



PHOTO: REUTERS

A member of Misrata forces, under the protection of Tripoli's forces, prepares himself to go to the front line in Tripoli, Libya yesterday. Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar pushed on with his assault on Tripoli, defying international calls for a ceasefire days into a battle that has left dozens dead.

Breaking

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the Synergetic Air-Breathing Rocket Engine (SABRE) and took place at a testing facility at the Colorado Air and Space Port in the United States.

At such high speeds, air flowing through the engine can reach incredibly high temperatures, which can potentially cause damage.

A pre-cooler reduces the temperature of gases before they enter the core engine itself.

Recent tests prove that the component can cool gases from over 1,000 Celsius to ambient temperature in less than 1/20th of a second, according to a statement from Reaction Engines.

"This is a hugely significant milestone which has seen Reaction Engines' proprietary pre-cooler technology achieve unparalleled heat transfer performance," said Mark Thomas, Reaction Engines' CEO.

"The HTX [precooler] test article met all test objectives and the successful initial tests highlight how our pre-cooler delivers world-leading heat transfer capabilities at low weight and compact size."

Thomas emphasised that the technology could also be used in hybrid electric aviation as well as very high-speed flight.

The SABRE engine is designed to reach speeds above Mach 5 in the Earth's atmosphere, and will then be able to turn into a rocket that can fly through space at up to Mach 25.

It "breathes" air from the atmosphere, allowing greater fuel efficiency and lower weight than existing rocket engines that need to carry their own oxygen supply.

Abrar's death

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handed him over to police in the capital's Shahjadpur on the morning of March 19 after the vehicle had hit and injured a college girl.

After the accident, the bus was parked by a road there.

Informing Gopal about the incident over the phone, conductor Yasin Arafat said agitated locals might torch the bus. Gopal then asked him to drive the vehicle to a safer place.

Yasin, who had no driving licence, took the wheel and the bus ran over and killed 20-year-old Abrar near the entrance to Bashundhara Residential Area. The conductor committed the offence only to flee the scene with the bus, Gopal told Metropolitan Magistrate Sadbir Yasin Ahsan Chowdhury.

According to the bus owner, driver Sirajul started a trip from Sadarghat area around 5:45am on March 19 and hit Synthia Islam Mukta, 20, a student of Mirpur Ideal Girls' Laboratory Institute, at Banshitala in Shahjadpur.

The magistrate recorded Gopal's confessional statement after DB Inspector Kazi Shariful Islam, also the investigation officer of the case, produced him before the court on expiry of his three-day remand.

The magistrate sent him to jail after recording his statement at his chamber.

A DB team picked up Gopal from the capital's Mugda early on April 4. The following day, he was placed on three-day remand.

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

Sirajul, Yasin and Ibrahim had given statements before the same magistrate, admitting their guilt.

Price fall hits Aman

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cost was no less than Tk 700 per maund."

The price of Aman paddy started falling at the end of January, according to farmers in the upazila.

Market insiders have identified two causes for this: an "unplanned" import of rice in fiscal 2017-18 and a bumper yield of Aman this season.

Although the latter one appears to be a blessing, farmers are actually paying the price, said KM Layek Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Auto Major and Husking Mill Owners' Association.

"The imported rice is still dominating the market. Because of these, Aman prices have fallen," he said.

"This season [October to December], the country saw a production of 1.53 crore metric tonnes of Aman rice, which was 13 lakh metric tonnes higher than the target," said Abdul Muyeed, director at the field service unit of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

In fiscal 2017-18, the total rice production in the country was 3.63 crore metric tonnes, according to DAE. As much as 3.52 crore metric tonnes of rice was consumed in the period, the US Department of Agriculture mentioned in its Global Agriculture Information Network report 2019.

According to the food ministry, in the previous and current fiscal year, 39 lakh metric tonne and 1.5 lakh metric tonnes of rice were imported respectively.

