



THE KANCHPUR-MEGHNA-GUMTI BRIDGES ARE BEING BUILT WITH HIGHLY DUCTILE GRADE 420 BSRM ULTIMA BARS



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INDONESIA 'VOLCANO TSUNAMI'

222 dead, 843 more injured

Huge waves slam into beaches around Sunda Strait without warning; hundreds of buildings destroyed; 28 missing

AFP, Carita

A volcano-triggered tsunami has left at least 222 people dead and hundreds more injured after slamming without warning into beaches around Indonesia's Sunda Strait, officials said yesterday, voicing fears that the toll would rise further.

Hundreds of buildings were destroyed by the wave, which hit the coast of southern Sumatra and the western tip of Java about 9:30 pm Saturday after a volcano known as the "child" of Krakatoa erupted, national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said.

Search and rescue teams were scouring rubble for survivors, with 222 people confirmed dead, 843 people injured and 28 missing, Nugroho said.

Tsunamis triggered by volcanic eruptions are relatively rare, caused by the sudden displacement of water or "slope failure", according to the International Tsunami Information Centre.

Unlike those caused by earthquakes, which trigger alert systems, they give authorities very little time to warn residents of the impending threat.

The destructive wave left a trail of uprooted trees and

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Volcanic Ash heading SW at up to an altitude of 55,000 feet

Clockwise from left, a resident searches for items among the ruins of a villa at Carita beach in Padeklang, Banten province, Indonesia, after the area was hit by a tsunami. A resident injured during the tsunami is treated at a health centre in the province. An aerial photo shows damaged buildings in Carita after the tsunami. A man stands among ruins.



PHOTO: REUTERS, AFP

LICENCE REQUIREMENT BRTA caves in to drivers' demand

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

In August the government relaxed until December 31 the requirement of experience for getting licences to drive medium and heavy vehicles. Now in the face of transport workers' demand, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority requested the road transport and bridges ministry to extend the period by another six months.

"We have written to the ministry as we are yet to get expected response [from the drivers] after relaxing the requirement in August. But it is required to bring discipline in the sector," said Mahbub-E-Rabbani, spokesperson for BRTA.

The BRTA has not yet got any response from the ministry, he said.

Meanwhile, a road safety campaigner alleged that the BRTA made the move under pressure from transport workers, while a road safety expert termed the move "unfortunate".

In August, the government had relaxed until December 31 the requirement of experience for getting licences to drive medium and heavy vehicles.

It made the decision to make up for the shortage of drivers with licences for those vehicles and following the request of leaders of transport owners and workers.

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Bad year for overseas jobs

Employments abroad saw 27pc drop this year thanks to shrinking labour market, lack of skilled manpower

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Migration overseas for jobs has declined by around 27 percent this year from the scenario last year, according to a research.

The shrinking labour market, a lack of skilled manpower, competitiveness with other South Asian nations and the return of women migrants from Saudi Arabia following abuse are some major factors responsible for the decline, said Tasneem Siddiqui, professor of political science in Dhaka University, while launching the study report at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

A little over 6.14 lakh men and women went to Gulf and Middle Eastern countries until October this year, the report says referring to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

If the rate of migration remains unchanged, this year's migration would be 27 percent less than last year's, said the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit in the report.

However, Tasneem said, there was no reflection of this in the foreign remittance since migrants begin sending remittance a year after joining work. This year's remittance from migrant workers until November is \$14.34 billion, up from last year's \$13.53billion.

Saudi Arabia topped the list of destinations with 33.6 percent migrants flying in from here, followed by Malaysia. The second largest destination for migrant workers received 1.55 lakh Bangladeshis, almost double the

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Ensure free, fair, credible election

Canada urges all DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Canada has encouraged all involved in the electoral process to work together in fostering a peaceful campaign environment, enabling the people of Bangladesh to participate safely in free, fair, inclusive and credible elections.

"Canada stands by the people of Bangladesh and supports all voters in the full exercise of their democratic rights and freedoms in the context of national elections on December 30," said Benoit Préfontaine, high commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh, in a statement yesterday.

Peace and security are the cornerstones of democracy. Acts of violence and intimidation undermine the legitimacy of the democratic process, he said.

"The pre-election

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'Smart' uniforms check absenteeism



AFP, Beijing

Schools in southern China are using chip-powered "smart" school uniforms to track their students in a bid to tackle truancy and boost attendance, according to state media.

The uniforms use chips to monitor the location of students and can record their exit and entry into school, according to the tech firm behind the tracking devices.

"When students enter the school, the smart uniforms help take a photo or video of them," explained principal Ran Ruxiang, whose elementary school in Guizhou province started rolling out smart uniforms last November.

More than half of the school's 1,400 students were wearing the smart uniforms, he told AFP.

At least 10 schools in Guizhou and

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N'ganj fire death toll rises to four

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

The death toll from Wednesday's fire in Narayanganj rose to four yesterday, after two more people succumbed to their burns at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

All four belong to the same family at Fatullah in Narayanganj.

The latest dead are Shibnath Das, 35, and his son Arpit Das, 10.

Two others of the family - Haridasi, 55, and her daughter Sumitra Das, 27, -- died on Thursday.

Five other victims -- Archana Rani Das, 28, Anamika Das, 15, Narayan Chandra Das, 40, Promit, 14, and Shaon, 10 -- are undergoing treatment at the DMCH burn unit.

Nine members of the family had suffered serious burn injuries as their second floor-flat of a four-storey

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A man takes his children out on his bicycle, with the younger one sitting in the front basket and the elder one at the back. While the gesture is sweet, it is also risky in a country without cycle lanes and proper implementation of traffic laws. The photo was taken from Doyel Chattar in the capital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

US TROOPS PULLOUT FROM SYRIA

Macron slams Trump

AFP, N'djamena

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday criticised US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw American forces from Syria, saying "an ally must be reliable".

Speaking in the Chad capital N'Djamena, Macron said "I deeply regret the decision" by Trump to pullout US troops.

Trump last week ordered a complete troop pullout from Syria, asserting that the Islamic State group had been defeated, and a significant withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"To be an ally is to fight shoulder to shoulder," Macron said, adding that France was doing just that in Chad in the fight

against jihadist groups.

"An ally must be reliable, to coordinate with its other allies," he said.

Macron also paid tribute to Defense Secretary James Mattis, who said he was resigning on Thursday after Trump's Syria announcement.

"I want here to pay tribute to General Mattis... for a year we have seen how he was a reliable partner," Macron said at a news conference with his Chadian counterpart Idriss Deby.

Mattis, 68, was one of Trump's first cabinet picks and has spent nearly two years at the Pentagon.

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 24

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

Today is the 45th Death Anniversary of Begum Firdaus Rizvi



We request all relatives, friends and well-wishers to remember her in their prayers and to pray for eternal peace of her soul