

# Migrants occupy Athens rail station in border passage bid

Dozens of asylum seekers occupied the main railway station in Athens yesterday in a burgeoning protest demanding access to the border and passage to other EU states.

The protest has shut down Larissis Station, the main hub connecting Athens to the north, and unfolded hours after a similar move at the migrant camp of Diavata near Thessaloniki, where clashes erupted.

Authorities said the Athens demonstration was sparked by anonymous calls on social media over recent days, telling asylum seekers that human rights groups will assist them in crossing into North Macedonia and on to other EU states.

Both the government and the UN refugee agency have stressed that no such possibility exists.

In Athens, the migrants shouted "Saloniki" (Thessaloniki) and "Germany", an AFP reporter at the station said.

At the Diavata camp, skirmishes broke out between migrants and riot police on Thursday and yesterday, with the security forces making sporadic use of tear gas.

A senior migration ministry official said yesterday the demonstration was intended as a "message" to the European Union.

"It's a message that Europe must understand that this is a problem demanding a European solution," Miltiadis Klapas, general secretary of the migration ministry, told reporters at the station.

"But it cannot be imposed like this," he added, referring to the station shutdown.

More than 70,000 refugees and migrants are believed to live in Greece in the wake of a mass influx beginning in 2015, mainly fuelled by the Syrian civil war.

In 2016, a sprawling tent city formed at the border town of Idomeni, a bottleneck where 8,000 people mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan were stranded after other EU countries began shutting their borders.

The improvised camp was eventually cleared by Greek authorities and the migrants and refugees were relocated to organised facilities around the country.

# German far-right MP could be 'controlled' by Russia: report

A German far-right member of parliament, Markus Frohnmaier, could become "absolutely controlled" by Russia and act in Moscow's interests, media reported yesterday.

The BBC conducted a joint investigation into Russian documents together with the German magazine Der Spiegel, the German TV channel ZDF and the Italian newspaper La Repubblica.

The documents dating from 2017 indicate that close allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin believed that Frohnmaier, elected to the Bundestag lower house in September that year, was very partial to their strategic interests.

They were sent by email on April 3, 2017 to a high-ranking aide in Putin's administration calling for concrete "support" for Frohnmaier, 28.

The analysis describes Frohnmaier's chance of being elected as "high" and an assessment of his potential value to Moscow: "We will have our own absolutely controlled MP in the Bundestag."

# Cops making

anti-narcotics drive last year. Rahman was also trying to contact police for surrender.

Accused in at least six cases, Bhutto is another top narcotics dealer in the district. His three-storey building in Teknaf's Nazirpara area was damaged by locals.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Cox's Bazar Superintendent of Police ABM Masud Hossain said they had already started the process of organising the second surrender programme.

"We are now trying to communicate with the narcotics traders directly and also through some intermediaries," he added.

Meanwhile, the district police have taken an initiative to form anti-narcotics committees in Teknaf's five unions, sources said.

Each of the committee will be comprised of 20 local people who would perform their activities under the supervision of police and using information from the top narcotics traders who have already surrendered.



A man reacts after police disperse migrants and refugees from a field near the town of Diavata in northern Greece, yesterday. Greek police fired tear gas yesterday to disperse them who had gathered in a field near the country's border with Northern Macedonia in the hope of making their way illegally up through the Balkans towards northern Europe.

# Philippines' Duterte warns China to back off disputed island

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has warned Beijing to back off from a disputed island in the South China Sea, warning of possible military action if China "touches" it amid rising tensions over the key waterway.

Duterte, aiming to attract trade and investment from the Asian superpower, has mostly withheld his early criticism of Beijing's expansive claims to the sea -- a point of regional contention because trillions of dollars of goods pass through it.

But as the Philippine military warned this week that hundreds of Chinese coast guard and fishing vessels had "swarmed" the Manila-held Pagasa island, also known as Thitu, the Philippine president spoke out late Thursday.

"I will not plead or beg, but I am just telling you that lay off the Pagasa because I have soldiers there," Duterte said in speech to prosecutors.

"If you touch it, that's another story. Then I will tell my soldiers 'prepare for suicide missions'", he added.

Duterte has repeatedly said war with China would be futile and that the Philippines would lose and suffer heavily in the process.

His words came after his Department of Foreign Affairs issued a statement calling the Chinese ships' presence an "illegal" violation of Philippine sovereignty.

China, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam have all staked claims to various islands and reefs as well as waterways in the sea, with rich petroleum reserves thought to sit deep beneath the waters.

In a major victory for Manila, an international maritime tribunal ruled early in Duterte's presidency in 2016 that China's claims to the area have no legal basis.

