

Malaysia wants perpetrators punished

Malaysia wants the perpetrators of atrocities against the Rohingyas be tried immediately at the International Criminal Court (ICC).
 "The Malaysian government is openly adhering to the principle that criminals must be punished. The root problem is that the Rohingyas have been driven out from their own country," Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah said.
 "For us, investigation into the case of Myanmar and the [humanitarian] crime is very important to be resolved at the root so that the criminals can be dragged to the court," he told reporters after visiting the Rohingya Education Centre (REC) in Klang on Tuesday.
 Saifuddin added although the matter could take a long time, Putrajaya is very serious about the issue as such oppression has forced the Rohingya community to become refugees all over the world, reports Bernama, the state news agency of Malaysia.

In August last year, UN-appointed investigators recommended that Myanmar's top military commanders be brought to justice as it "undoubtedly amounts to the gravest crimes" against the general public, including genocide, under international laws.
 A UN Fact Finding Mission report drew up a list of alleged perpetrators, including Myanmar's commander-in-chief Min Aung Hlaing and five other military commanders.
 Referring to the report, Saifuddin said Putrajaya wants to be involved in ensuring that the "criminals" are brought to the ICC as soon as possible.

Meantime, Saifuddin said for the time being, Malaysia would still adhere to its principles to accept the Rohingya refugees, as most of them said they were too afraid to return to their homeland for safety reasons.
 "Our government standpoint is we don't reject people [Rohingya refugees] from coming.
 "On humanitarian grounds, we never send [Rohingya refugee] boats away. We don't have the capacity to do much more, but we never reject them. We want to do more to assist them," he said.
 "We understand the concerns of our own people [about the presence of the Rohingya], but we do not have the heart to send them back to Myanmar just like that.
 "The majority of them want to return, but for the time being, they feel unsafe about going back."

Saifuddin also believes that if there are social problems related to Rohingya in the country, local authorities will take necessary action.
 As many as 88,880 Rohingyas live in Malaysia -- a portion of them registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Some 25 percent of the Rohingyas also received educational assistance provided by NGOs.

Fakhrul, Maudud

FROM PAGE 2
 member Moudud Ahmed was addressing the programme, a party junior leader stood up saying, "Please talk about Khaleda Zia's release".
 "Tell us when and how she'll be freed. Why is the hall room not filled here?" the junior leader said amid the slogans of party men.
 At one stage, Moudud said, "We'll surely come up with programmes, but you'll have to have patience."

He added that a movement was the only way to free Khaleda from jail. "Khaleda Zia won't be freed through a legal battle. Her release will be our only agenda."
 During the end of the discussion, BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam came to speak at the programme, during which party activists began shouting, demanding action programmes to free Khaleda from jail.

In reply, Fakhrul said the programmes cannot be announced "whimsically". "You'll have to observe the programmes if we announce those," he added.
 Dissatisfied with his response, party activists began shouting again demanding an announcement programmes or dissolving the party committee.

Fakhrul then urged them not to shout in the hall room and sit down. The BNP secretary general said, "I realise your pain and anger. But you must keep in mind that it's not easy to succeed in a struggle of democratic forces against fascism. Why do you think you've failed? You've neither failed nor been defeated."
 He said BNP leaders and activists became successful in the December 30 polls as it has now exposed to the people and the global community that the ruling Awami League "was a fascist force though it talks about democracy".

Thousands left homeless

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 Now, all of those, along with their hopes and aspirations, lie buried under the rubbles.
 At the moment, they have no idea what to do. Their last resort is to return to their village in Kishoreganj, where they have no land but do have a few relatives who may lend a helping hand.
 "I saw on television how the government supported the Rohingyas. They were given land, a house and even daily rations. But what did we, as citizens, get?" Rashida asked.
 For now, Rashida and Tanjila sit guarding a few of their belongings, while their husbands roam around looking for a place to live.
 Such scenes are common here.
 Visiting the area yesterday, our correspondent found the streets lined with rubble or several hundred women and children sitting with their belongings.
 Some complained that their belongings were stolen during the eviction.

