

# UN peacekeepers attacked by armed group in Central African Republic

UN peacekeepers on patrol in the Central African Republic exchanged fire with members of an armed group in a Muslim enclave of the capital Bangui, the United Nations said yesterday.

The peacekeepers were fired at in the Muslim rebel bastion called PK5, home to several armed groups and they responded, said Herve Verhoosel, spokesman for the UN peacekeeping mission known by its initials MINUSCA.

The attack occurred Saturday evening and "clearly the target was the peacekeeping troops," he added.

The armed groups operating in the PK5 area have taken advantage of the weakness of the state since the end of a sectarian conflict pitting mainly Muslim rebels against nominally Christian militias.

# Rein in graft

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officers could not work together, it would not be possible to tackle corruption.

Among others, barrister M Amir-UL Islam, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, former minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan) Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder spoke in the seminar.

Former rector of BPATC AZM Shafiqul Alam presented the keynote paper while Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, president of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, moderated the seminar.

# Khaleda

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head of orthopedic department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, also chief of the four-member board.

"She [Khaleda] already had some complications and she has developed some new problems. But her overall condition is not critical," he told The Daily Star.

He declined to give any details about her condition, but said they gave her some advice.

The three other board members are Prof Mansur Habib (neurology), Prof Titu Miah (medicine) and Prof Sohely Rahman (psychical medicine), all from the DMCH.

The team will hold a meeting with the hospital authorities today and then decide about providing her treatment, said DMCH Director AKM Nasiruddin.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Mohammed Nasim yesterday said they were enquiring about Khaleda's health all the time and took all necessary measures for her treatment.

Nasim, also an Awami League presidium member, urged the BNP not to spread "rumors" about Khaleda's health.

On Friday, the BNP expressed concern over Khaleda's health condition and demanded that the government immediately allow her personal physicians to examine her.

The party has also called for Khaleda's release from jail for better treatment at home or abroad.

The former prime minister landed in jail on February 8, after a Dhaka court sentenced her to five years' in prison in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case.

# Hasina, Modi

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extremism and terrorism, said sources in Bangladesh and India.

They said New Delhi fears violent incidents in Bangladesh ahead of the elections which could spill over.

The Indian foreign secretary would seek Dhaka's opinion on what steps could be taken for socio-economic development in Rakhine State for a sustainable solution to the crisis, they said.

Indian diplomatic sources said India is ready to assist Myanmar in building houses in Rakhine to help Bangladesh and Myanmar implement the process of repatriation and rehabilitation of the Rohingyas.

# Rape accused killed in 'shootout'

STAR REPORT

Two people including a fugitive accused of raping a five-year-old girl in Cox's Bazar were killed in "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in the last two days.

Abdur Rahim, 20, accused of raping the girl at Chakaria upazila on March 26 was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab early yesterday, reports our correspondent in Cox's Bazar.

The incident occurred in Ulubania area adjacent to Katakhal Bridge under Dulahazara union around 12:30am.

Company Commander Maj Md Ruhul Amin of Rab's Cox's Bazar camp said criminals opened fire on a patrol team of the elite force. The crime busters returned the fire and drove away the criminals.

The Rab team recovered bullet-hit body of Rahim, one shooter-gun, three bullets and two empty cartridges from the spot.

Police and local sources said Rahim, son of Akhter Ahmed of Ulubania area, lured the girl to a secluded room and raped her. The victim was later rescued and taken to Chakaria Upazila Health Complex. As her condition deteriorated, on duty doctors sent her to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital.

The victim's grandfather filed a case with Chakaria police on March 28.

The locals said several allegations of abusing women against Rahim had earlier been settled through arbitrations.

In Bagerhat, a middle-aged man named Haider Ali was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab at Rampal on Saturday night.

The Rab could not give detailed iden-

ity of the man of around 50, reports our Bagerhat Correspondent.

Rab-8 Deputy Commander Maj Sajibul Islam said preparations were being taken for surrender of three Sundarbans robber gangs before Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal scheduled for yesterday.