# Bus owner arrested

After the accident, the bus was parked by a road there. Bus conductor Yasin Arafat then informed Gopal of the matter over phone and said agitated locals might torch the bus. Gopal told him to take the vehicle to a safer place.

As instructed, Yasin, who had no driving licence, took the wheel and the bus ran over Abrar near the gate of Bashundhara Residential Area, police said.

Gopal had been on the run since the accident happened. A DB team arrested him around 6:30pm on Thursday, said Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

A bus owner's primary responsibility is to ensure immediate treatment of victims after an accident takes place, Masudur said. But without doing so, Gopal committed an offence by asking the conductor to flee the spot immediately along with the bus.

The second accident that killed Abrar, a first-year honours student at Bangladesh University of Professionals, would have been averted, if Gopal acted responsibly, the police official added.

DB officials said in primary interrogation, Gopal admitted that driver Sirajul began his trip from Sadarghat area around 5:45am and hit Synthia Islam Mukta, 20, a student of Mirpur Ideal Girls' Laboratory Institute, at

However, he has largely set aside that ruling and backed off on their once tense territorial dispute over the sea.

He has been criticised at home for taking too soft a stance on China and getting little of the billions of dollars in investment promised by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

For its part, Beijing has downplayed the rising tension over Pagasa, saying on Thursday that both sides had "exchanged views frankly, amicably and constructively" on the issue.

The United States, long-time Philippines ally and former colonial master, has moved to oppose any Chinese expansion in the sea.

For the first time, the US said in March that it would come to Manila's aid in case of an "armed attack" in the South China Sea.

The US navy has also forcefully asserted its right to freedom of navigation in the area, repeatedly sailing close to the man-made islands and drawing Chinese protests.

# Two 'robbers'

them, forcing them to retaliate, Mohiuddin claimed.

The two sustained bullet injuries during the "shootout" and were pronounced dead after being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), he added.

The bodies were kept at the DMC morgue for autopsies.

Rab seized the vehicle and recovered a firearm, two sharp weapons and several bullets from the scene.

Mohiuddin claimed the gang stole the lorry from Dhaka's Rayerbazar area on March 10.

The gang has been active in the city and nearby areas for a couple of years, Rab officials said.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the Rab's claims.

Banshtala in Shahjadpur.

Gopal also confessed that he had been operating the bus on Sadarghat-Gazipur route illegally though the vehicle had the permission to ply on Dhaka-Brahmanbaria road, said the DB official, adding that Gopal did not change the ownership of the vehicle even after he bought it two and a half years ago.

Rejecting his bail petition, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah placed Gopal on a three-day remand after DB Inspector Kazi Shariful Islam, also investigation officer of the case, produced him before the court with a three-day remand appeal.

Earlier, detectives arrested conductor Yasin and bus helper Md Ibrahim from separate places on March 27, a week after Abrar's father Brig Gen (ret'd) Arif Ahmed Chowdhury filed a case with Gulshan Police Station.

# 115 Rohingyas

27 Rohingyas from Teknaf while they were attempting to leave for Malaysia.

The following day, police rescued seven Malaysia-bound Rohingyas from Moheshkhali.

On March 30, members of Bangladesh Coast Guard arrested three alleged traffickers and rescued 32 Rohingyas from the St Martin's Island while they were leaving for Malaysia.

# 1.1m children affected by Venezuela crisis

Says Unicef

The number of children who are affected by the Venezuelan crisis and who will need humanitarian aid this year is expected to more than double to reach 1.1 million, up from nearly 500,000, the UN children's agency said Thursday.

The figure includes children uprooted from Venezuela, those who have returned and others in host and transit communities across Latin America and the Caribbean, said a Unicef statement.

The latest estimate highlighted expectations among aid agencies that the political crisis in Venezuela will worsen in the coming months, exacerbating the dire humanitarian situation of children and families.

Unicef called on governments in the region to uphold the rights of children and ensure they have access to essential services.

An internal UN report seen by AFP last week said seven million people -- about 24 percent of Venezuela's population -- are in need of humanitarian aid, lacking access to food and medical care.

President Nicolas Maduro has blamed US sanctions for Venezuela's economic problems but opposition leader Juan Guaido, who has declared himself interim president, says government corruption and mismanagement are at fault.

Guaido is recognized by the United States and around 50 other governments.

# UN concerned

The fighting has impacted on civilians of various ethnicities in Rakhine and Chin States, including Rakhine, Rohingya, Chin, Mro and Dagnet.

