



Mourners pray yesterday, for the victims of the mass shooting, during an improvised vigil in a parking lot of a shopping center in Virginia, Beach, Virginia. A municipal employee sprayed bullets "indiscriminately" at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center, police said, killing 12 people and wounding four in the latest mass shooting to rock the US. PHOTO: AFP

## Disgruntled worker kills 12

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arrived within minutes of the first shots, Cervera said, and the suspect was killed after a lengthy gun battle.

Virginia Beach police had trained for a mass shooting.

"You cannot replicate the intensity of an environment such as this," Cervera said.

The police chief said the gunman "immediately and indiscriminately" fired on his victims, but declined to comment on any possible motive.

According to local media, Craddock was 40 years old and had no serious criminal record.

The rampage in Virginia Beach was the worst mass shooting in the United States since November 2018, when a dozen people were slain at a Los Angeles-area bar and grill by a gunman who then killed himself.

Survivors of Friday's shooting recounted scenes of pandemonium and fear that erupted as gunshots rang out, and workers scurried frantically for cover. Some said they stacked desks against office doors to barricade themselves in.

Cervera has said he will only give the gunman's name once because city authorities want to focus on his victims.

Virginia Beach City Manager Dave Hansen identified the victims during the news conference and said that, except for the contractor, they had worked for Virginia Beach for between 11 months and 41 years.

"They leave a void that we will never be able to fill," Hansen said.

The four people who were seriously wounded in the shooting were still being treated at local hospitals. They included a police officer whose life was saved by his ballistic vest, Cervera said.

The bloodshed unfolded at Building Two of Virginia Beach's municipal center complex, where office space for more than 400 employees houses information technology, public works, planning and

utilities departments next door to City Hall.

The complex lies several miles inland from the town's popular seashore, situated on the Atlantic coast at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Southeast Virginia's most populous city has roughly 450,000 year-round residents.

President Donald Trump had been briefed on the shooting and was monitoring the situation, the White House said Friday night.

As of yesterday midmorning, the Twitter-friendly Trump had made no public comment on the shooting.

According to the Washington-based Gun Violence Archive monitoring group, Friday's shooting was the 150th mass shooting in the United States this year, defined as a single event in which four or more people are shot or killed.

That rate, as Democratic senator Chris Murphy pointed out on Twitter, amounts to virtually one mass shooting a day.

Despite the scale of gun violence across the nation, gun ownership laws are lax, and efforts to address the issue legislatively have long been deadlocked at the federal level.

Among Democrats, the response to the shooting was especially pointed, with many of the party's White House hopefuls weighing in on the gun violence crisis.

"Another horrific shooting shocks the nation, this time in Virginia Beach," Pete Buttigieg tweeted. "Already, this much is clear: it is unacceptable for America to remain the only developed country where this is routine. We must act."

Senator Bernie Sanders decried the influence of the National Rifle Association, a powerful lobby group that routinely calls for more guns in US society so that ordinary citizens are armed and ready to confront a "bad guy."

"Congress must listen to the American people and pass gun safety legislation. This sickening gun violence must stop," he said in a tweet.

## Most farmers

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from whom the food directorate could buy the amount specified by the government. So, whoever could force their way early to the LSD could make a sale, and the rest did not.

Food Inspector Tariqul Islam, who was assigned at the Kalibari Road depot, said he was authorised to procure 242 tonnes of paddy from 484 listed farmers (500kg each), but the agricultural department sent them a list of 6,500 farmers.

"So, I followed the 'first come, first served' policy, and made the purchase after verifying their agriculture cards and the list," he said.

He acknowledged that many farmers failed to make sales.

Another listed farmer, Taibur Rahman, 52, of Jummapara in Lalmonirhat municipality, faced the same problem. He alleged that rice mill owners, businessmen and politically-connected people were able to sell, while "genuine" farmers like him could not.

Farmer Saminul said, "We, the marginal farmers, get deprived whereas politically-backed farmers, and businessmen are benefited."

A rice mill owner in Lalmonirhat town, Uzzal Hossain, said he sold 500kg of paddy to the government depot at the sadar upazila. "Many other rice mill owners, businessmen, even political people, sold theirs as they are also farmers," he said.

On Thursday, Amjad Hossain, 56, a farmer and Awami League activist at Gokunda village, sold 1,000kg of paddy at the Teesta depot in the upazila headquarters.

"I made the sale against two agriculture cards -- one is mine and the other is my wife's. My wife got the card as she works with me and thus also a farmer," he said.

Amjad harvested about 31 tonnes of paddy from five bighas of land, he said.

However, Amjad's co-villager and farmer Naser Ali, 58, failed to sell his paddy at the Teesta depot on the same day. "I saw political people and businessmen crowding the supply depot, and the food inspector preferred them over us," he said.

When asked, the food inspector at the Teesta depot, Harunur Rashid, said, "I was allowed to buy only 115 tonnes of paddy

from 230 farmers where the list has 3,800 farmers. I made all the procurement after matching the agriculture cards with the list."

The officer said he had police deployed at the depot after he was threatened on Wednesday when two groups of farmers affiliated with the ruling party clashed over who would sell their produce first.

