

Trump disputes

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 declaring that if others were held to the standard to which critics have held Saudi Arabia in recent days, "we wouldn't be able to have anyone for an ally".

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Trump's comments indicated that he would turn a "blind eye" to the incident.

Speaking to local broadcaster CNN Turk, Cavusoglu added that the US had not informed Turkey of an audio recording in which MBS can be heard calling for Khashoggi to be "silenced as soon as possible".

GIVING SAUDI A PASS
 Turkish officials have repeatedly said the killing was intentional and have been pressuring Saudi Arabia to extradite those responsible to stand trial.

On Thursday, Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign affairs chief, said there needed to be a "transparent" and "credible" investigation into Khashoggi's murder.

"Those responsible, really responsible for this terrible murder have to be accountable," Mogherini told a news conference in Ankara.

Khashoggi was killed when he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2 to obtain a document certifying his divorce.

The kingdom initially rejected accusations that Saudi officials were behind his disappearance, but after Turkish authorities began leaking evidence of high-level involvement, Riyadh eventually backtracked and admitted that he was killed by "rogue" operatives.

More than 50 days after his murder, the whereabouts of Khashoggi's body is still unknown.

Critics in US Congress and high-ranking officials in other countries have accused Trump of ignoring human rights and giving Saudi Arabia a pass for economic reasons, including its influence on the world oil market.

Bessma Momani, a professor at the University of Waterloo in Canada, said it was unsurprising that the Trump administration had repeatedly defended its ties with the Saudi monarchy despite international condemnation.

"There have been several opportunities for Trump to rein in Mohammed bin Salman, to make it very clear that not only was this unacceptable but that there would be consequences.

"Instead, Trump has made it very clear that he sees the relationship as a strategic one, one in countering Iranian influence in the region. He has continued to suggest that there is an enormous amount of money to be made, both in preserving the US-Saudi arms trade and the limitless supply of Saudi oil in the world economy."

2 missing men
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 According to police and villagers, followers of Sirajul Haque, attacked the supporters of Zakir Hossain, who is a close aide of former Banshgari UP chairman and late AL leader Hafizur Rahman alias Sahed Sarkar, during the clashes that also left 10 injured.

Since then, the two had remained traceless. Locals on Thursday night found their floating bodies in a fishing enclosure in Char-Madhua area.

On information, police recovered the bodies. The hands and feet were tied with rope.

Mozaffar Hossain, inspector (operation) of Raipura police, said Shipon Mia, a relative of the deceased, identified the bodies. Those were sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy, he added.

China hopes for trade war solution at Xi-Trump talks

AFP, Beijing
 China said yesterday it hopes US President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping can find a solution to the trade war when they meet at the G20 summit next week.

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Wang said global trade faces a "complex situation", with "unilateralism and protectionism on the rise" creating uncertainty for economic development.

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Beijing also backs reform of the World Trade Organization to enhance its authority and effectiveness, he said.



Artistes perform a traditional dance called "Rakhal Nritya" beginning the Maha Raas Leela at the Madhabpur Jora Mandap in Kamalganj, Moulvibazar, yesterday. The Bishnupriya Manipuri community observes the colourful festival with dance and music to celebrate the divine love of Radha and Krishna. It will conclude with the sunrise today.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Survivors pin hope on own factory

FROM PAGE 16
 We rented a small room as our factory at a monthly rent of Tk 4,000 and gave Tk 10,000 in advance," she said, adding that they arranged Tk 40,000 to buy two sewing machines, an overlock and other instruments.

"We collected the money by contributing Tk 5,000 each."

Of the 10, eight work on the factory floor while two others look after the business.

Although the initiative is a good one, their business still suffers from a lack of funds. Shobita said they needed financial help to succeed.

So far, they bought raw materials worth Tk 10,000 and have made Tk 5,000 in profit, with some unsold stock left. They have been engaged in manufacturing children wear.

But Shobita knows they need to do much more.

"We need around five to seven machines and some one lakh taka as cash in hand to run the operation fully," she said.

Shobita believes they need to do something for themselves as no one else had helped them.

Khairul Mamun Mintu, organising secretary of the Garment Worker Trade Union Centre, praised the initiative but highlighted the need for offering them financial assistance so they can get back on their feet.

He suggested that the government, as well as the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, should come forward in this regard.

Though praiseworthy, the initiative is still a hard one, with the workers still suffering from physical, mental and familial issues.

Bilkis Banu, an injured worker of the factory, said her son had left her after her injuries and she was now struggling to survive.

Formerly, a sewing machine operator on the third floor of Tazreen Fashion garments factory, Bilkis jumped from the second floor of the building to escape the fire and injured herself.

"I still am not fit to work. We have gone broke by going to different hospitals and clinics in the past few years," she said.

