

Rohingya scars consistent with atrocity reports

Say physicians

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Rohingya people's accounts of being shot, hacked and wounded by explosives are supported by forensic evidence, according to a report by physicians who examined them in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

The report, compiled by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and seen by Reuters, will be published later in July. It is the first large-scale effort by medical experts to corroborate the accounts of refugees.

US-based PHR investigates mass atrocities globally and shared a Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for its work medically documenting landmine injuries.

The PHR report focused on refugees from the village of Chut Pyin. Myanmar security forces fired on civilians, raped women and burned homes, survivors and Rohingya from neighbouring villages told Reuters. They estimated hundreds were killed.

Of the 25 Chut Pyin survivors examined by PHR, 22 had physical injuries, according to the report.

Seventeen had gunshot wounds, five had suffered blunt trauma such as from kicking or beating, three had wounds from explosions or burns, three had penetrating injuries such as from stabbings, and two had suffered sexual violence.

"All the forensic examinations and medical records were highly consistent with the histories that the survivors described," said PHR.

"Chut Pyin exemplifies the campaign of violence that Myanmar authorities have carried out against the Rohingya people" and "should be investigated as crimes against humanity", the report concluded.

Kim Dotcom loses New Zealand extradition appeal

AFP, Wellington

Megaupload founder Kim Dotcom suffered a major setback in his epic legal battle against online piracy charges yesterday when New Zealand's Court of Appeal ruled he was eligible for extradition to the United States.

The German national, who is accused of netting millions from his file sharing Megaupload empire, faces charges of racketeering, fraud and money laundering in the US, carrying jail terms of up to 20 years.

Theory

FROM PAGE 16

general relativity says that all objects fall the same way, despite their mass or their composition. That means for instance that an apple and a cannonball, falling from a tower, will reach the ground at the same time.

But some worried that might not always be true. In cases of extreme gravity, it was thought, alternative kinds of gravitational behaviour might be observed.

By testing the theory in perhaps the most extreme environment possible - in a massive three-star system - the theory still applies.

"This research shows how routine and careful observation of distant stars can give us a high-precision test of one of the fundamental theories of physics," said Ingrid Stairs, professor in the department of physics and astronomy at UBC and a co-author of the study.

The research was done in what scientists referred to as a "natural laboratory" - a triple star system called PSR J0337+1715, located about 4,200 light-years from Earth. The extreme conditions there serve as a useful way for scientists to perform tests in such situations.

"This is a unique star system," said Ryan Lynch of the Green Bank Observatory in West Virginia, and co-author on the paper. "We don't know of any others quite like it. That makes it a one-of-a-kind laboratory for putting Einstein's theories to the test."

In that system is a neutron star in a 1.6-day orbit with a white dwarf star, and the pair in a 327-day orbit with another white dwarf further away.

Scientists have been watching the system for years, and the neutron star sends out an incredibly reliable pulse that means it can be tracked with extreme precision.

If other theories of gravity were correct, then the neutron star and the inner white dwarf would fall towards the outer white dwarf differently to each other. Since the inner white dwarf is not as massive or compact as the neutron star, if the theories gravitational binding energy had an effect then it would be possible to see it from Earth.

The researchers didn't see any effect, suggesting that Einstein's theory of relativity holds true even at such vast scales. "If there is a difference, it is no more than three parts in a million," said coauthor Nina Gusinskaia of the University of Amsterdam.

Floodwater rises in Sylhet, Sunamganj

Surma flows above danger level; 182 educational institutions closed

OUR CORRESPONDENTS, Sylhet and Moulvibazar

Floodwaters rushing down from highlands in India have inundated much of the low lying areas of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts.

While the Surma river has swollen above the danger level, water levels of the Cholti, Patli and Jadukata rivers are rising every day.

Heavy rain upstream, in India's Meghalaya, is aggravating the situation.

At least 182 flooded schools and colleges in the districts have been forced to close.

Part of Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila is flooded while Kanaighat and Fenchuganj are likely to be inundated soon.

People in Sunamganj town,

Tahirpur, Chhatak and Bishwamvarpur upazilas are also suffering in the flood.

