



Firemen working on the site of a train derailment near Milan on Thursday. Three people were killed and 10 seriously injured when a packed regional train derailed near Milan in northern Italy, emergency services said.

PHOTO: AFP

Criminals kill 3

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His business rivals in the area were trying to capture the business and threatened him several times to quit. Two months ago they cut off the internet cable of Jahangir's business to mount pressure on him, he alleged. Police said they were looking for the suspects. In Feni, a Chhatra League activist was hacked to death on Thursday. Criminals attacked Md Shakil, 18, an HSC candidate of Joynal Hazari College, with knives near Zohiria Mosque on Shaheed Shahidullah Kaiser Road in the town in the evening. He was first taken to Feni Sadar Hospital and then to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he died.

He said Ibrahim might be a victim of mugging. However, police recovered Tk 1.30 lakh and a mobile phone from Ibrahim's possession. After being stabbed, Ibrahim ran for his life all by himself as there was no one around. With blood oozing out from his body, he managed to reach the nearby Salahuddin Specialised Hospital in Tikatuli area around 4:30am. He died there within an hour. "We are yet to be sure why and where Ibrahim was stabbed. Our team is working to identify the criminals," said Sohel Rana, assistant commissioner of Wari Division.

Zabed Haider, general secretary of BCL district unit, said Shakil was a member of the student organisation. Police said they were not clear about the motive behind the murder. Officer-in-Charge of Feni Sadar Model Police Station Md Rashed Khan Chowdhury said they were trying to arrest the killers.

Rights activists

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The United Nations described Myanmar's crackdown as ethnic cleansing, which Myanmar denies. "I pity her because she seems to be caught in the middle of being a Nobel Prize winner for peace and this is now the ruckus, she is heavily criticised," Duterte said in his speech. Human rights groups have also strongly criticised Duterte's anti-narcotics campaign during which more than 3,900 suspected drug users and peddlers have been killed in what the police called self-defence after armed suspects resisted arrest. Critics dispute that and say executions are taking place with zero accountability, allegations the police reject.

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Dutch police launch biggest-ever DNA hunt for boy's killer

AFP, The Hague

Dutch police yesterday launched the country's biggest ever DNA search, asking over 20,000 men to come forward as they seek to resolve the 1998 murder of a young boy. "Some 21,500 men will receive a personal invitation in February to voluntarily give DNA samples," police said in a statement. "It's the largest such DNA investigation in search of family ties ever carried out in The Netherlands." Eleven-year-old Nicky Verstappen disappeared during the night of August 9, 1998, while on a summer camp at the Brunssumerheide nature reserve, near the German border. His body was found the next evening, close to the camp site. "This large-scale DNA research comes as a final attempt to answer the question who left traces" on Nicky's clothes, the police said. They stressed the men, aged between 18 to 75, were not suspects in the murder, but could help "make a major contribution to finally shine a light on what happened to Nicky in August 1998". The police were searching to see "if the DNA donor has any family ties to the person who left traces in the place where Nicky was found." The men are all from Heibloem, where Nicky lived, and villages surrounding the nature reserve, the public broadcaster NOS said. Analysis of the DNA samples is likely to take between six to 12 months, and if any matches are found then further research will have to be carried out. Several collection points will be set up and remain open for three weeks. Since October police have been also carrying out a voluntary DNA drive among some 1,500 men who were regular visitors to the camp. But so far it has not turned up any clues.

Protesting French prison guards reject govt proposals

AFP, Paris

French prison guards yesterday pushed ahead with work stoppages and pickets after two unions turned down the government's latest offer to end a nearly two-week crisis after a series of attacks by inmates. But French President Emmanuel Macron said his justice minister Nicole Belloubet, who has been negotiating with union leaders this week to end France's worst prison blockade in 25 years, had his full support. "The minister is taking action and I'm certain she will reach a negotiated solution", Macron said Thursday. Belloubet told union chiefs that 1,500 maximum security cells would be built, and that dangerous inmates would be handcuffed and once again subject to spot cell searches. She also pledged to create 1,100 new jobs to ease the pressure on the 28,000 guards at overcrowded prisons, and at least 30 million euros (\$37 million) to increase salaries.

Trump apologises for retweeting far-right British group

AFP, London

US President Donald Trump yesterday made a rare apology over his decision to retweet anti-Muslim videos posted by a British far-right group, a move which strained tensions with London. "If you're telling me they're horrible racist people, I would certainly apologise if you'd like me to do that," he told ITV's Good Morning Britain, referring to the group Britain First. Trump sparked outrage in Britain in November with the retweet and drew a public rebuke from Prime Minister Theresa May, to which he replied angrily, souring trans-Atlantic ties. However, the two leaders met in Davos on Thursday where they agreed to press ahead with Trump's long-planned visit to Britain later this year, and the president was keen to downplay talk of a rift. "The real me is someone who loves Britain, loves the UK, I love Scotland; very special people and a very special place," he said. "I don't want to cause any difficulty for your country." Trump retweeted, in quick succession, three videos characterised as showing Islamist violence, at least one of which was found to be misleading. They were posted by Jayda Fransen, the deputy leader of Britain First who was in 2016 convicted of religiously aggravated harassment of a Muslim woman. In the interview, presenter Piers Morgan said the president caused "huge anxiety and anger in my country, because Britain First is basically a