Women were seen talking to their husbands over phone, enquiring about whether a house had been found. They all awaited news of a new roof over their heads being found, but most of these phone conversations apparently ended in disappointment.
 A resident informed that some families were looking for a single three-bedroom flat to share. House-owners, however, denied renting out to them. He claimed they were told that the houses would not be rented out to "poor people" like them.
 Fifty-year old Shamsunnahar sat outside the remnants of her house. Worry was etched across her face.

She said she came here after she was married at 14. Since then, the demolished two-bedroom house behind her had been the only home she had known.
 "My husband is a private car driver. The money he had earned was supplemented by three small shops we rent. Now, all of that is destroyed. They did not let us save anything," she said.
 Shamsunnahar has two children -- a daughter who is appearing for her HSC and a 30-year old son.

The mother of the two can no longer promise her children a roof over their head and that knowledge seemed to have broken her.
 Her brother-in-law, Deen Mohammad, said he was born in this house. "This was our ancestral land. We had 30 bigha here which the government acquired in the 70s to house the Biharis. Since that did not happen, we moved back in and have been living here ever since."
 Deen, who claimed to be a freedom fighter, also said there was injunction against the eviction, but he could produce no documents to support the claim. "Everything is buried under there. I will have to dig it out," he said.
 "We would have been satisfied if we had been served a legal notice of eviction. But all they did was announce it by megaphone a week ago and then they came with the bulldozers," Deen added.

Jaded Tigers swept 3-0

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 series. However, just like the batsmen, the bowlers also failed to perform to their potential resulting in the hosts posting a mammoth 330 for six.
 The Bangladesh top order continued their abysmal run of form, as the Tigers were left reeling on 61 for five inside fifteen overs of the chase. Sabbir and Mohammad Saifuddin provided some resistance with a 101-run sixth-wicket partnership before the latter was dismissed for 44.
 After that, all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz's 37 runs at the death served only to reduce the margin of defeat, with the Tigers folding for 242 in 47.2 overs.
 It was not too long ago that

5 journos sued

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 Palash Mia, organising secretary of the Nawabganj Upazila unit Swechhahasebak League, filed the case with Dohar Police Station following a report in the newspaper on "the luxurious house of Nawabganj Police Station OC Mostafa Kamal" on Tuesday.
 In the case statement, Palash said the report mentioned that he demolished a house of one Mohiuddin in Bordhonpur area in 2018 which is completely untrue.
 He mentioned that the five reporters in collusion with each other published the report incorporating false and fabricated information to demean him and create instability in the country through publishing the report against him and the OC.
 The reporters committed a crime under the Digital Security Act, court sources said, citing the statement.
 Yesterday, Zafar gave his statement before a magistrate.
 A family member of Zafar told The Daily Star, "Zafar was traceless and his phone was switched off since 4:00pm on Tuesday... Our family came to know about the case and his arrest around 2:30am today."
 Masud Karim, chief reporter of the

Meanwhile, Shamsunnahar's husband called to inform her that he had found a house in Dewar Bazaar for Tk 12,000. Shamsunnahar laughed at this, saying she did not know how they could afford it.
 Shamsunnahar and Deen now feel they have nothing to look forward to; except, the rubble of their house a mango tree, which blooms with flowers above them. Even the tree will be gone soon and soon nothing will be left of over three decades of memory.
 During the first of the eviction, an NHA official said in 1970 the government acquired the land and since then it had been grabbed and used illegally by locals. He added that although several notices have been given to the slum dwellers, they still did not vacate the area.
 The housing authority and police asked the slum dwellers many times, including the night before the drive, to vacate but they did not pay any attention, he said.
 Many of the dwellers could not save their valuables as they were out of their houses for work, Javed said.
 Abdullah Hil Baki, subdivisional engineer (Dhaka) of NHA, said the drive began Tuesday morning and will continue for a project titled "Griho Shuchona Flat" for building construction.