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre of Water Development Board, the Surma and other rivers in the region have been overflowing for the last couple of days due to excessive rainfall.

Surma was flowing 102cm above the danger level on Wednesday night in Kanaighat upazila, 33cm above in Sylhet city and 70cm in Sunamganj town.

The swollen Pirayin, Gowain, Sari and other rivers are wreaking havoc in nine unions of Gowainghat, Abdul Hakim Chowdhury, Gowainghat upazila chairman, said.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Hasina warns AL men

FROM PAGE 1

Parliamentary Party meeting in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban last night.

She said AL nominations would be given considering popularity and dedication for the party. "It's not certain that existing MPs will get nominations ... many might be dropped. I have information about who is doing what," an AL MP quoted Hasina as saying.

She also warned female MPs of reserve seats. She said she has information that many female MPs were trying to establish their authority bypassing incumbent MPs, said meeting insiders.

The AL chief mentioned two ministers who had sacrificed their candidature in the national polls of January 5, 2014, and called upon party leaders to get ready to make sacrifices in the next elections.

TEERINK CALLS ON HASINA

Hasina yesterday assured the new ambassador of European Union of a free, fair and credible general election, reports BSS.

"The Awami League had to struggle for protection of the democratic rights of the people when the state power was confined to the cantonment," she said when EU envoy Rensje Teerink called on her at her office.

Briefing reporters after the meeting,

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said the PM's comment came in response to the EU envoy's hope for a transparent and credible election.

Hasina and the envoy expressed their satisfaction over the existing cordial relations, he said.

The PM thanked the EU for helping the Election Commission and introducing transparent ballot boxes and voters' list with photographs.

About the Rohingya situation, she said Rohingyas were creating immense burden on Bangladesh's economy. Everybody, including the administration, police, army, BGB and other agencies were sincerely working to ensure their safe shelter, food and healthcare.

Rohingya refugees are occupying the cultivable land of the local people, causing economic problems for them.

The PM highly appreciated the role of the EU on the refugee issue.

The envoy assured stepping up the EU support and pointed out the 30 million Euro additional support for the Rohingyas. She also talked about imposing sections on seven Myanmar generals for their links with the atrocities on Rohingyas.

Rensje Teerink hoped that the visit of UN Secretary General would help making the international support to Rohingyas stronger.

Toriquel 'forced'

FROM PAGE 16

Activists of Chhatra League, pro-Awami League student body, attacked master's student Toriquel near RU main gate on Monday afternoon when he was going to bring out a pre-scheduled procession with national flags.

Both bones of Toriquel's right leg were broken when he was attacked with a hammer and he had eight stitches on his head as the BCL men hit him with sticks.

Toriquel left RMCH and was admitted to privately-run Royal Hospital in the city's Laxmipur area in the afternoon after the RMCH authorities released him, said his brother.

"His condition seemed to be worsening. He could not move and would cry often in pain," said Touhidul, adding that, "We wanted to stay at the hospital for a few more days. But we are forced to leave."

Assistant Prof Subrata Kumar Pramanik of RMCH's Orthopaedic Surgery Department denied the allegation of forcing Toriquel to leave the hospital.

"We, doctors, under no circumstances will force any patient to leave the hospital," he told The Daily Star when contacted over his mobile phone.

"Toriquel was released as we found that he would be able to go home to rest," Subrata said. He could stay for a few more days if he wanted, he added.

"We face pressure of patients at our ward and cannot provide all patients their complete treatment. We have to release some patients who have better condition to accommodate the worse ones."

He said there was no pressure on them from any quarter to release Toriquel.

He said Toriquel needed a surgery after two weeks and he would be given a full cast on his broken leg. He could take rest at home until then.

Toriquel's brother Touhidul said the RMCH staffers asked all his attendants to leave the ward at 10:30am when a group of doctors went to visit him.

During the visit, the doctors told Toriquel that he would be released.

"I was astonished hearing this," Touhidul said.

Touhidul went to the doctors as soon as he heard about his release. Talking to him, one of the doctors told him that his brother could stay if he wanted.

would leave. Minutes later, the same staff took the letter from him and asked him to collect it from the police.