bunch of racists, fascists". "Of course I didn't know that," Trump responded in excerpts of the interview filmed on Thursday and aired yesterday. He said: "I know nothing about them, I know nothing about them today, other than I read a little bit... Certainly I wasn't endorsing anybody." "I don't want to be involved with people (like that)," he said, adding: "I am the least racist person that anybody is going to meet." The president, known for his voracious use of Twitter, admitted: "When you do those retweets they can cause problems because you never know who's doing it to start off with." But he was less apologetic about tweeting the content of the videos, saying he believed they depicted "radical Islamic terror". "Radical Islamic terror, whether you like talking about it or not, you look at what's going on in the UK, you look at what's going on all over the world," he said. "It was done because I am a big believer in fighting radical Islamic terror." May said at the time that Trump was "wrong" to send out the tweets, further straining ties after a series of spats between the president and London mayor Sadiq Khan over terrorism. Trump hit back at May on Twitter, saying: "Don't focus on me, focus on the destructive Radical Islamic Terrorism that is taking place within the United Kingdom. We are doing just fine!"

Punish BCL men

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Several public university teachers and some leftist political leaders took part in the rally at the foot of Raju Memorial Sculpture. "The university teachers have forgotten the role of a teacher and have appeared like 'political cadres' and 'bureaucrats'. Had the teachers played their due role, such incidents would not have happened," said Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources, Power and Ports. He also called upon the university students to stand together against the injustice to overcome the present situation. Speaking at the programme, Ganasanghati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki said, "The university authorities are supposed to listen to any logical demand of the students. But during some recent incidents, we saw that they kept themselves inside the office and locked the gates to it, obstructing the students from raising their demands." He alleged that although the Chhatra League members had once stood for students' logical movements, nowadays they were being used by the university authorities to suppress any logical movement. President of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Muzahidul Islam Selim, educationist AN Rasheda, Prof Gitiana Nasreen of mass communica-

tion and journalism department and MM Akash of economics department of the DU also spoke at the programme, chaired by Imran Habib Ruman, convener of Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote. On Tuesday, several hundred BCL men from the DU attacked a group of leftist student organisations to "rescue" DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman, who was besieged by the protestors to press home a four-point demand in front of his office. At least 50 students and two journalists were injured in the attack. Meanwhile, 46 teachers of different public universities yesterday in a joint statement said the photographs and footage of the Tuesday's attack by BCL men saddened them. "The use of the pro-ruling party student body for suppressing the movement has badly tarnished the image of the university and marred its pride," the statement reads. The DU authorities didn't play an impartial role in tackling the situation, the teachers added. They said besieging the VC's office was a conventional programme and locking the main entrance to it to foil the programme was not acceptable since the entrance remained open the following day when a group of BCL men besieged the office demanding expulsion of protesting students. The teachers demanded withdrawal of cases against the protesting students.

Indonesian

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Tomorrow morning, Widodo will visit Savar National Memorial to pay homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War. He will also visit Bangabandhu Museum in the capital's Dhanmondi to pay respect to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Indonesian president will have official talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office at 10:00am tomorrow. Widodo will leave Dhaka for Afghanistan at 9:00am on Monday. The visiting president will discuss bilateral, regional and global issues, including the Rohingya crisis, during his Bangladesh visit. Hasina visited Indonesia in 2015 and 2017, and invited the Indonesian president to visit Bangladesh. In September last year, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi visited Dhaka and discussed the Rohingya issue with top Bangladeshi officials.

Sub-inspector

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After the incident, the three policemen were closed to Chittagong Police Lines. A three-member committee, led by Additional Superintendent of Police in Chittagong Mosisuddowla Reza (north), was formed to investigate the incident and asked it to submit the report by today.

Rights bodies

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They said the victim was admitted to a hospital next day, but her parents did not file any case out of fear. Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples' Forum General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong called upon the government to ensure security of all the ethnic minorities.

Oldest

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Binghamton University. "It provides the clearest evidence yet that our ancestors first migrated out of Africa much earlier than we previously believed." The fossil, named Misliya-1, "exhibits teeth that are in the upper size range of what's seen in modern humans, but that otherwise shows clear patterns and features of our species," said the report. Other archaeological evidence in the cave showed that the inhabitants hunted big game and used fire. Stone tools that were chipped in places to make them sharper were also found nearby, marking the "earliest known association of the Levallois technique with modern human fossils in the region." Older fossils of modern humans have been found in Africa, including some with similar facial characteristics excavated from the Ethiopian sites of Omo Kibish and Herto, dating to around 195,000 and 160,000 years old. Even older primitive human remains -- though still members of our species -- have been found in Morocco (315,000 years old) and South Africa (259,000 years old). In China, the human fossils known to science are younger, with fragments from the Zhiren and Daoxian Caves ranging in age from 80,000 to 113,000 years ago. But the discovery in Israel sheds new light on the routes of modern human migration out of Africa, and helps scientists better understand the evolution of our own species.