As part of that, a Rab team went to Sapmari area to bring the robbers when a group of criminals opened fire on them in the dark.

The Rab also retaliated, he said, adding, after about 10 minutes, the criminals retreated and a bullet-hit body was recovered from the area. Locals later identified the body as Haider Ali.

Several weapons and bullets were recovered from the spot.

# BNP to join Khulna

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Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office.

The meeting also discussed the country's present political situation.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman spoke at the meeting over mobile phone. He urged all to stay united on the movement to have BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia released.

Party sources said the BNP leaders would sit again on Friday.

Around 100 leaders were present in yesterday's meeting and discussed the party's next course of action.

Seeking anonymity, a senior BNP leader said all the leaders agreed that the party's unity would have to be maintained at any cost and there would be no compromise with Khaleda getting released.

Fakhru told journalists that they

decided to take part in the elections to intensify the ongoing movement to free Khaleda.

The party will take part in the polls to continue the democratic process, he said.

On Saturday, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda declared the elections schedule for Gazipur and Khulna city corporations.

According to the schedule, the deadline for submitting nomination papers is April 12, while the dates for scrutinising those are April 15 and 16. The last date for withdrawing nominations is April 23.

In 2013, BNP candidates Moniruzzaman Moni and Prof MA Mannan were elected mayors in Khulna and Gazipur city corporations respectively.

# The fragmented land

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were all inspired by the Islamic State propaganda. It was July 1, 2016.

More than a decade ago on a bright spring day in 2004, as Shias had been celebrating their holy month in Karbala, bombs went off, killing 140 people. Al-Qaeda was responsible for the attack.

Stories of similar brutal attacks keep popping up from Baghdad to Paris to Germany to New York to London to Syria to Egypt.

The fact remains, all this was predicted and warned about much earlier. And all the intelligence warnings were ignored by the US and UK when they launched the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The world has changed since then, probably forever.

As a direct result of the Iraq war, the Middle East today lies fragmented with sectarian violence erupting everywhere. The Iraq war has suddenly stoked up the festering schism between the Shia and Sunni Muslims, the seed of which was sowed in the early years of Islam.

As a fallout of the war, the IS has grown and gained in power before being crushed recently, and al-Qaeda has found new breeding grounds and targets.

This one war has touched almost every nation on the map, in one way or another. The world today is a much unsafe place to live in than the illusory "stability" the US administration had sought in the Arab region through the invasion.

The other casualties of the war are the moral high ground that the West and the UN claimed after the Second World War. The West that had formed the United Nations for peace after the devastating Second World War with the pledge of "Never Again" have its hands stained with Arab bloods through the illegal and unjust war thrust upon Iraq. The West today stands accused of war crimes. And the UN has been proven too flawed and weak when it comes to the manipulations of the powerful nations.

AN OLD FEUD REVIVES

The Shia-Sunni divide is 14-century-old. After the death of the Prophet, there was a protracted debate on who were to bear the mantle of the Khilafat or the torch bearer of the Muslims. There were strong expectations among the followers and family of Hajrat Ali (RA), who was the one of the earliest converts to Islam and the Prophet's son-in-law, that he would become the Khalifa. But instead Hajrat Abu Bakr (RA), the Prophet's father-in-law became his successor after

his death.

On three consecutive occasions, after each Khalifa's death, Hajrat Ali (RA) was sidelined. And finally, when Khalifa Hajrat Usman (RA) died, he became the fourth Khalifa.

Hajrat Ali (RA) did not enjoy widespread support among the governors of Egypt and later was opposed by some of his own guards. A bitter internal rivalry began that culminated in the Battle of the Camel in which Hajrat Ali's (RA) opponent was the Prophet's youngest widow, Hajrat Ayesha (RA). Although Ali (RA) won the battle, the rivalry did not end.

