Another dies

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In 2010, a court banned the use of machines in Jaflong and stated that stones may only be collected manu-

After two years, in 2012, another judgement deemed illegal a bridge, which was built by stone traders in Jaflong for smooth transportation of the stones.

The court also asked the authorities concerned to classify a 15km area in Jaflong as Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs).

In an ECA, stone collection, whether manual or through machines, is banned altogether. Both these judgements were made following writ petitions filed by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyer's Association (BELA).

It took the authorities concerned three years after which a gazette was finally published in 2015 to deem 14.93km area in Jaflong as an ECA. However, three years on, the government is yet to mark the ECA bound-

Watermelons

FROM PAGE 16

a difficult commute to the field as rickshaws or vans do not want to ply the unpaved roads."

Despite all the hard work and meticulous preparations, it is quite possible that the vines do not bear fruits. "This risk always remains for us watermelon farmers," he added.

Omker Biswas, upazila agriculture officer, Mahalchhari, said they give training in the techniques of growing watermelons and preventing diseases. "Farmers in this region are quite zealous and have made the almost impossible possible."

"Watermelons are typically planted at the end of January and harvested in summer. But these early watermelons need extra care for preventing diseases."

Farmers in the area are eligible to receive loans to grow other conventional fruits, oilseeds and spices. If such a facility was available to produce seasonal crops like watermelon, it would help the marginal farmers

Abul Kalam, deputy director of DAE Khagrachhari, said, "We encourage farmers to grow a variety of crops, in addition to the main crops. Although there is a risk of the vines not bearing fruit, watermelons earn more money for the farmers."

Myanmar opens murder probe after men found 'shot' in head

REUTERS, Yangon

Myanmar police yesterday said they had opened a murder investigation into the killing of two men that residents say appeared to have been shot in the head after they were detained by soldiers in the conflict-torn north of the country.

Residents say the men were ethnic Kachin farmers who were living in camps for people displaced by conflict in Maing Hkawng, a village about 30 km (20 miles) from Myanmar's border with China.

More than 100,000 have been forced from their villages since a ceasefire between Myanmar's army and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) broke down in 2011.

The northern conflict is separate from the Rohingya crisis stemming from western Rakhine state but the military's campaign has similarly been beset by allegations of abuses against civilians.

Ethnic Kachin men Hpaugan Yaw, 65, and Nhkum Naw San, 35, had been missing since they were taken away by the military on Jan. 31, according to residents and campaign group Fortify Rights, which interviewed two witnesses to their deten-

A shallow grave containing two bodies was discovered on Thursday by a civilian search party in a forest near Maing Khawng, in Kachin state's Mansi township. Authorities visited the grave on Friday and a doctor

conducted an autopsy on the bodies. "The case has been filed at Mansi police station under section 302 (of Myanmar's Penal Code), a murder charge," said Thura Myo Naung, a spokesman for police in Kachin state who declined to comment further

other than to say police were investigating. The Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement posted on its Facebook

page the bodies had "penetration wounds on the left cheek" and the backs of their heads had "exploded". The men went missing while herd-

ing buffalo, according to a missing persons complaint filed on Feb. 5, said the statement, which did not mention the alleged involvement of soldiers.



Locals inside a stone pit trying to see if anyone else had been buried alive after sliding earth from the edge of the pit killed an illegal quarry miner in Jaflong of Sylhet yesterday. At least 21 people have been killed in such quarries of Sylhet this year. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Tigers rediscover

FROM PAGE 1

down to deep cover for two runs. The next ball was a wide off-stump yorker that the little right-hander smashed over point for four. This time he did not wield his willow like he did against India in a way as if victory had been achieved. He checked his attacking instincts and emotions and drove the next ball to wide mid-on and initially thought of taking a single. But a misfield allowed him to regain the strike with Bangladesh needing one run from the last three deliveries. He pushed the fourth ball softly to the vacant mid-wicket region before bursting into wild celebrations. He also did a bit of the snake dance, perhaps in an attempt to show how insulting it was when the Lankans did it after their 2-0 T20I series win in Sylhet last month.

Mushfigur was unconquered on a 35-ball 72 as Bangladesh posted their first 200-plus score in T20Is and completed their highest run-chase in the shortest format -- they scored 215 for five in 19.4 overs in chase of Sri Lanka's 214 for six. It was more than just a win for the Tigers after a dismal run of form across all formats since the sudden departure of their coach Chandika Hathurusingha after the South Africa series last year.

After this win Bangladesh are now on equal footing with Sri Lanka and India -- all have one win each going into the return legs.

four fours and five sixes in a flawless innings which saw him score the second-fastest half-century by a Bangladeshi.