Talking to The Daily Star, most of the marginalised farmers in Lalmonirhat's other upazilas including Aditmari, Kaliganj, Hatibandha, and Patgram said they failed to make sales.

This boro season, 310,105 tonnes of paddy were grown on 48,150 hectares of land in Lalmonirhat's five upazilas. But the government set the procurement limit at only 1,493 tonnes from 2,986 farmers while there are 55,000 farmers on the list in this district. It means that less than six percent of the listed farmers could make sales.

Enamul Haque, agriculture officer at Lalmonirhat sadar upazila, said, "We made the list of farmers based on our survey. Whoever has land and lives on farming was enlisted."

When asked why the procurement limit exceeds the number of listed farmers, he said, "We enlisted all the farmers who came to us, and sent the list to the food directorate. It is the responsibility of the food directorate to decide how they would procure."

## North Korea swine flu outbreak puts South on edge

AFP, Seoul

South Korean troops stationed along the world's last Cold War frontier have been put on high alert in the face of a new infiltration threat from the nuclear-armed North -- fever-stricken wild boar.

An outbreak of African swine fever that has cut swathes through China, Vietnam and Mongolia has spread to the isolated country, sparking worries that sick animals crossing the heavily militarized border could devastate the South's US\$5.9 billion pork industry.

## North-bound trains

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aware but do nothing about it," Rifat Khan, a private university student said.

The Nilphamari-bound Nilsagar Express also ran three-and-a-half-hours behind schedule. It had also been delayed by one hour and 40-minutes on Friday.

Meanwhile, the rail authority was forced to change the entire train, including the locomotive and carriages, of Rangpur Express, which saw a seven-hour delay on Friday. Yesterday, the train had left Kamalapur after a one and quarter hour delay.

The change resulted in passengers facing problems in finding their seats. Many passengers, who had bought tickets for AC seats, did not get those and had to go by normal seats.

Earlier on Thursday, the same train got delayed by three to four hours due to a technical glitch in one of its bogies, a railway official said.

The delay increased on Friday, thus forcing the authority to change the entire train.

Besides, the Khulna-bound Sundarbans Express left after an hour's delay, while the Chattogram-bound Chattala Express was delayed by half an

hour.

Around 10:30am yesterday, Kamalapur Railway Station Manager Mohammed Aminul Haque said four among 17 trains had been delayed.

He told reporters that the pressure of passengers caused the trains to reach the station late and so it could not leave on time either.

About Rangpur Express, he said they tried their best to replace the seats on the train. They have to replace AC seats with first class chairs as the new train had two AC chair coaches less than the original one.

On Friday, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon visited the railway station and apologised for the delays on the first day of the weekend ahead of Eid.

**NO MAD RUSH AT GABTOLI**

Eid holidaymakers' rush at city's Gabtoli bus terminal was thin yesterday, with several bus services cancelling their trips due to shortage of passengers.

Staffers of at least four southern-region bound bus services said shortage of passengers had led them to cancel 14 trips.

Sanjeeb Babu, counter master of Hanif Paribahan at Gabtoli Bus Terminal, said they cancelled

six trips since morning due to a shortage of passengers, while five buses left for their destinations with many seats vacant.

Although the respective bus services who cancelled made alternative arrangements -- either by returning tickets or arranging seats on another bus on the same route -- passengers of the cancelled bus trips alleged that they were not informed prior to the cancellation.

"They have returned the money. But I am not sure whether I will get a ticket of another suitable bus service with a preferred seat," Monowar Hosssain, a student of a private university, said.

The buses that did depart left on time. Torrential rain in the morning, however, and shortage of passengers forced several bus services to delay their trips by 15 to 30 minutes, staffers of different bus services said.

Meanwhile, Badiuzzaman Badal, senior vice-chairman of Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carriers') Association, said the number of passengers going by waterways started to increase from Friday and will reach peak on June 3.

"We have completed all our preparation to take people home," he added.

## All they wanted

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"But we didn't use any anti-government placards. Rather, our placards said: 'Ensure fair price for crops'; 'Buy crops directly from farmers' and so on."

Registrar Nuruddin Ahmed said he did not know anything about the protest or the placards and that he only followed the directives of the university's disciplinary board.

Contacted, Ashiquzzaman

Bhuiyan, proctor and a member of the disciplinary board, said they issued the notice to the students for forming the human chain "without taking their permission and carrying anti-government placards".

To give an example of anti-government activities, he said, "One placard read: The throne will burn if crops burn."

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said the notice

was "offensive".

"It shows the university authorities have forgotten their responsibilities."

Every citizen has a right to protest, he said, adding, "Those who see a student protest demanding fair prices of rice as an anti-state activity have become essentially blind. This notice makes that very clear."

[Our Faridpur correspondent contributed to the story.]

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## Top yaba dealer's

FROM PAGE 12

Md Firoz ordered the law enforcers to seize the houses and properties of the three after hearing the case.

Prior to that Criminal Investigation

Department (CID) filed a case against the three under Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012, said ABM Masud Hossain, superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar.

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