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BANGLADESHIS IN WAR-TORN LIBYA

500 stranded in Tripoli

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 500 Bangladeshis may have been stranded in two locations of Libya, about 200-kilometre off to the country's capital, amid fighting between UN-backed Libyan government and Libyan National Army.

Ashraful Islam, first secretary of Bangladesh Embassy in Libya, yesterday told this to The Daily Star over phone.

He said around 250 Bangladeshis had already been relocated from different areas of Tripoli in the last two weeks as a military campaign began in the areas to seize the city.

The Bangladeshis who had been relocated were accommodated at different Bangladeshi camps in safer areas of Tripoli, Ashraful said.

“We have relocated the Bangladeshis as they sought help after getting trapped into different areas as those were under attack,” he said.

The embassy has a helpline number (+218-21-4911198-99) which is always ready to rescue those contacting, he added.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Libya is taking help from the Libyan Red Crescent to locate Bangladeshis using GPS and rescue them, the diplomat said, adding no casualty of Bangladeshis was reported during the recent fighting.

Nearly 180 people were killed as a result of Libyan National Army leader Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's assault on Tripoli, reported The Guardian.

The news outlet also reported that at least four more civilians were killed in a bombardment on the Libyan capital overnight on April 16.

According to Bangladesh Embassy, an estimated 20,000

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Charred remains of shops at a kitchen market in the capital's Malibagh after a fire broke out there yesterday morning. Inset, firefighters at the spot.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN/PRABIR DAS

Fire ravages 230 shops in Malibagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A massive fire swept through Malibagh kitchen market yesterday morning, burning down some 230 shops.

The fire originated from a shop around 5:30am and it took 13 firefighting units around four hours to douse the fire, said Ershad Hossain, a duty officer at the Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters.

No casualty was reported. A four-member committee was formed to investigate the fire, he said.

However, the shop owners blamed the firefighters as they could not save any of the 230 shops in the market. They alleged that the fire fighters did not carry adequate water even after being informed immediately after the fire broke out.

“Two fire fighting vehicles arrived immediately but the six others arrived late without carrying sufficient water,” said Faisal Majumder, secretary of the kitchen market traders' association.

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Violence mars 2nd phase of India polls

Sporadic clashes flared in J&K, West Bengal; polls worker gunned down by suspected Maoist rebels in Odisha

REUTERS, New Delhi

Millions of voters across swaths of southern India cast ballots yesterday in the second phase of a mammoth, staggered general election, as sporadic violence flared in the east and the insurgency-racked state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Election Commission said 66 percent of more than 155 million eligible Indians had voted, as per provisional data, in 95 constituencies in 12 states. Results of the election to India's 545-member parliament are expected on May 23.

In focus are the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where the main opposition Congress party and its allies need to win big if they hope to stop Prime Minister Narendra Modi from securing a second straight term.

Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have run an aggressive campaign, playing to their nationalist, Hindu-first base and attacking rivals they accuse of appealing minorities.

Critics say such divisive rhetoric

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MUELLER'S RUSSIA PROBE

Report outlines likely Trump obstruction

REUTERS, Washington

Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report on his inquiry into Russia's role in the 2016 US election detailed a series of actions by President Donald Trump to impede the probe, raising questions about whether he committed the crime of obstruction of justice.

The release of the 448-page report yesterday that disclosed the findings of a 22-month investigation represented a watershed moment in Trump's tumultuous presidency.

Mueller did not make a conclusion on whether Trump, whose presidency has been overshadowed by the Russia investigation, had committed obstruction of justice but did not exonerate him either.

The report provided fresh details of how the Republican president tried to force Mueller's ouster, directed members of his administration to publicly vouch for his innocence and dangled a pardon to a former aide to try to prevent him from cooperating with the special counsel.

It also concluded, as Barr announced last month, that Trump and his campaign had not engaged in a criminal conspiracy with Russia during the election.

Barr in March concluded that Trump had not broken the law, but told a news conference yesterday that Mueller had detailed “10 episodes involving the president and discusses potential legal theories for connecting these actions to elements of an obstruction offense.”

Trump appeared to be in a celebratory mood, saying at a White House event with wounded US troops that he was “having a good day” following the report's release, adding, “It's called no collusion, no obstruction.”

The report's disclosure, with portions blacked out by Barr to protect some sensitive information, is certain to launch a new political fight in Congress and on the 2020 presidential campaign trail, as Trump seeks re-election in a deeply divided country.

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Mother helps cops nab son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cig

A mother helped police arrest her son, hours after he allegedly stabbed one of his friends to death in the port city's Bayazid area yesterday.

Fatema Rahman, local leader of a faction of Mohila Awami League, told police where her son Forhad, 20, was hiding, leading to his arrest, said Ataur Rahman Khandakar, officer-in-charge of Bayazid Police Station.

Forhad had told his mother over phone that he was hiding at a relative's house in Char Patharghata area after stabbing his friend Shahadat Hossain, 22, the OC said.

“If I hid his crime today as the mother, he would have committed another bigger crime in the future. I cannot do that as a citizen,” Fatema told The Daily Star.

Quoting witnesses, Mobarak Ali, councillor of ward-7 of the city corporation, said Forhad stabbed Shahadat over trifles around 2:00pm.

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Giant ancient lion discovered



AFP, Paris

A giant lion with enormous fangs that roamed the Kenyan savannah more than 20 million years ago was one of the largest ever meat-eating mammals, researchers said yesterday.

A team unearthed the lower jaw, teeth and other bones of a new species, Simbakubwa kutokaafrika -- Swahili for “big African lion”.

They calculated it would have weighed up to 1,500 kilogrammes and could have preyed upon the elephant-like creatures that lived there at the time.

“Based on its massive teeth, Simbakubwa was a specialised hyper-carnivore that was significantly larger than the modern lion and possibly larger than a polar bear,” said Matthew Borths, from Duke University, who co-led the research with

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No info on Khaleda going to the UK

Says foreign minister

STAR REPORT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said his ministry has no information about whether Khaleda Zia is going to London.

“We have not received any such information yet... We have no information,” he told reporters at a press briefing held at the ministry ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 3-day visit to Brunei from April 21-23.

Following media reports, there has been speculation in the political circle that

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 19

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-35 12-30 4-45 6-24 7-45
JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 5-00 6-28 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A Brown Crake in Chapainawabganj's Babudang. The photo was taken in March.

PHOTO: SAYAM U CHOWDHURY



Brown Crake in Bangladesh: a century-long wait

SAYAM U CHOWDHURY

It's quite an incredible feat to still have more than 600 species of birds in our country and with the increasing numbers of birdwatchers and wildlife photographers every year, many new species are being discovered or rediscovered.

One such rediscovery was made in Chapainawabganj in February by a Rajshahi-based photographer Nur E Saud, who is a dentist by profession and wildlife

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Love for orchid

Nature lover working hard to preserve rare varieties of orchids on the Khagrachhari hills



ANVIL CHAKMA, back from Khagrachhari

A nature lover is working hard to preserve rare varieties of orchids that bloom on the hills in Khagrachhari.

Sathowai Marma has a collection of 55 varieties of the flower in his home yard at Rajyomoni neighbourhood in the hilly district.

The 33-year-old man has taken the move simply to raise awareness among the indigenous community not out of any commercial purpose. “They are not for sale. Many

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