Elsewhere, many of the residents were seen planning to return to their village homes. They were selling whatever they had at the marked-down prices.
 Sohail Rana, a rickshaw puller, had his wife and one five-month-old daughter, with him. He was haggling with a pick-up truck over the fare to go back home to Tna in Kishoreganj.
 The pick-up driver asked for Tk 10,000 -- trip which usually cost around Tk 2,500. Sohail refused because he could not afford it.
 "I could only save my TV and a bed. Everything else was bulldozed. Now I have to go back home as I have nothing left here," he said.
 He said none of his relatives had taken him in. "When there had been a fire earlier, many people came to help us. Now, no one is here. Not even the journalists. Not even the politicians."
 "We are voters in this area. But no one cares about us."
 Seeing the deluge of people leaving, many bus service operators have set up counters in the area.
 The demand for tickets is high but the fare has remained unchanged.
 Abdus Sattar, a bus counter supervisor for a bus to Kishoreganj, said, "The locals have been looking for a way back home so we came here. We did not increase the price of the tickets."
 "Our buses will come here to pick up the passengers. They don't have to go anywhere for it," he added.
 As the man was talking to this correspondent, officials from the NHA and the police stood stoically yards away, while the bulldozers continued to raze down structures amidst tears and shouts of slum dwellers.

Put pressure

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 negotiation on air service agreement between the two countries was concluded.
 The president hoped that formal signing of the Air Services Agreement will help gain further momentum in bolstering trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people contact through air connectivity between the countries.
 Jugantor, said the journalist communities' fear of misuse of the Digital Security Act has been proven to be true through the arrest.
 "Police could have conducted a proper investigation before the arrest," he said, demanding intervention of the information and law ministers.
 He also demanded unconditional withdrawal of the case.
 Sazzad Hossain, officer-in-charge of Dohar Police Station, said the accused attempted to deteriorate the law and order situation and tarnish the image of police through publishing false and untrue information.
 Police are trying to arrest the other accused, he added.

GAS PIPE LEAK 8 injured as bus, pick-up catch fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least eight people were injured as a bus and a pick-up van caught fire from a leaking gas pipeline on Mirpur road in the capital's Dhanmondi area yesterday afternoon.
 The "Number-7" bus caught fire in front of Sunrise Plaza near Dhanmondi-27 around 3:35pm, Ashrafur Islam, station officer of Mohammadpur fire service station, told The Daily Star.
 Most of the injured were the bus passengers, the fire station official said, adding that a pickup van also caught fire at that time.
 On information, two units of firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the flame, he said.
 Of the injured, two were admitted at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital with burn injuries, while the six others took primary treatment, said G.G. Biswas, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station.

"The bus caught fire when it was stopped right where the gas was leaking from the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company pipeline," added the OC.
 One side of the road from Rapa Plaza to Manik Mia Avenue remained blocked for hours following the incident. The incident resulted in heavy traffic in the area as the bus was rescued.
 Meanwhile, the gas line repair work disrupted gas supply in the area. "A valve kit was damaged," said Md Kamruzzaman Khan, director (operation) of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited (TGTDC).
 Due to the gas line repair, some areas, including Dhanmondi, Kalabagan, Shukrabad, Greenroad, Farmgate, Rajabazar, Kalyanpur, Gabtoli, Shymoli, Mohammadpur and Adabor, experienced disruption and low gas pressure, he added.
 The supply had not resumed till 10:00pm last night.

Macron to unveil measures to fight anti-Semitism

AFP, Paris
 French President Emmanuel Macron will announce measures to fight a flare-up in anti-Semitism during a dinner with Jewish community leaders yesterday, a day after a spate of hate crimes brought thousands onto the streets in protest.
 Macron's address to the annual dinner of the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions will be closely followed by Europe's biggest Jewish community.
 On a visit Tuesday to a cemetery in the Alsace region, near Germany, where 96 Jewish tombstones were spray-painted with blue and yellow swastikas, Macron promised Tuesday. "We shall act, we shall pass laws, we shall punish."
 His visit came as thousands of people took part in rallies around France to condemn a recent spike in anti-Jewish crimes, which Macron and his government has linked in part to anti-Semitic elements within the "yellow vest" protest movement.