One and a half hours later, a policeman gave Touhidul the release letter and asked when he was leaving.

"When the authorities handed us over the release letter, the hospital staffers repeatedly asked us when we would leave. The police personnel were asking us to leave. Is it possible for us to stay?" asked Touhidul.

"We cannot leave him untreated; we admitted him to a private hospital," Touhidul added.

Contacted, Assistant Sub-Inspector Rafiqul Islam, in-charge of the hospital's police box, said the allegation against the police of forcing the patient to leave the hospital was false.

"How we can force him to leave the hospital, if its authorities do not release him?" he said.

Shahadat Hossain Khan, officer-in-charge of Motihar Police Station, said police at the hospital were asked to provide Toriquel security. He was not in police custody.

Irregularities

FROM PAGE 16

The hospital authorities did not renew its licence in 2017-18. Besides, there is no list of specialist doctors, though the hospital is specialised.

The committee has also found that there is no detailed information of pathologists who prepare test reports.

In the notice, Max Hospital, where Raifa died of alleged wrong treatment and medical negligence, has been given 15 days to provide required information to the committee. If the hospital authorities fail to do so, action will be taken to shut it down, the notice added.

Jahangir Hossain told The Daily Star that they found the irregularities and would take action as per the law if the hospital authorities did not provide them the information.

On 29 June, Raifa was admitted to Max Hospital with a complaint of sore throat. She died from wrong treatment of doctors of the hospital, her parents alleged.

Chittagong Union of Journalists has been demanding a fair and proper investigation into the death of Raifa.

The probe body has been investigating the incident since July 1.

Contacted, Dr Liakot Ali, director of Max Hospital, said they got the notice on Wednesday and would give all the information to the committee within the stipulated time.

Race against

FROM PAGE 16

nation and united Thais in prayers for their safe return.

Water is being pumped out from the deluged cave round-the-clock, reducing the flooding by one centimetre an hour.

But with rain forecast to begin on Friday, the Chiang Rai provincial governor helming the unprecedented rescue effort conceded the mission was now "a race against the water".

"Our biggest concern is the weather. We are calculating how much time we have if it rains, how many hours and days," Narongsak Osottanakorn told reporters, without providing further details.

In a sign of increased urgency, Narongsak said medics and Thai Navy SEAL divers are assessing whether the boys are fit and well enough to be taken out early -- apparently softening his instance on Wednesday that "no risk" will be taken with the evacuation.

The prospect of the stranded "Wild Boar" team diving out is fraught with risk.

It takes seasoned cave diving experts around six hours to reach the muddy ledge where the boys are sheltering around four kilometres (2.4 miles) into the cave.

Many of the youngsters -- who are aged between 11-16 -- are unable to swim and none have diving experience.

Three days after contact was made with the group, Thai Navy SEAL experts continued to teach them the basics of diving.

But the areas where diving is still necessary are tight and may require the boys to swim through murky waters unaccompanied.

The looming rains have further tweaked anxiety among relatives of the trapped team, who on Wednesday appeared smiling, wrapped in foil blankets and in good health in video footage circulated by the Thai Navy.

"Yesterday I felt hopeful... today I heard the rain is coming," said Sunida Wongsukchan, great aunt of one of the boys Ekkarat Wongsukchan, 14, who goes by the nickname 'Bew'.

"I'm very worried."

It's high

FROM PAGE 1

against Japan, where they showed the tenacity to come back from 2-0 down, they did not look like a team capable of travelling the distance.

The Belgium game will be a tough test for Brazil. They will miss their defensive midfielder Casemiro due to suspension. It is likely that Fernandinho will start. But Brazil coach Tite, who had earlier named his starting eleven during the pre-match briefing, decided to keep it close to his chest for a change this time around.

The professor not even confirmed if Marcelo would be back after missing the last two games due to a back spasm. He was also against the idea of giving Roberto Firmino a start in place of a misfiring strike Gabriel Jesus, who is yet to score a goal.