Until March last year, there were 13.67 lakh metric tonnes of rice in the

government's warehouse. The amount was sufficient and no sign of food crisis surfaced.

During a recent visit to Gopalganj paddy market in Dinajpur sadar upazila, the district correspondent saw farmers waiting for buyers with sacks of paddy lying by the roads. But they hardly got any that day.

One of them, Mobarak Ali of Borail village, said he had 20 sacks of paddy but had no buyer.

"If I sell paddy at the current market rate which is Tk 600, I will lose Tk 100 per maund. Moreover, we need to pay Tk 100 to each carrier and Tk 20 for one sack. One sack means two maunds of paddy," he said.

Reza Humayun Kabir Chowdhury Shamim, president of Dinajpur Rice Mills Owners Association, said, "Not only the farmers, we, the parties who bought paddy following Aman harvest, are also affected by the fall in price," said.

"We are now incurring a loss of about Tk 200 per sack."

Layek Ali said, "Once the boro paddy hits the market, the price of Aman paddy would drop further."

He urged the government to consider limiting export of fine rice as a preventive measure.

Although the farmers are hit by losses, there is no sign of price falling at the retail rice markets in Dhaka. According to the food ministry, the current retail price for coarse rice in the capital is Tk 32/34 per kilogram.

(Dinajpur Correspondent Kongkon Karmaker contributed to this report)

5-year-old raped

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The victim was undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Her medical tests will be conducted at the hospital when her condition improves, said the OC.

In Mymensingh, police have so far arrested three out of seven accused for allegedly gang-raping an eighth grader in Ishwarganj upazila on Saturday night.

Police are conducting drives to arrest the other accused, said Ahmed Kabir Hossain, OC of Ishwarganj Police Station.

Yesterday, the victim was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for medical tests.

Besides, the three arrestees were produced before a Mymensingh court in the afternoon and the court sent them to jail, said the OC.

The schoolgirl, 14, of Kishoreganj Sadar upazila, lives in Dhaka. She was returning to Dhaka from her village home by train on Saturday afternoon.

Quoting the victim, the OC said as she found no direct train from Kishoreganj to Dhaka, the girl was travelling in a Mymensingh-bound local train to catch a Dhaka-bound train from Mymensingh town.

But she got off the train at Sohagi Railway Station in Ishwarganj in the evening. She then went to Ishwarganj Railway Station to get on a Mymensingh-bound train, the police official said.

As night grew, she did not get any train to travel to Mymensingh town. She was moving around the Ishwarganj station.

Around 11:00pm, a local youth named Sujan Mia offered her an over-

night stay at his house. Finding no other way, the girl agreed to go with him, the OC added.

Sujan and five to six other youths raped the girl throughout the night at the house and drove her out of the house on Sunday morning.

Locals found the girl in Ishwarganj station area critically injured and informed police of the matter. Police later rescued the girl.

On Sunday night, the victim's mother lodged a case with Ishwarganj Police Station, accusing seven people, including the arrestees.

Our Benapole and Mymensingh correspondents contributed to this report.

CHRISTCHURCH MASSACRE

Top judge named to head inquiry

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday named a Supreme Court judge to lead an inquiry into the massacre last month of 50 worshippers at two Christchurch mosques.

"The government will ensure no stone is left unturned as we examine as quickly as possible how the March 15 attack happened, what could have been done to stop it and how we can keep New Zealanders safe," Ardern said.

The Royal Commission probe, the most powerful judicial inquiry available under New Zealand law, will be led by Supreme Court Judge William Young and report its findings by December 10, she said.

The Royal Commission probe, the

BJP for 'easier' trade,

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controversial, and further enhancing border security.

On foreign policy, the poll document said a BJP government would take forward India's "Neighbourhood First" policy by "extensively leveraging forums such as BIMSTEC to accelerate regional coordination and economic co-operation with countries in our neighbourhood.