At least 10 killed

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 Abdur Karim, a local, said he was standing near the building around 10:40pm when he suddenly heard a bang. He heard a sound of explosion near the four-storey building. Flames soon spread to the building and a broken piece of glass hit him, leaving him injured.
 Sohag Hossain, one of the injured, said he, along with two of his friends, were working at a plastic factory at the building at the time. Suddenly, they heard a huge noise before noticing the fire. They tried to flee but could not escape the fire.
 He was being treated at the DMCH burn unit.
 Many people from the area were seen looking for their relatives, who apparently went missing, at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital after the incident.
 Of the injured, 44 were rushed to the hospital, Bacchu Miah, inspector at the DMCH police outpost, told this newspaper.
 Sixteen of them suffered burns and nine were admitted to the burn unit of the DMCH. The other injured hurt themselves while trying to flee, he said.
 Two other victims were taken to nearby Salimullah Medical College.
 Several burnt vehicles were seen in front of the buildings.
 Rafiqul Islam, a tenant at Hazi Wahed Mansion, said they had asked the landlord on several occasions in the past to remove the godowns from the building, but in vain.
 The incident brings to mind the Nimtoli fire that killed 123 in 2010. It had sparked a public outcry, demanding relocation of chemical warehouses and stores from the area, but little has been done in the last nine years.

Saudi backs

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 The prince, whose country accuses Iran of backing militant strikes, added: "I want to state that we are ready to cooperate with India in every way, including through intelligence sharing."
 He said India and all "neighbouring countries must work together".
 US President Donald Trump Tuesday described as a "horrible situation" the Kashmir terrorist attack by Jaish-e-Mohammed, and said he was getting reports on it and would issue a statement.
 US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, Bolton, and the White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders in separate statements have asked Pakistan to immediately take action against the JeM and its leaders and end support to terrorist safe haven.
 UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called on India and Pakistan to take immediate steps to defuse tensions and offered to help broker a solution if both sides agree.
 The crown prince, on his first major tour in India since the storm erupted over the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October, also signed joint accords on industry and culture, but announced no major deals.

ENERGY AND INVESTMENT
 In Pakistan, the Saudi prince announced \$20 billion of investment for the Muslim country.
 Modi has faced increasing pressure to take action over the Kashmir attack claimed by Pakistan-based Islamist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). Islamabad, which banned JeM in 2002, has denied any role.
 The Saudi delegation had wanted the Delhi leg of the crown prince tour to be devoted to bolstering its oil supplies to India.
 Saudi Arabia is one of India's key crude

suppliers, along with Iran and Iraq.
 Since taking office in 2014, Modi has also sought to attract Saudi investment in trade, infrastructure and defence. Two-way trade was worth \$27.5 billion last year.
 Saudi Arabia wants to invest more, officials said.
 "Economic power is shifting from West to East and India will be (the) second-largest economy ahead of the United States, which is a big opportunity for us," Amin Nasser, chief executive of Saudi Aramco, the world's biggest oil company, told a Delhi investment conference yesterday.
 Aramco signed an accord in April last year with Indian investors on a \$44 billion petrochemical project in western India. Nasser, a member of the crown prince's delegation, said his firm was in talks with other Indian firms as well.
 Prince Mohammed said Saudi Arabia has invested nearly \$44 billion dollars in India since Modi's visit to his country in 2016.
 "We plan to diversify our investments in petrochemicals and other sectors," he said.
 Prince Mohammed, who was greeted with a traditional Modi bear hug at the airport late Tuesday, was expected to go on to China later yesterday.
 India's opposition Congress party meanwhile criticised Modi for welcoming the crown prince "with such abundance - only hours after he promised billions to Pakistan" while Indians were in grief over the Kashmir attack.
 "PM Modi has shown the country, the martyrs and every soldier in India what he thinks of their service and sacrifice," the party said on Twitter.