According to reports received by the UN Human Rights Office, fighting has intensified in Buthidaung, Rathedaung, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Sittwe townships in Rakhine State in recent weeks, leading to the displacement of over 20,000 civilians. The impact of the violence on civilians in northern Rakhine has been exacerbated by the government's near-suspension of humanitarian access since January 2019, Shamdassani said.

In the most recent escalation, on the evening of April 3, two military helicopters flew over Hpon Nyo Leik village tract in south Buthidaung township and fired on civilians tending cows and paddy fields, killing at least seven civilians and injuring 18 others, according to sources on the ground, read the statement.

The April 3 attack was carried out in an area that had seen large-scale displacement of Rohingya civilians in recent days.

According to information received by the UN Human Rights Office, some 4,000 Rohingyas were displaced between 25 and 30 March from the villages along the road connecting Buthidaung and Rathedaung towns. The displaced had fled westward and are taking shelter in areas, including Hpon Nyo Leik village tract, Shamdassani said in her statement.

"We call on the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army to immediately cease hostilities and to ensure that civilians are protected. Humanitarian access to all areas of northern Rakhine must urgently be restored, including those areas affected by recent clashes," she said.

As the international community is taking steps towards accountability for the crimes committed against civilians in previous years, the Myanmar military is again carrying out attacks against its own civilians -- attacks which may constitute war crimes. The consequences of impunity will continue to be deadly, the statement added.

# Bus race costs

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Witnesses said two buses of Ramzan Paribahan and Swadhin Paribahan were racing towards Rampura at that time. The bus of Ramzan Paribahan hit Iram's bicycle and dragged him around 10 yards, they added.

"When the buses were trying to overtake each other, one made room for the bicycle while another knocked it down," said Harez Mia, a witness.

In protest, fellow students and locals blocked the intersection after Juma prayers for two and a half hours. They put up barricades on the road with burning tyres, halting vehicular movement.

Around 15 vehicles were vandalised during the road blockade while the agitating people demanded justice for recent road accidents and construction of foot bridges and speed breakers in the area.

The blockade was removed around 4:30pm after the police high-ups assured the protesters of action. After the accident, authorities were seen constructing a speed breaker on the spot.

Earlier on July 29 last year, two college students were killed during a race between two buses in Shewra area on Airport Road in the capital, touching off a wave of protests actively participated by students of almost all educational institutions. The agitations lasted for more than a week and put Dhaka on a standstill.

ANGER, FRUSTRATION

Iram's father Delwar Hossain expressed frustration over the spate of road accidents cutting the young lives short.

"What will happen if I file a case? There would be no action and such accidents will continue..." said Delwar, a ready-made garment trader in Dhaka's New Market area.

One of the protesters said, "Whenever a road accident happens or someone is killed, a footbridge or speed breaker is constructed. Is this how we want to ensure road safety?"

The relatives of Iram want stern punishment of people responsible for his untimely death.

Iram's cousin Masudur Rahman said their another cousin Imran, 28, lost his life under the wheels of a speeding bus at the same place, just three months back.

Khokon Mia, a vendor, said Iram's body was lying on the road for an hour when a patrol team of Khilgaon police was seen nearby. When locals told them to take the body to hospital, they said the area was under Demra police and they had nothing to do about it.

Police said they seized the bus of Ramzan Paribahan and also detained its driver and helper.

COLLISION CLAIMS 2 LIVES

Two persons were killed and 14 others injured in a collision between a truck and a bus on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Manikganj's Shibalay upazila yesterday.

The identity of the dead could not be known immediately.

A Paturia-bound bus of Rabeya Paribahan collided head-on with an onion-laden truck in Mushuria area around 4:30pm, said Yamin-ud Daula, in-charge of Barangail Highway Police Outpost.

The truck driver was killed on the spot while another passenger of the bus died while being taken to hospital. Fourteen passengers of the bus sustained injuries in the accident, the OCs said.

The injured were rushed to Upazila Health Complex and then transferred to Manikganj District Hospital.

Four of the injured were shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated, said Dr Lutfor Rahman, resident medical officer of the district hospital.

ANOTHER STUDENT KILLED

A student of Netrakona Government College, Bijoy Ravid Das, 22, was killed on Mymensingh-Kishoreganj Road in Mymensingh's Gouripur upazila around 10:15pm on Thursday.

Abdullah Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of Gouripur Police Station, said a truck and a human haulier collided head-on, leaving Bijoy dead on the spot.

Police seized the human haulier but the truck driver managed to flee with his vehicle, the OC added.