She added that she had been able to get some assistance from the "Injured Workers Medical Care Trust" formed in 2016.

Similarly, before the mini-factory started operations, another worker at the new factory, Jorina Begum, had been unemployed for the last five years as she was suffering from trauma and taking treatment at Ibn Sina Hospital in Dhaka with the help of Tazreen and Rana Plaza Claim Administration Committee.

She too had escaped the fire by jumping from a second-storey window, resulting in a serious injury to her back. Ever since then, she has been unable to sit or stand for long hours. Her husband left her soon after the incident.

Jorina received Tk 2.5 lakh in financial grant from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), with which she ran her family and paid for her treatment in the last four years.

Failing to find a suitable job, she returned to her native Mymensingh, only to return when this new opportunity opened.

Like in Jorina's case, for most of the victims, the assistance money has dried up and not many are seeing a ray of hope.

Although many received financial grants and free treatment from several international and national organisations, including ILO and BLS, and even the prime minister, it has done little to remedy their current living situation.

Due to the nature of their injuries and the mental trauma suffered, many workers are finding it hard to secure a job, with their expenses growing.

Rehena Begum, another survivor, suffers from unbearable back pain which makes it difficult for her to work. On top of that, she said she had to spend over Tk 500 on medication every month.

At least 113 workers were killed and 172 were injured on November 24, 2012, in the fire at Tazreen, some 35km south of Dhaka.

When the fire broke out, the workers

attempted to leave the building through the front gate, but the management had locked it from outside. Most of the survivors were left with little choice but to jump off the upper-storey windows of the building.

Later, two cases were filed with Ashulia Police Station against the factory owner and others. Police submitted charge sheets in both cases against 13 people, including the factory owner Delwar Hossain, on September 2015.

The cases are currently under trial at the Additional Sessions Judge Court-1 in Dhaka.

Meanwhile Abdul Motin, brother of a victim, filed another case with the High Court over the incident, which too was transferred to the Additional Sessions Judge Court-1, said Shohidul Islam Shobuj, convener of Biplobi Garments-Textile Sramik Forum, a worker's organisation in Bangladesh.

Afterwards, Tazreen's Managing Director Delwar Hossain was sent to jail in February 2014 on charges of causing deaths by negligence. He was released on bail six months later.

Khairul Mamun Mintu, organising secretary of Garment Worker Trade Union Centre, said more than two thousand workers were in the factory when the fire broke out. The actual number of injured workers is well over 172, he claimed.

Once a river ran thru' it

FROM PAGE 16
 Now, Nurul collects rent from the about 1,000 shanties Jashim used to "own".

Akhtar, president of Bhera Sramajibi Kalyan Samiti, told The Daily Star that they owned the land according to Revisional Survey and filed a case to get the Bangladesh Survey Ledger amended as it records the property as the government land.

He also mentioned that they wrote to the Chattogram deputy secretary's office and the land ministry to get lease of the land.

Asked why they sought lease when they "own the land", he walked off.

According to locals, Akhtar occupied at least 10 acres in the name of Bhera Sramajibi Kalyan Samiti on the confluence of Chaktai and Rajakhali canals.

Nurul did not pick up The Daily Star's phone calls.

People living there told The Daily Star that they pay him between Tk 1,000 and Tk 3,000 a month as house rent. There are about 5,000 shanties built on occupied land in the area, they added.

"You can also buy a plot if you have the money. You can buy a katha of land here for Tk 2-3 lakh. As there are no genuine documents for these pieces of land, an agreement on a stamp paper is required to own land here," said Nurul Nahar, a resident of the slum controlled by Bastuhara Bahumukhi Samabaya Samiti.

Another woman preferring anonymity told The Daily Star that the land was once part of the Karnaphuli. Leaders of the Samiti filled up the portion and turned into plots.

"Ten years ago, the land where we are standing now was the river," she said.

Nazrul Islam Khan, general secretary of the Samiti, told this newspaper that the houses, markets, plots, graveyards, religious institutions have been built

occupying the river.

"There were tributaries and canals here. ... people filled it up with brick chunks and sand and the colonies were built," he said.

A writ petition has been filed against an eviction order issued by the High Court in 2016, he said, adding that they were trying to lease the land from the government.

"If the government wants back its land, we must return it. We urge the government to relocate us somewhere else. If the Rohingyas can have a place in our country, why will we be deprived being citizens?"

The authorities cannot even stop fresh land grabbing, let alone reclaiming the occupied land on the both banks of the Karnaphuli.

Aliur Rahman, general secretary of Committee to Protect Chattogram's Canals and Rivers, said the more land surfaces on the Karnaphuli, the more illegal occupation takes place.

The grabbing became more severe after the HC ordered removal of 2,185 illegal structures on the river, he told this correspondent.