Defender Miranda, who will captain the team against Belgium, while appearing at the briefing with Tite said that Belgium were not all about Hazzard or Lukaku. "They are collectively a very strong team. It will be a tough game for us but we know how to tackle this kind of games."

Interestingly, Tite is yet to allow the captain's armband to any of his forwards or midfielders including Neymar. After Marcelo captained the first game, Thiago Silva and Miranda took the honour so far in what is an already-famous as a rotational policy.

Meanwhile, France might have won against two-time winners Uruguay only once in their last seven meetings --- they are yet win a game in the World Cup against La Celeste -- but this talented and youthful side have shown that they are more than capable of ending the jinx after that fabulous 4-3 win against Argentina last week where superstar-in-the-making Kylian Mbappe made the difference with his sonic bursts of speed. The 19-year-old set up the first goal before scoring twice in the second half to send Lionel Messi's Argentina packing.

Uruguay will desperately look for their injured striker Edinson Cavani, who struck a brace in a 2-1 win that sent Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal packing from the round of 16, to defy the pain and keep his golden boot ambitions alive.

Tite said Brazil's match against Belgium will be an exciting contest. But the Seleccion fans want another dominant display from their team in quest of fulfilling the dream of hexa.

Every moment

FROM PAGE 1

one of her fellow protesters, she said at a briefing in front of Dhaka University's Ruqayyah Hall yesterday.

"I thought the police station would be safe for me, but it was like a second hell," said Moriom Mannan Farah, a first year student of political science at Tejgaon College, who described "every moment" of her immediate past encounter with that group of people "as like hell".

A resident of Bashundhara Residential Area, Farah had joined a human chain on the premises of Central Shaheed Minar on Monday, demanding quota reforms in civil service. She said she has been with the movement since it began under the banner of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad in February.

But the moment the programme started around 11:00am on that day, a group of BCL men swooped on the protesters, snatching away their banner and beating them up.

As the attackers started assaulting Faruk Hasan, one of the joint convenors of the platform, Farah tried to save him. A photo of the incident went viral.

Faruk was beaten up at the spot. Later, he was picked up by the attackers and handed over to Shahbagh Police Station.

Little did Farah, who hailed from Khulna, know about the danger that was lying ahead.

"I got into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to go home. As I crossed the Shaheed Minar intersection, around 200 motorbikes surrounded my vehicle," she said at the briefing yesterday.

"I was scared as some of them entered my CNG, snatched my cell phone and purse and started showing me," she told reporters, accompanied by her fellow protesters.

"And then they started hurling abuses which I cannot even utter. They started touching me."

"To me, every moment inside the CNG was like hell."

The men took her to Shahbagh Police Station, she said.

"Right after I was taken there, they [police personnel] opened my purse and started yelling that I took yaba. I just had a bottle of water and two makeover kits inside my purse."

The policemen allegedly took out a knife from her bag and asked her about it.

"Why would I keep a knife? I just went to the demonstration," she said at the top of her voice.

The policemen also allegedly took out a lighter from the bag and accused her of being a yaba addict.

Farah repeatedly told the law enforcers that her purse was taken by the boys and returned later. She said she had nothing but the water bottle and the makeup kits in it.

Then, the cops kept her waiting inside the police station, she said.

During that time, she said, some female police members kept forcing her to admit that she was an addict, which she did not.

"I cried and kept begging them to let me call my family and go home. But, they told me that [you] want to be a leader. You need to stay in jail and do many other things to be a leader."

"I had to endure the torture just because I was out there to save him [Faruk]," she said.

According to Farah, the law enforcers also forced her to admit that she belonged to the central committee of the platform seeking quota reform and that she knew some "secret information". Otherwise, why anyone would dare save a leader like Faruk, they doubted.

"People even try to save a dog if it is beaten. Here a human being was dying and shouldn't I go [to save him]?"

After Farah's photograph went viral, her family members rushed to different hospitals in the city, looking for her. She said she had uploaded a status on Facebook before leaving home to join the quota reform programme on

the Shaheed Minar premises.

Later around 9:00pm, someone showed up at the police station and asked for her address and contact number. The person said they would release her.