Bangladesh seek

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runs on Thursday will have an Impact on the Tigers but the Bangladesh think tank will once again go out with the same aggressive approach this time, with some caution mixed in. Tamim Iqbal's opening partner has been the biggest concern throughout the tournament as Anamul Haque was unable to utilise the opportunity, and the right-hander might have to pay the price in the final. Despite Imrul Kayes being included in the squad for the final it was learned that another wicketkeeper-batsman, Mohammad Mithun, is likely to replace Anamul in the final even though he has not gotten a game in the series so far. The seniors once again lifted the performance and morale of the side throughout the tournament but a continued over-reliance on them may backfire on the hosts. Two of the most senior members, Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan, have led from the front in all games except the last one, which saw a different Bangladesh team as none of the junior members were able to step up and take responsibility. The middle order needs to fire as the experienced Mahmudullah Riyad continued his poor run against the Lankans in the series so far, while Nasir

Hossain -- who has scored 11,3,0,2 and 3 in his last five innings -- was perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the new-look Tigers. According to sources close to the team, there are likely to be three changes from the previous game -- Nasir is set to make way for off-spinning all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz and pace bowling all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin is also expected to return in place of Abul Hasan who did not have a notable outing in the previous game. Sri Lanka will all of a sudden find themselves in a much better situation after the commanding win. Chandika Hathurusingha will surely come up with a specific plan to upset the Tigers and they are expected to retain the team that won the last league game handsomely. One of the most crucial aspects, which will perhaps keep Sri Lanka guessing, will be the pitch in Mirpur which has had variable pace and bounce. It won't be surprising if the home side comes up with something out of the box when it comes to preparing the pitch. However, as Mashrafe said before the start of the series, they will want to be smart but not over-smart when it comes to making strategies to surprise the opponent. Only time will tell who comes out with a smile in the end.

Trump ordered

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Trump attorney Ty Cobb told AFP: "We decline to comment out of respect for the Office of the Special Counsel and its process." But Trump had no such scruples about commenting as he arrived at a conference center in the snowbound Swiss mountain resort yesterday. The president had told journalists in August that he had not considered firing Mueller, some two months after he reportedly had moved to do just that. "I haven't given it any thought. I mean, I've been reading about it from you people, you say, 'Oh, I'm gonna dismiss him.' No, I'm not dismissing anybody," Trump said. According to the Times, Trump had accused Mueller of three conflicts of interest that he argued disqualified him from running the Russia collusion investigation. They were as follows: Mueller had terminated his membership at a Trump golf course over a dispute about fees, had worked for the law firm that previously represented the president's son-in-law Jared Kushner, and had been interviewed to return as FBI director before he was appointed special counsel. Democratic Senator Mark Warner, the vice chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said Thursday that firing Mueller would be a "red line." The day before, Trump for the first time directly said that he would cooperate with Mueller under oath, whose investigation he had previously dismissed as a "witch hunt." In a separate development, Facebook Inc said Russian agents created 129 events on the social media network during the 2016 US election campaign, according to testimony to Congress, shedding more light on Russia's purported disinformation drive aimed at voters. Facebook, in a written statement to US lawmakers released on Thursday and dated Jan 8, said that 338,300

RUSSIA PROBE
Dutch spies watched as Russians hacked US Democrats: report
Facebook says Russian agents created 129 US election events
different Facebook accounts viewed the events and that 62,500 marked that they would attend. The company said it did not have data about which of the events took place. Facebook, the world's largest social media network, said in September only that Russians had created "several promoted events." Copies of the event pages that have surfaced since then show that at least some of them were political rallies centered on divisive subjects, such as immigration. Facebook delivered the details to Congress this month in response to written questions from the US Senate Intelligence Committee. Facebook said that it had found "overlap" between the online marketing done in 2016 by Russian agents and by President Donald Trump's campaign and called it "insignificant." Meanwhile, Dutch media yesterday reported that Dutch intelligence services have provided "crucial evidence" to US counterparts about Russian meddling in the 2016 elections. After penetrating the network of Russian hackers known as Cozy Bear, the Dutch agents alerted US spy chiefs as they watched the Russians transfer "thousands" of Democratic Party emails ahead of the presidential vote. The Dutch national intelligence service (AIVD) had been watching the notorious group since 2014, according to the respected Volkskrant daily, and a Dutch TV news programme Nieuwsuur. They have provided "crucial evidence of the Russian involvement" as well as "technical" proof in the hacking of the US Democratic Party, the reports said, citing anonymous US and Dutch sources.