The office of the deputy secretary of Chattogram found 2,185 illegal structures on the banks of the Karnaphuli, according to a survey report in 2016.

Elias Hossen, deputy commissioner of Chattogram, told The Daily Star that they could not remove those structures identified as illegal due to fund crisis.

They wrote to the Ministry of Land Thrice over the last two years asking for Tk 1.20 crore but are yet to get any response, he said.

"We published circulars in three local dailies asking the land grabbers to dismantle their structures.

"We are determined to launch an eviction drive as soon as possible with or without the fund."

CO2 absorbing

FROM PAGE 16
 carried out and if successful, it could mean 200 million tonnes of CO2 is being turned into biomass every year.

Contractors from Korea, Germany and the UK believe the site to be a promising source of polymetallic nodules, which contain metals like nickel, copper and cobalt.

Researchers at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh carried out a series of experiments of the sediments located in the CCFZ and discovered the bacteria, findings were then published in the Limnology and Oceanography.

Andrew Sweetman, who was part of the research team said: "We discovered that benthic bacteria are taking up large amounts of carbon dioxide and assimilating it into their biomass through an

unknown process.

"Their biomass then potentially becomes a food source for other animals in the deep sea, so actually what we've discovered is a potential alternative food source in the deepest parts of the ocean, where we thought there was none."

Prior to the study, researchers had believed that the biggest source of biomass on the ocean seafloor was organic matter, like dead fish and plankton, that had floated down.

The team has highlighted the importance of more research being carried out before any mining activities begin.

Sweetman added: "This equates to approximately 10 percent of the CO2 that the oceans remove each year, so it's possibly an important part of the deep-sea carbon cycle."

BNP leader Milon

FROM PAGE 16
 international affairs secretary of BNP.

Earlier, a team of Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police raided a house on Chatteshwari Road of the port city and arrested Milon, said law enforcers.

The BNP leader took shelter at the rented flat of one Shah Alam after returning home from abroad, said police.

Visiting the house yesterday afternoon, this correspondent found it under lock and key. Security guard Nurul Kabir said some 15 men wearing jackets of DB raided the house around 2:00am.

"I informed caretaker Md Alim... When he came, the men showed a photo of Shah Alam and his wife to him and asked if they lived in the five-storey building.

"Alim answered in the affirmative. The men then knocked on the door of Shah Alam's flat and asked the resi-

dents to hand Milon over to them," Nurul said.

He said they had no idea about Milon's stay at the house.

Appearing from inside the flat, the BNP leader asked the law enforcers to give him time for taking a shower and offering Fazr prayers.

The law enforcers took Milon and Shah Alam away around 5:00am, said the security guard.

Asked about Shah Alam's profession, he said they knew him as a businessman.

Contacted, Abu Sufian, vice-president of Chattagram city BNP, said Shah Alam was not involved in BNP politics. "He might be a friend of Milon."

The former state minister had left the country after securing bail from a court on June 5, 2012. He returned home in the middle of this month and was preparing to surrender before the court, according to BNP sources.

Gunmen storm China consulate

FROM PAGE 1
 Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told reporters in Islamabad that "all the terrorists have been eliminated", and that all 21 staff at the consulate during the attack had been taken to a safe location.

CHINA IS AN 'OPPRESSOR'
 The attack was claimed by a separatist militant group from Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan, which is at the centre of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the major Chinese project in the country.

"We have been seeing the Chinese as an oppressor, along with Pakistani forces," the spokesman for the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Geand Baloch, told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location, adding they were "destroying the future of Balochistan".

The BLA later emailed a statement to media in which it said the attack was "aimed at making it clear that China's military expansionism on Baloch soil will not be tolerated".

It warned the Chinese to leave or "be prepared for continued attacks".

The group is just one of the militant outfits operating in Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and poorest prov-

Spanish PM agrees closer ties with Cuba during historic visit

REUTERS, Madrid
 Spanish premier Pedro Sanchez agreed with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel to deepen bilateral political ties on Thursday, at the start of the first official visit by a Spanish leader to the Communist-run country in three decades.

The two leaders signed an agreement instituting annual high-level political dialogue meetings between Spain and Cuba, touching on an array of topics including human rights.

Relations between Cuba and the

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European Union have steadily improved since being formally relaunched in 2016 after a two-decade chill, even as they have festered between the island and the United States.

Even before he touched down in Havana, Sanchez had come under fire from some opposition activists, however.

Sanchez was in Cuba "to entertain dictators instead of calling for freedom and democracy," the leader of the opposition Popular Party, Pablo Casado, wrote on Twitter.



Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy premiers an archaeological play "Mahastan" at Basu Bihar of Bogura's Mahasthangarh yesterday. Written by Selim Mozahar and directed by Liaquat Ali Lucky, the play revolves around the chronological history of Bengal from 5th century BC to Bangladesh's Liberation War. PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSEHD

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