The Shias, the followers of Hajrat Ali (RA), remain a minority, about one-fifth of the Muslim population, mainly in the Arab world, and comprise part of the sharply defined and finely balanced jigsaw puzzle of Shias and Sunnis where the pieces still fit.

The imperial powers, mainly Britain, France and Italy, exploited the old festering enmity during the First World War to play their imperial game in the Middle East and it brought back the old tension to the surface.

What is today's Iraq, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan, were once part of the Ottoman empire that reached its height in the 14th century and even made forays into Europe, conquering the Balkans and southern Europe. With the empire's eventual decline in the 18th and 19th century, much of its European footprint was gone.

The final disintegration came when the Ottomans sided with Germany in the First World War and lost. Britain and France carved up the Ottoman empire and created new countries, each as their colonies.

Britain took control of Iraq, carving it out of three Ottoman provinces - one dominated by the Shias, one by the Sunnis and the other by the non-Arab Kurds. Thus, a large part of ancient Mesopotamia became Iraq.

Then the other part of Mesopotamia was divided into new lands. France took one such vast piece named Syria and also took the smaller slice of Lebanon. The British grabbed Palestine and Transjordan that would much later become Jordan and Israel. Italy, late in the game of land grabbing, took over Libya.

It was then the colonisers played their old game of divide-and-rule to ramp up sectarian tensions. It often happened that they picked a minority group and

started supporting them to power. After all, a minority placed in power would hardly think of betraying its enablers. This is how the Sunnis came to control a majority Shia in Iraq, or an Alawite minority rooted in Shiaism came to control a Sunni Syria, or in Bahrain, the minority Sunnis ruled.

This empowerment policy necessarily did not follow religiosity. The Arab society is divided along a complex web of clans, sub-clans, tribes and sub-tribes. This made the power question ever more critical.

Now back to the modern times.

When Saddam Hussein grabbed power in Iraq in 1968, he would also play this sectarian divisive game of statesmanship and purged his Ba'athist party of Shias, the majority population. Saddam kept any sectarianism in check because he had set up a harsh order.

But after the Iraq war, a sudden and violent change took over that unsettled the puzzle pieces. As Saddam's regime fell, so did the ruling Sunnis. The Shias found a newly discovered dominance.

The Shias control some crucial power centres like in Iran where the ruling class and majority of the population are Shia. Syria is a Sunni country with the Shias headed by Bashar al-Assad in power. Hezbollah is a powerful Shia military group in Lebanon that has fought several wars with Israel and even put the Jewish state forces in deep trouble and to shame during the 34-day war in 2006.

Iraq is a Shia majority country. But a Sunni Saddam Hussein ruled supreme with the 65 percent Shia population left out of power and somewhat suppressed.

This century old semblance of calm and balance suddenly fell apart with the invasion of Iraq and the fall of Saddam.

Shia Iran, an arch enemy of Iraq, suddenly found a new friend in the Shia-ruled Baghdad, a prospect that the West did not anticipate or just ignored in its zeal to dislodge Saddam.

The Shia-led government of Iraq immediately went on a Sunni purge. It set up a de-Ba'athism Council and sacked the old military and security personnel of Saddam Hussein, mostly Sunnis. The Sunnis lost government jobs as well. In a clannish society where jobs are served on the basis of clan loyalty, this meant tribe after tribe, clan after clan becoming jobless overnight.

Suddenly the whole Arab world saw empowerment in reviving their sectarian identities. But it didn't go too well. Majority Shias in Sunni-ruled Bahrain wanted to clamber back to power only to

be ruthlessly quelled. Sunnis in Egypt and Saudi Arabia started chanting against mistreatment of their brethren in Iraq and Syria.

Countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen, Lebanon and Turkey were all pitted against one another. The Saudis became wary of Iran's rising power because of the changes in Iraq. It got into actions that would undermine Iran in many ways including the ban on Iranian pilgrims in Hajj and the strange "kidnapping" case of the pro-Iran Lebanese minister in Saudi Arabia.

