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BANGLADESH'S CHOICE

2018

ASSAM NRC CRISIS

Fear grips 'stateless' millions

Dec 31 deadline to register as citizens looms

AFP, Karail

Indian farmer Nur Mohammed can barely sleep for worrying that his wife might soon be made stateless, put in a detention camp and deported.

She is one of four million people left off a draft National Register of Citizens (NRC) published in July in the north-eastern state of Assam -- provoking accusations of discrimination against Muslim residents and of stoking ethnic tensions.

Those not on the list, who could now face being effectively stripped of their Indian citizenship and rights, can challenge their omission by providing certain documents to prove they are legal residents -- but many lack the necessary paperwork, and the December 31 deadline is looming.

"We are genuine Indian citizens," said Mohammed, 66, his voice low and quivering.

"While my name, the names of my two sons and daughter appeared in the list, the name of my wife is not there," he told AFP.

The draft list excludes all those unable to prove they were in the state before 1971, when millions fled Bangladesh's war of independence and sought refuge in Assam and elsewhere.

Those born in Assam after 1971 have to prove that their parents or grandparents entered India before that.

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Villagers gather at the site of Hindu houses burned down by unidentified people at Singia Shahapara of Thakurgaon yesterday. Local Awami League and BNP men blamed each other over the incident.

PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

Houses of Hindu family torched in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Unknown criminals yesterday set eight houses of a Hindu family on fire in Thakurgaon.

The incident happened between 4:30am and 5:00am while residents of the houses were asleep, said Krisna Ghosh, one of the victims.

Although the family members escaped unhurt, the fire killed seven goats, destroyed sixty maunds of paddy and all the furniture of the houses, Krisna added.

The attackers first set a house on fire. Soon, it engulfed adjacent seven houses, the victim said.

Meanwhile, local Awami League and BNP leaders brought allegations against each other over the incident. They alleged that the attack was carried out for creating panic among the local Hindu community ahead of December 30 polls.

Gonesh Ghosh, general secretary of Jagannathpur union unit Awami League, said BNP-Jamaat men were trying to create panic among the Hindu community so

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Tigers seek perfect end

SPORTS REPORTER

Both Bangladesh and West Indies will be looking to finish 2018 on a positive note when they lock horns for their last international fixture of the year in the third and series-deciding T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, beginning at 5:00pm, today.

The hosts are oozing with confidence following their comprehensive 36-run victory on Thursday which levelled the series. More importantly it was the right kind of approach from the Tigers after a thumping eight-wicket defeat in the first T20I in Sylhet.

The Tigers came back strongly as a unit and the collective approach, especially with the bat, helped

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Mattis deserts Trump

Cites policy differences in resignation letter as US pulls out troops from Syria, Afghanistan; allies react with unease

AFP, Washington

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis resigned Thursday, leading a chorus of protests at home and abroad after President Donald Trump ordered a complete troop pullout from Syria and a significant withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Trump steadfastly defended his sudden push for retrenchment, vowing that the United States would no longer be the "policeman of the Middle East" and saying the 2,000-strong US force in Syria was no longer needed as the Islamic State group had been defeated.

Mattis, a battle-hardened retired four-star general seen as a moderating force on the often impulsive president, made little attempt to hide his disagreements with Trump.

"Because you have the right to have a secretary of defense whose views are better aligned with yours," Mattis said in his resignation letter to Trump, "I believe it is right for me to step down from my position."

Mattis hailed the coalition to defeat Islamic State as well as Nato, the nearly 70-year-old alliance between North America and Europe whose cost-effectiveness has been questioned by the businessman turned president.

"My views on treating allies with respect and also being clear-eyed about both malign actors and strategic competitors are strongly held and informed by over four decades of immersion in these issues," Mattis wrote.

One day after the surprise announcement on Syria, a US official told AFP that Trump had also decided on a "significant

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OC 'seeks vote', clip goes viral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officer-in-charge of Kolaroa Police Station in Satkhira allegedly sought vote for Awami League's electoral symbol "Boat," violating the electoral code of conduct.

"I, on behalf of the administration, want to say you one thing that you will cast your vote for the pro-liberation forces, for the 'boat' symbol," the OC Maruf Ahmed said while speaking at a programme on Thursday.

A video clip of his speech went viral on social media where many people expressed their shock and dismay over the issue.

Narrating the incident, Habibur Islam Habib, a former BNP lawmaker and

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'Farmer' Trump sings country in video post

AFP, Washington

He's still the government's best showman.

Surrounded by political chaos, with the government verging on shutdown and legal cases coming in from every direction, President Donald Trump delivered comic relief when he posted a video Thursday of himself singing a cornball duet from an old sitcom.

The 13-year-old video from an Emmy Awards broadcast shows the New York born-and-bred, cow-country adverse real estate billionaire dressed as a farmer in denim overalls and a straw hat, wielding a

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J&J BABY POWDER BSTI to collect samples for asbestos test

REUTERS, Dhaka

BSTI will collect and test samples of Johnson & Johnson's Baby Powder for asbestos in a couple of days after a Reuters report last Friday that the firm knew for decades that cancer-causing asbestos could be found in the product.

"We take this issue seriously and within a couple of days we will collect samples from the market" SM Isahaque Ali, a director at the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), told Reuters.

BSTI will either do the tests inside or outside the country.

Isahaque said BSTI wouldn't stop the Baby Powder from being

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US-led strikes kill 27 in Syria

AFP, Beirut

Air strikes by the US-led coalition yesterday killed 13 jihadist fighters and 14 of their relatives in eastern Syria, a war monitor said.

The strikes came two days after US President Donald Trump's decision to pull troops out of Syria raised fears the Islamic State group would use the vacuum to regroup.

"At least 27 people were killed this morning in Al-Shaafa," Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP.

He said eight children were among the 14 civilian victims and added several

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Dhananjay Roy with bamboo crafts depicting significant events of the 1971 Liberation War. Every year, in the month of victory, Dhananjay displays his works on the front yard of his house in Khaliasha Poncha village of Nilphamari.

PHOTO: STAR

Artistic way to recall 1971

Works of Nilphamari craftsman depict Liberation War events

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Craftsman Dhananjay Roy has turned his thatched hut in a remote village of Nilphamari into a mini Liberation War museum.

With trembling hands and poor eyesight, the 80-year-old has been making bamboo structures depicting significant events of the 1971 war.

Every year, marking the month of victory, Dhananjay puts his creations on display on his front yard in Khaliasha Poncha village.

The artisan believes that with time, people are forgetting the significance of the war. He wants to pass on the spirit of the Liberation War through his work.

During 1971, Dhananjay took refuge in India after losing his near and dear ones to the brutality of the Pakistan army.

"I want to embody the realities of the war so that the young generation gets to know about the great sacrifices made by their forefathers," Dhananjay told this paper.

During a visit, this correspondent found a number of bamboo-made figurines on display outside Dhananjay's home. Replicas of the National Memorial and the Central Shaheed Minar were also there.

One figurine was of Bangabandhu's historic March 7 speech.

Another set of figurines displayed people fleeing on foot, on boats, and on bullock carts to India. The artisan crafted a number of miniature freedom fighters and Pakistan army men.

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 22
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-25 12-45 3-45 5-24 7-00
JAMAAT 6-00 1-15 4-00 5-27 7-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION