fielded Sambit Patra.

"15 AAP MLAs of have cases against them. Few are on bail and some of the MLAs are in jail. Shouldn't Mr Arvind Kejriwal resign?" Mr Patra said, counting AAP among the country's most corrupt parties and its leader Arvind Kejriwal, an autocrat.