The main sectarian clash flared back in Iraq and spread into Syria and Yemen. The Sunnis, the Ba'athists and other clans deprived of their long-held power, took up arms, attacking government forces and Shia civilians alike. Car bombing and suicide attacks became regular occurrences in Baghdad and other parts of the country.

In this dark cauldron was born the Islamic State (IS), a fearsome Sunni-backed militant group imbued with the ideals of Wahhabism. IS's birth is also controversial because of its timing at the peak of Israel's attack in Lebanon that had seen mounting civilian deaths, upwards of 3,000, and evoked sharp world criticism.

Iran came into the fray to fight IS because the group's main target were the Shias. And then the Kurds also took up arms because the bloodthirsty IS targeted them as well.

As the US sought Iranian and Shia help to fight the IS, the Saudis became uneasy. With US support for the Kurds in the fight against IS, Turkey became nervous because the Kurds laid a claim to a part of Turkey. Istanbul started shelling the Kurds.

But as if the lamentable condition of Iraq was not enough for the West to understand the cost of such invasions, as if the collective memory of the West suffered amnesia and that is why all of a sudden, images of brand new 4WD vehicles decked with heavy machine guns and rocket launchers started emerging from Libya and Syria. Suddenly there were money and arms from invisible sources flying into the hands of the so-called Libyan dissidents and Free Syrian Army.

As logic followed, Shia Hezbollah soldiers vowed to save Shia Assad and marched into Syria. The Hezbollah has some fierce fighters and has a long history of war with Israel. Their entry into Syria startled many including Israel and the Saudis, drawing them even more

into the conflict.

Libya fell quickly with its leader Muammar Gaddafi captured and lynched by the dissidents, and the world saw the UK Prime Minister David Cameron standing on the balcony in Benghazi on September 15, 2011 to laud Libya's new freedom.

It didn't take long for Libya to further slide into chaos and violence as all types of sectarian fighting erupted. Today Libya is more recognizable as a state similar to Iraq.

The UK, still unsatisfied until Syria was down, wanted to intervene in Damascus. Fortunately, Cameron lost the vote in August 2013 and Syria survived with the full backing of Russia. But the land has been pulverized by air strikes by all types of forces - the Turks, the Americans, the Syrians and everybody else.

As war and devastation gripped the whole region, the only option left for the civilians was to flee and eventually it all resulted in a huge refugee crisis. Millions of Iraqis, Syrians and Yemenis crossed the Mediterranean to take shelter in Europe and any country willing to take them. Politics and social realities of the refugees changed forever with radical views rising swiftly among them.

The IS found a safe operating route there on the Syrian-Iraq border from where they pushed inside and finally captured Mosul, just miles away from Baghdad.

As the IS's overwhelming victory rolled across the land, the world reacted with fear. Its ideologies spread to touch almost every land from Bangladesh to Canada to Europe where hundreds died in terrorist attacks. The Holy Artisan victims were sad casualties of it.

When the IS was finally defeated by the Russians and by the Iraqi Shia militia, Mosul was in ruins.

Buried beneath the rubbles lie the ideologies of IS, the atavistic form of Islamic caliphate.

Today, the Arab land seem to be in a deep dark hole of war, deaths and bitter rivalry where the equation is changing every day, where bombs falling out of the clear blue desert sky into people's homes and blowing lives to smithereens is any day's occurrence. With its oil reserve depleting, prospect of peace in the Middle East seems to have evaporated as fast as a drop of water on the hot desert sand of the Middle East. As the region bleeds, there seems to be no end to its pitiful state on the imperialist chessboard.

# HSC exams start today

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monitoring excessive financial transactions through electronic means and banning cellphones around the vicinity of the centres are some of the steps taken to ensure fair environment.

The education ministry has taken the measures hard on the heels of widespread allegations of question leak in the SSC examinations held in February.

During a press briefing on March 28, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "From the experience of the SSC examinations, we have taken stricter measures this time. We have also taken stricter strategies. So, we can say that we have done everything humanly possible to prevent question leak."