"Then, the person told me that 'you are going home and will get some sleep. You are not going to come and join here again'."

"I kept mum," Farah said.

The person then said they needed an undertaking from her before her release. But they did not release her.

Later, someone from her family came to the police station, she said. Her brother-in-law, who is also a policeman, had called one of the officers at the police station over the phone.

She said the officer told her brother-in-law that "Your sister-in-law is ill mannered. Since you are a policeman we are letting her go. Otherwise many things could have happened to her."

The officer hung up, she said, adding that he then told her "Had your brother-in-law not been a policeman, we would have sent you to the court. There would be none to save you."

Even the female constables misbehaved with her, saying that, "They could not watch a world cup football match because of her."

"Whenever I was falling asleep, they came and woke me up," she said.

She said the police did not release her that night. Instead, they kept her in a filthy room along with thieves. Later, they kept her in another room with a woman who is accused of stealing a mobile phone.

"The woman told me that your family members came and that I would now be released. I asked how

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she knew that. She said you did not commit any crime. Waging a movement is a not crime."

"If a woman like her could understand that waging movement is not a crime, then why the so-called well-educated people like us are branding us as children of Razakars and traitors..."

Farah was released the next day.

"Everyone asks me what I want ... I will be given honour ... but if they want to honour me, bring me the gazette [on the reforms of the quota system]. If they want to honour me, lift the tag of Shibir and Jamaat off me. I want to be called a general student," she said.

Contacted, Abul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, refuted the allegation brought against the police station.

"I just saw the photo that went viral. The girl who came to the police station did not seem to be the same."

"Her guardians were late in coming to the police station. I said how I can release a girl without her guardian. The girl is from Khulna. Please match her identity," he said.

The OC claimed that the girl was not kept in their custody. "She was sitting at the Help Desk. We kept her to hand her over to her guardians."

Asked how she reached the police station, he said, "You saw how she came. I have no information without this."

This week, BCL activists attacked quota reform activists for three days, injuring many at Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University and Rajshahi University.

The incidents sparked outrage on social media.

Bowlers suffer

FROM PAGE 16

how poorly Bangladesh had played on the first day to be bowled out for their lowest ever score of 43 and then letting them reach stumps on 201 for two.

At tea on the second day, the hosts progressed to 375 for seven riding on a patient 121 from opener Kraigg Brathwaite and an unbeaten 50 from Shai Hope. Even though spinners Mehedi Hasan Miraz and skipper Shakib Al Hasan served a gentle reminder that Bangladesh can indeed compete in stretches, West Indies' lead had swelled to 332 -- a scarcely believable number given that the Test was just five sessions old.

Even with an improved second-day performance, there were enough signs that the two-Test series is likely to be an unhappy one for the tourists. On a pitch where West Indies fast bowler Kemar Roach took five wickets for eight runs on the first day, Bangladesh's three pacers -- the perennially inexperienced Rubel Hossain, rookie Kamrul Islam and debutant Abu Jayed -- had combined figures of two for 178 from 58 overs.

Brathwaite, who resumed the day

on 88, marched steadily and without any kind of trouble to his seventh Test hundred. More importantly, night-watchman Devendra Bishoo -- resuming on one off 16 balls -- looked like a specialist batsman as he played out more than half of the first session, adding 18 runs off 63 balls before he was bowled by Kamrul to be the only wicket to fall before lunch, which West Indies reached on 271 for three.

The second session saw a spike in wickets as left-arm spinner Shakib had Brathwaite caught at extra cover to end his 291-ball innings, and that set off a mini collapse of three wickets for 16 runs. Roston Chase was trapped in front by Mehedi, Shane Dowrich was caught off his boot at silly point off Shakib to leave the West Indies on 288 for six. Captain Jason Holder hit a few lusty blows in Hope's company, but Mehedi came back to get him caught at short leg for 33.

Fittingly, it was then that Roach came on and -- brushing aside the hamstring pain that made his bowling all the more remarkable -- rubbed salt into the Tigers' wounds with an unbeaten 32-ball 25 with four fours and a six.