Bijoy was a former cadet corporal of BNCC at Gouripur Government College unit in 2015-2016 sessions. He passed his SSC and HSC with GPA-5 from Nurul Amin Khan High School and Gouripur Government College respectively.

TWO TEENAGERS KILLED

Two teenagers were killed in a motorbike accident on Khilgaon flyover in the capital yesterday. They are Tajuddin Hossain Tuhin, 17, and Abdullah Al Noman, 16.

Sohrab Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sabujbagh Police Station, said the two were riding a motorbike on the flyover around 3:00pm. Their motorbike was at a speed of over 100kph.

"Noman was driving the bike. He lost control over the bike when he tried to change lane on the flyover and get

on the south side," the OC said.

At one point, the motorbike hit a road divider and fell down from the flyover. Later, when they were rushed to a nearby hospital, doctors declared them dead, the OC added.

None of them was wearing helmet, the OC said, adding both of the teenagers were residents of Wahab Colony in Bashabo.

The bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsies.

BOY KILLED IN PANCHAGARH

A 12-year-old deaf boy was killed as a truck hit his bicycle on Debiganj-Domar Road in Panchagarh's Debiganj upazila around noon yesterday.

The dead is Monir Mukit, son of Moshir Rahman.

Mukit was crossing the road riding his bicycle as he wanted to go a nearby playground. At that time, the truck hit Mukit, leaving him dead on the spot, said witnesses.

Rabiul Hossain, officer-in-charge of Debiganj Police Station, said the body was handed over to the family yesterday evening.

The truck driver fled the scene with his vehicle, the OC added.

RICKSHAW PULLER KILLED IN CUMILLA

A rickshaw puller was killed in Cumilla's Chandina upazila as a Chattogram-bound lorry hit his cement-laden rickshaw near Madhaiya Bus Stand around 9:30am yesterday.

The dead is Abdul Alim, 33. He left behind two children.

Monirul Islam, in-charge of Eliotganj Highway Police Outpost, said two pedestrians were also injured in the accident. They were sent to Cumilla Medical College Hospital.

The body was sent to Cumilla Medical College morgue for autopsy, he added.

Police seized the lorry but the driver managed to flee from hospital after receiving primary treatment, Monirul further said.

Meanwhile, another man was killed on Jashore-Chuknagar road near Sundolpur Bazar of Jashore, reported UNB.

The dead is Jamal Hossain, 23.

He was killed as a speeding truck ran him over around 3:00am.

250 sued

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the belongings of the police box.

"We have collected CCTV footage and pictures of the attack that have been published on different news outlets. The culprits will be brought to book as per the directives of senior police officials," he added.

On Thursday, clash broke out when the workers chased a policeman who was trying to take video footage and photographs of demonstrating workers who had blocked the rail line in Natun Rasta area around 10:30am, said police and witnesses.

Being chased, the law enforcers took shelter in the nearby Pabla police box. Then, some workers attacked the police box injuring four policemen, claimed Kazi Mostaq Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police station.

Contacted, Khulna Metropolitan Additional Deputy Police Commissioner Sheikh Moniruzzaman Mithue echoed OC Mostaq's statement and said the protesters attacked police without any provocation.

Bangladesh Jute Mill Workers' League President Sardar Motahar Uddin, however, denied the allegation and said no worker was involved in the attack on policemen.

"Some opportunist groups carried out the attack," he said.

The Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) and Non-CBA Oikya Parishad, the banners under which the workers protested, would arrange a meeting with CBA leaders of 26 state-owned jute mills today.

After the meeting, workers are expected to rejoin their work tomorrow.

Future of 19m

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The report says that climate change is a key factor pushing poorer Bangladeshis to head to the capital Dhaka and other major cities, where children risk being pushed into dangerous forms of labour and early marriage.

It cites research showing that Bangladesh has six million climate migrants already, a number that could more than double by 2050.

The connection between climate change and child marriage, child labour and access to education is evident in various parts of Bangladesh, according to the report.

"Climate change makes people poorer," said Gyas Uddin, a specialist on child protection issues, "and poverty is a major factor behind child marriage".

Despite making impressive gains in many social indicators in recent decades, child marriage remains rampant in conservative, Muslim-majority Bangladesh.

Bangladesh currently has one of the world's highest rates of child marriage with nearly a third of girls being married before the age of 15.

According to Unicef Bangladesh Child Protection Specialist Kristina Wesslund, climate change is one reason why an estimated 3.45 million Bangladeshi children are involved in child labour.

"Climate change is undoubtedly increasing the number of children who are pushed into the workplace, where they miss out on an education and are terribly exposed to violence and abuse," Wesslund said.