After rain stopped just in time to guarantee a game, stand-in Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad thought it would be wise to bowl on the rainsoaked pitch. But hosts Sri Lanka had other ideas in mind and they showered a different type of rain with the two Kusals -- Mendis (57 off 30 balls) and Perera (74 off 47 balls) leading the run-fest on a beautiful wicket.

Refreshingly, the Tigers more than matched that with a downpour of their own. Opening the innings with Tamim Iqbal, right-handed Liton Das smashed a 19-ball 43 with five sixes and a couple of boundaries as Bangladesh scored 74 in the first six Powerplay overs. Tamim also struck a belligerent 47 off 29 balls as Bangladesh reached 103 for 2 after ten overs, from which point they never looked back.

The introduction of Liton in place of Soumya Sarkar was a master-stroke

Four Mali soldiers were killed on

Friday when their vehicle ran over a

road mine in the central town of

Dialloube as they returned from an

operation against jihadists, military

tary operation against the jihadists'

main base in Dialloube, where ten

terrorists were neutralised, an army

vehicle drove over a mine, killing four

soldiers," said a military source at the

the deaths, adding that two other

activities in central Mali in recent

months, targeting domestic and for-

soldiers were seriously injured.

A foreign military source confirmed

Jihadists have ramped up their

"Returning from a successful mili-

AFP, Bamako

sources told AFP.

defence ministry.

Four Mali troops

killed by landmine

from the Bangladesh team management. The right-hander not only evocatively neutralised the off-spin of Akila Dhananjaya early in the innings, but also showed his quality as a clean hitter of the ball. Tamim also played beautifully in an opening stand that scored 74 runs in the first six Powerplay overs.

Earlier, the home side walloped their way to a massive 214 for six in their share of 20 overs in what was the third game of the Nidahas Trophy T20I tri-series. They were just short of what they did against India in the first six Powerplay overs. They stroked 70, five runs shy of their exploits against India, against a three-pronged Bangladesh pace attack. Rubel Hossain went for runs and so did an otherwise miserly Mustafizur Rahman, who took the wicket of Danuska Gunathilaka (26).

However, the listless among the trio was Taskin Ahmed, who went for a staggering 22 runs in his second over. Kusal Mendis started from where he had left off in Sylhet last month, when the Lankans sealed the two-match T20I series 2-0. The right-hander scored a 30-ball 57 that contained five sweetly timed sixes and a couple of boundaries before becoming one of the two quick victims of Mahmudullah's off-spin.

Left-hander Kusal Perera then stepped up to more than match his fabulous 66 against India, a match that his side won by five wickets last week. The pocket-size dynamo smashed Perera struck a 48-ball 74 studded with eight fours and two sixes. He was dismissed in the final over, mistiming a cutter from Mustafizur. But by that time the Lankans crossed the 200-run mark.

Upul Tharanga provided the late spark with a 15-ball 32. Mustafizur picked up three wickets for 48 runs while Taskin went for 40 runs in his three overs and Rubel conceded 45 in his four overs. Interestingly, Mahmudullah with two for 15 in his two overs was the most economical among the Bangladesh bowlers.

Anti-terror

FROM PAGE 2

to the restive north.

vehicle in central Mali.

operation launched in January 2013.

In June 2015, Mali's government

signed a peace agreement with coali-

tions of armed groups. But the

jihadists remain active, and large tracts

of the country are lawless.

to bear fruit.

the ATU unit will also have an additional DIG and eight superintendents of police. Initially, the ATU will use the build-

ing constructed recently for CITC unit on the Detective Branch office premises in the capital.

It will move to Agargaon after completion of its own high-rise buildings on two-acre government land there, it will move there, said the ATU chief.

His greed

taking the money, saying he needed it badly and will return the amount to the family.

Asked if he used money as bribe for getting the job, Al Amin replied in the negative.

He also said he divorced his wife last month for her "misbehavior". "As I was not happy with her, I

divorced her on February 26 [this year]," he said, denied demanding another Tk 5 lakh. Along with the complaint,

Jannatul submitted the stamped

paper that Al Amin signed while receiving the money, said her lawyer Abdur Rouf. According to the document, he received Tk 5 lakh on February 2, 2014 and the rest on March 18 that

year. A photocopy of the paper has been obtained by this correspondent. The case statement also mentioned that the accused drove her away on December 14, 2017 from her in-laws'

Since then she has been staying with her parents in Paikarihat village in Santhia. She has not received any divorce notice, she said.

Nasrin Nahar, mother of the complainant, said they knew dowry was illegal but they gave him the money for the sake of their daughter's happiness.

"Although illegal, I have done it for my daughter's happiness. But after getting the job, Al Amin changed. He was trying to get rid of my daughter and began to torture her," she said.

Mother, son

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house.

Monju was sleeping along with her three children.

The fire soon engulfed the entire house and damaged two other adjoining houses, police added.

Officer-in-Charge of Satkania Police Station Md Rafiqul Hossain who visited the spot said the mother might have forgotten to put out the stove.