But the guardians and the stu-

dents are still sceptical.

"During the SSC examinations, we saw how all the steps of the government turned out to be futile as the question papers, especially the MCQs, were leaked out and spread in the social media. We can only hope that the government takes better measures," said Shawkat Alam, a guardian of an HSC examinee.

"Question leak destroys the morale of the students. There must be a solution to stopping this menace," he said.

Some Facebook groups are already active and alluring people to collect what they mentioned as question papers.

The SSC examinations were marred with widespread allegations of question leak that drew fierce criticism.

Arrests were made and cases

filed, but the root cause and people behind the leak remained undetected. The education ministry formed a probe committee that came up with a report that the MCQs of a few question papers were partially leaked out.

The written tests of the HSC examinations will be held till May 13, while the practical exams will be taken on May 14-23.

As many as 1092,607 examinees are going to sit for the examinations under eight general boards, 100,127 under the madrasa board and 117,754 under the technical board from 8,943 education institutions in 2,541 exam centres.

Among the candidates, 692,730 are male and 618,727 are female.

Besides, 299 students will appear in the examinations from seven overseas centres.

# Eight killed in bus crash

FROM PAGE 16

Sheikh, 35, of Gopalganj's Muksudpur. The identities of two others could not be known immediately.

Bus passenger Fatema Begum, 40, of Barguna's Amtoli, said, "The driver drove the bus at a high speed; some passengers asked him to drive the bus slow but he did not care."

Another passenger Mamun Hossain, 32,

of Baherchar in Patuakhali, said, "The driver is responsible for this accident. He started driving the bus at a high speed from Dhaka and also talked on mobile phone."

Momtaz Uddin Ahmad, assistant director of Faridpur fire service and civil defence, said four fire fighting units from Faridpur Sadar and Bhanga upazilas, and Gopalganj Sadar and Muksudpur upazilas conducted the rescue operation.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
 Ministry of Finance, Internal Resources Division  
 National Board of Revenue (NBR)  
 VAT Online Project

## e-Tender Notice

Tender ID No.	180599
Tender package No. and name	GD/VOP/17-18/17; Procurement of Internet Connectivity for VAT Online Project
Last selling date of tender document	11 April 2018, 5.00pm.
Deadline for tender submission	12 April 2018, Time-2.00pm.

The interested bidders may visit the website [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). This is an online tender, no offline/hard copy of tender will be accepted. Only registered bidder will be able to participate in the tender. Further information and guideline is available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Project Director**  
 VAT Online Project, NBR  
 160/A, Kakrail, Dhaka

GD-892

# No more secrets!

FROM PAGE 16

consonants and vowels in our brains.

The researchers believe that the machine could one day help patients who suffer from conditions that don't allow them to speak or move.

The machine registers and analyses the combination of vowels and consonants that we use when constructing a sentence in our brains.

It interprets these sentences based on neural signals and can translate them into text in real time.

In fact, scientists claim that the machine can use

words that it hasn't even heard before.

Study leader David Moses told the Sun: "No published work has demonstrated real-time classification of sentences from neural signals.

"Given the performance exhibited by [the machine] in this work and its capacity for expansion, we are confident in its ability to serve as a platform for the proposed speech prosthetic device."

There are fears from critics, however, that the device will cause problems if secret thoughts are exposed accidentally.

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### E-Tender Notice

E-Tender will be invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description	Online tender notice publication date	Online tender closing date
01	180794 (KUET/P&D/DIF/1270/05)/18, Date-01.04.2018	Package No. W-02 (Development)/2017-18	Renovation & reconstruction of Auditorium Building (Interior & necessary works)	01-04-2018	16.04.2018
02	181903 (KUET/P&D/DIF/1272/05)/18, Date-01.04.2018	Package No.-12 (Development)/2017-18	Supply of Scientific Equipment for BECM Department	03.04.2018	17.04.2018

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for last selling/downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.

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