"Nationalism is our inspiration, empowerment of weaker sections is our vision and good governance is our mantra," Modi said, adding that the manifesto would take India on "one mission, one direction".

The manifesto released at the BJP headquarters here said the party was committed to enactment of the Citizenship Bill for the protection of members of religious minority communities from neighbouring countries who were escaping persecution.

It also said a BJP dispensation "will take effective steps to prevent illegal immigration into the north eastern states. There has been a huge change in the cultural and linguistic identity in some areas due to illegal immigration, resulting in adverse impact on local people's livelihood and employment.

"We will complete the NRC process in these areas on priority basis. In future, the NRC will be implemented in a phased manner in other parts of the country," it added.

In an apparent reference to the resistance to the Bill among most of the non-Bangla speaking people of the seven north eastern states, the manifesto said the BJP would explain the issue to the people of the area.

The manifesto also promised to secure the country against "internal and external aggression", scrapping a law for special rights to residents of Jammu and Kashmir, and doubling farmers' income by next year.

The document also "reiterated" the promise of a Ram temple at Ayodhya and pledged to "explore all options".

It further promised a "zero tolerance" approach to terrorism.

The party further pledged a permanent house for every family living in temporary houses or without any home by 2022.

The manifesto addressed pension for small and medium farmers, and shopkeepers, days after the Congress manifesto vowed to bring about several welfare measures, including a grant of Rs 72,000 to the poorest 20 percent households in the country if voted to power.

The BJP said it would spend Rs 25 lakh crore in the next five years for rural and agricultural development.

The manifesto promised to revise tax brackets to help the middle class, after the Modi government's last budget dished out major tax relief in February.

35 killed as fighting

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destroyed airport, some 30 kilometres south of Tripoli, and the rural area of Wadi Rabi further east.

World powers have expressed alarm at the violence, saying it threatens to further destabilise Libya and derail UN-led efforts to find a political solution to the country's woes.

The US has appealed for an "immediate halt" to combat operations and the UN Security Council has called on Haftar's forces to halt their advance.

On Sunday, Russia blocked proposals for the council to adopt a formal statement, instead insisting that all Libyan forces be urged to stop fighting, diplomats said.

Moscow is a key supporter of Haftar, along with Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

But the Kremlin yesterday urged "all sides to reject actions that could provoke bloodshed in battle and the deaths of civilians".

Fierce clashes Sunday near Tripoli saw Haftar's fighters and an array of powerful western Libyan armed groups exchanging fire including air strikes.

Forces backing the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord on Sunday announced a counteroffensive named "Volcano of Anger".

Spokesman Colonel Mohamed Gounou said it was aimed at "purging all Libyan cities of aggressor and illegitimate forces", in reference to Haftar's fighters.

Boats carrying

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More boats carrying about 200

Rohingya migrants are believed to be

at sea, Noor Mushar said.

"If we find them in our waters, we

will bring them to shore," he said,

adding that it was not clear if this

group was travelling from Bangladesh

or Myanmar.

More than 700,000 Rohingyas

crossed into Bangladesh in 2017

fleeing an army crackdown in

Myanmar's Rakhine state, according

to UN agencies.

Myanmar regards Rohingyas as

illegal migrants from the Indian

subcontinent and has confined tens

of thousands to sprawling camps in

Rakhine since violence swept the area

in 2012.

The unrest prompted tens of thou-

sands of Rohingyas to flee Myanmar

by sea. The exodus peaked in 2015,

when an estimated 25,000 people

crossed the Andaman Sea for

Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia,

many drowning in unsafe and over-

loaded boats.

The group had been travelling with

hundreds of other Rohingyas on a

larger boat before they were trans-

ferred to smaller, crowded vessels in

Thai waters, he said.

The 47 migrants were dropped

about one kilometre offshore and

walked for an hour through mud.

Forty one were detained and six peo-

ple are missing, Noor Mushar said.

"Since there was no one to greet

them, they made their way in sepa-