The ill-fated mother and son were trapped inside as the door also caught fire. Neighbours were able to pull out Monju's daughters Purnima Shil, 17, and Protima Shil, 14, got out through a window, the OC said.

Purnima's legs were burnt and she was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH), he added.

Sources in the Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters at Agrabad said one fire engine rushed to the spot and was able to extinguish the blaze around 12:30am.

Just society key to fighting militancy

Say eminent personalities at a book launch

event.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would have to ensure good governance and just society to prevent the rise of militancy and fundamentalist forces, eminent personalities said at a programme yesterday. They also said the progressive forces

would get no benefit from compromising with fundamentalist forces. Bangladesh Economic Society

organised the programme to launch

the book of Prof Abul Barkat titled Bangladesh-e Moulobad [Fundamentalism in Bangladesh]. Speaking as chief guest, language

movement veteran Ahmad Rafique in his speech said imperialist forces were the main patronisers of fundamentalist forces. He said to combat fundamentalist

forces "we will have to give proper education to our children from family level so that they can grow up as real human beings".

Noted jurist M Ameer-Ul Islam in his speech said a knowledge-based society has to be built to get rid of the curse of fundamentalism as the current politicians have failed to tackle the problem.

Former chairman Mizanur Rahman of National Human Rights Commission said, "We want to know from the state what actions it has taken against the militants."

He claimed that different law enforce-

ment agencies were being used for tack-

28 Bangladeshis

"We had the location under surveil-

media reports on the issue.

lance since 3:00pm on Thursday

"We found that seven different

companies were simultaneously carry-

ing out the homestay business without

Foreigners who ran the companies,

"The rooms are then rented out for

"All of the detainees have been held

He also said the people, who worked

for not having any proper travel docu-

there, did not have permission to work

Department on January 12 detained a

On the same day, the immigration

department of the country, after weeks

of surveillance, raided a house in Shah

occupying it were mostly blacklisted

Jakarta, Indonesia and then took a

boat to enter Malaysia illegally.

film director was detained by the

They had travelled from Dhaka to

In December, 2017, a Bangladeshi

Malaysian police for alleged trafficking

on the pretext of organising a cultural

Alam and found 50 Bangladeshis

by the department.

and the service was advertised online.

Bangladeshi expatriate in a raid for

allegedly running a trafficking gang.

Malaysian Immigration

rented up to 20 apartments for run-

as low as Rm 150 and payments are

ning their businesses, he said.

FROM PAGE 1

permits."

before moving in.

only made in cash.

ments," he said.

ling political opponents of the government rather than dealing with militancy. Professor Kamrul Hasan Khan, vicechancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said there

would be no results if the country's progressive forces compromised with fundamentalist forces. He said there was "no unity among the progressive forces". Professionals

and civil society members come forward when political leaders fail to work as per the people's expectations.

Noted cultural personality Mamunur Rashid, Chairman of Dhaka University Economics Department Shafiq Uz Zaman, Director General of Islamic Foundation Shamim Mohammad Afzal, former president of Bangladesh Economic Association Prof Moinul Islam also spoke at the programme.

Macron, Modi sign

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concerned about seismic activity in the area and fears about the safety of nuclear power in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan.

Earlier in the day, Macron talked about his personal rapport with Modi which was established after their meeting in Paris last year.

"Ithink we have very good chemistry, our two great democracies have a historic relationship," the French president said.

Modi broke protocol to receive Macron at the airport, exchanging warm hugs and robust handshakes.

"You welcomed me in Paris last year with an open heart and a lot of warmth. I am happy that I have got an opportunity to welcome you in India," Modi said at the start of his speech yesterday.

Today, Macron will attend a solar power summit designed to showcase India and France's commitment to fighting climate change, which both leaders have made a priority.

Travelling with his wife Brigitte, France's 40-year-old president will also visit the monument to love, the Taj Mahal, a few hours drive from the Indian capital on Sunday.

Tomorrow, he heads to the chaotic Hindu holy city of Varanasi on the banks of the river Ganges, which the Indian premier has promised to modernise and clean up.

Macron's visit comes after a somewhat misstep-laden visit to India by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Both he and Macron are often compared internationally because of their broadly similar political views,

as well as youth and good looks. But Trudeau's visit hit a series of embarrassing bumps and he received a fairly cool reception during

his stay in India. Trudeau was pilloried on social media and in the Canadian press for donning traditional Indian clothing at every opportunity.



Ghouta region on the outskirts of the capital Damascus yesterday. Syrian regime forces cut off the largest town in Eastern Ghouta from the rest of the opposition enclave in a blow to beleaguered rebels defending their last bastion near Damascus. PHOTO: AFP

Smoke billows following Syrian government bombardment on the rebel-controlled town of Misraba, in the eastern