Uphold own culture

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 Talking about the contributions of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the Language Movement, she said it was unfortunate that once his contributions had been removed from history.
 Hasina said if people read the "Unfinished Memoirs", the autobiography of the Father of the Nation, they would know how the Language Movement had started.
 She said they were publishing a book in 14 volumes over the 23 years' secret documents of Pakistani Intelligence Branch (IB). The first two volumes of the book have already been published over the secret documents of 1948-'50 and 1951-'52 respectively.
 The PM said people would know about Bangabandhu's contributions to the Liberation War after reading the secret documents.
 She said her previous government (1996-2001) had started construction of the International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka, but the BNP-Jamaat government stopped the work coming to power in 2001.

After returning to power in 2009, the AL government completed the construction work, she added.
 The PM distributed coveted Ekushey Padak-2019 among 21 eminent citizens for their contributions to their respective fields.
 This year's winners of the award are Prof Halima Khatun (posthumous), advocate Golam Arif Tipu and Prof Monwara Islam for Language

'IS teen'

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 British citizen by birth and has never applied for dual nationality with Bangladesh.
 Bangladesh reiterated her firm commitment to adhere to the policy of zero tolerance against terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations.
 The statement comes amid reports the UK has revoked the citizenship of Shamima.
 Meanwhile, AFP reports that Shamima yesterday said she was shocked by the UK government's decision to revoke her citizenship and was thinking about applying to settle in the Netherlands, the homeland of her husband.
 Shamima, who travelled to Syria in 2015 and now wants to return to Britain after giving birth in a refugee camp in Syria last week, said the order was "unjust".
 "I am a bit shocked," she told ITV News after learning of the move, which was announced in a letter Tuesday from the British government to her mother in London.
 "It's a bit upsetting and frustrating. I feel like it's a bit unjust on me and my son."
 She said an "option" could be to apply for citizenship in the Netherlands, where her husband and the father of her newborn child -- an IS fighter believed to be held by Kurdish forces in Syria -- is from and has relatives.
 "Maybe I can ask for citizenship in Holland," she added. "If he gets sent back to prison in Holland I can just wait for him while he is in prison."
 Her fate has stirred controversy since she along with two friends fled her east London home to join the terror network four years ago when she was 15.
 The case highlights a dilemma facing many European countries, divided

over whether to allow jihadists and IS sympathisers home to face prosecution or bar them over security concerns as the so-called "caliphate" crumbles.
 Britain's Home Office said it would not discuss individual cases when asked about Shamima.
 Interior minister Sajid Javid yesterday told lawmakers that revoking citizenship was "a powerful tool" not used lightly.
 "But when someone turns their back on (our) fundamental values and supports terror they don't have an automatic right to return to the UK," he said.
 However Javid hinted that her newborn son could be treated differently.
 "Children should not suffer, so if a parent does lose their British citizenship it does not affect the rights of their child," the minister said.
 She gave birth to her third child at the weekend, and appealed to British authorities to show "compassion" by allowing her to raise the baby in Britain -- while expressing no regret over having joined IS.
 In the ministry's letter sent to Shamima's mother, it said the teen had the right to appeal the order.
 Tasnime Akunjee, a lawyer for her family, said it was disappointed with the move and "considering all legal avenues to challenge this decision".
 Shamima, who is of Bangladeshi heritage, was born in Britain, has never had a Bangladeshi passport and is not a dual citizen, according to Akunjee.
 The Home Office reportedly believes that she is entitled to claim citizenship in the south Asian country.
 Shamima is currently in a refugee camp in northeast Syria where she fled to escape fighting in the east of the country along with hundreds of other people with links to IS.