

## Two killed

FROM PAGE 16

with bullet wounds, the commanding officer said.

They were rushed to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex, where they were both declared dead.

The BCB officials claimed to have recovered 10,000 yaba pills, a gun and three bullets from the spot.

Three BCB men were injured during the "gunfight", the BCB official added.

## DU students

FROM PAGE 16

to walk from the hospital to get a vehicle to return home.

The students' four-point demand include cancellation of affiliation of seven colleges, publishing results within two months, digitalising all administrative activities and controlling mass transport movement inside the campus.

The agitating students announced that they would barricade the Shahbagh intersection today and called for boycotting all classes and exams until their demands are met.

"We lifted our blockade for today; we will block the intersection tomorrow to meet our demands," Tarekul Islam, an organiser of the demonstration, told The Daily Star. Tarek, a student of law department, alleged that the university's academic and administrative activities slowed down due to the affiliation of the seven colleges.

"Some students [of the seven colleges] are often involved in various immoral and illegal activities identifying themselves as Dhaka University students which tarnishes the university's image," he said.

Contacted, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said the students should have discussed the matter with the university authorities instead of blocking the streets which causes public sufferings.

"The students can place their demands before us and we can sit for discussions. The students should not demonstrate in a way that causes public sufferings," he added.

On Tuesday, students of the seven colleges barricaded the Nilkhet intersection to press home their four-point demand, including promotion of students who failed their honours first-year final exams.

On February 17, 2017, the government affiliated Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College, Kabi Nazrul Government College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Mohila College, Mirpur Government Bangla College and Government Titumir College with Dhaka University.

## Kuwait arrests stateless protesters demanding citizenship

AFP, Kuwait City

Kuwaiti authorities have arrested more than a dozen people, including a leading rights activist, in a crackdown on protesters demanding greater rights for stateless Arabs, Amnesty International said yesterday.

They face a number of charges including participation in unlicensed demonstrations, spreading false news and state security offences, the London-based rights group said.

"The Kuwaiti authorities have arbitrarily arrested more than a dozen protesters in recent days, including prominent human rights defender Abdulhakim al-Fadhli and other activists, in a crackdown on peaceful protesters demanding greater rights for the stateless group known as Bidun," Amnesty said in a statement.

"Twelve protesters remain in custody," Amnesty said the arrests took place between July 11 and 14 following protests by members of the Bidun group in Kuwait after a fellow Bidun, 20-year Ayed Hamad Moudath, committed suicide for reportedly being unable to obtain official documents and ultimately losing his job.

The rights group criticised the arrest of peaceful protesters and denying Bidun their rights.

"By continuing to deny the Bidun citizenship, the authorities are denying these long-term residents a range of basic rights, including their right to health, education and work, which in effect exclude them from being part and parcel of and contributing to a vibrant Kuwaiti society," said Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty's Middle East research director.

Rights groups have repeatedly accused Kuwait of mistreating about 100,000 stateless Arabs, saying the Gulf country has failed to recognise the right of these long-term residents to citizenship.

Kuwait has insisted that most Bidun or their forefathers came from neighbouring countries and do not qualify for citizenship. According to Amnesty, the Bidun group continues to face restrictions on employment, health care, and state support provided to Kuwaiti citizens despite reforms announced in 2015.

## US sanctions on Myanmar army

FROM PAGE 16

government has taken no actions to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses, and there are continued reports of the Burmese military committing human rights violations and abuses throughout the country," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

Pompeo said a recent disclosure, first reported by Reuters in May, that Min Aung Hlaing ordered the release of soldiers convicted of extrajudicial killings at the village of Inn Din during the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya in 2017 was "one egregious example of the continued and severe lack of accountability for the military and its senior leadership."

"The Commander-in-Chief released these criminals after only months in prison, while the journalists who told the world about the killings in Inn Din were jailed for more than 500 days," Pompeo said.

The Inn Din massacre was uncovered by two Reuters reporters, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, who spent more than 16 months behind bars on charges of obtaining state secrets. The two were released in an amnesty on May 6.

The US announcement came on the first day of an international ministerial conference on religious freedom hosted by Pompeo at the State Department that was attended by Rohingya representatives.

"With this announcement, the United States is the first government

to publicly take action with respect to the most senior leadership of the Burmese military," said Pompeo, who has been a strong advocate of religious freedom.

"We designated these individuals based on credible information of these commanders' involvement in gross violations of human rights," he said.

### SANCTIONS CONDEMNED

A spokesman for the Myanmar military, Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, said by phone the military had not ignored the accusations, citing internal probes. One army-led investigation in 2017 exonerated security forces of all accusations of atrocities. Another is ongoing.

"Right now we have an investigative committee ... to conduct a detailed investigation," he said. "They should value these facts."

He said the soldiers had been lawfully released.

Myo Nyunt, a spokesman for the ruling National League for Democracy Party, condemned the decision to impose sanctions.

"This kind of action happened because they don't understand the real situation of Myanmar," he said. Myanmar's leaders had not ignored human rights concerns, Myo Nyunt said.

A 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar drove more than 730,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. UN investigators have said Myanmar's operation included mass killings, gang rapes and widespread arson and

was executed with "genocidal intent."

The State Department has so far stopped short of calling the abuses genocide, referring instead to ethnic cleansing and a "well-planned and coordinated" campaign of mass killings, gang rapes and other atrocities.

"He (Pompeo) has not come to the point at which he has decided to make a further determination. Generally our policies are focused on changing behavior, promoting accountability, and we have taken today's actions with those goals in mind," a senior State Department official told reporters, asking not to be identified.

The military in Myanmar, where Buddhism is the main religion, has denied accusations of ethnic cleansing and says its actions were part of a fight against terrorism.

A declaration of genocide by the US government could require Washington to impose even stronger sanctions on Myanmar, a country where the United States has competed for influence with regional rival China.

The senior State Department official said Washington hoped the latest steps would strengthen the hand of the civilian government in Myanmar in its effort to amend the constitution to reduce military influence in politics.

The Trump administration had thus far imposed sanctions on four military and police commanders and two army units involved in the abuses against the Rohingya and had been under pressure from the US Congress to take tougher steps.

## Regulate use of antibiotics

FROM PAGE 16

"We asked them to take steps so that pharmacies can't sell antibiotics without prescriptions," he added.

The minister also asked the DCs to visit district and upazila hospitals regularly and check attendance of doctors, cleanliness and other issues of the hospitals.

### MOSQUITO CONTROL WEEK

Amid rising cases of dengue fever in and outside the capital, the government will now launch a nationwide "Anti-Mosquito Week" campaign from July 25 to 31.

Local Government Division Minister Tazul Islam told reporters the DCs were given directives to take necessary steps in this regard.

He said a cleanliness drive will be carried out simultaneously across the country.

More than 5,000 people have been infected with dengue virus so far this

year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

On media reports that the chemicals the two Dhaka city corporations are using to kill mosquitos were ineffective, the minister said, "Even if I wish, I can't spray chemicals to kill mosquitos that can also kill humans."

Use of any chemicals for mosquito control requires permission from the World Health Organisation, he pointed out.

Tazul said he ordered relevant officials to have those chemicals re-tested at the labs of international certification agencies, including the SGS and Bureau Veritas.

About the ongoing demonstration by municipalities staff in front of the Jatiya Press Club, he said they were examining their demands.

Several thousand employees of the municipalities from across the country started a sit-in programme in

front of the Press Club from July 14, demanding their salaries be paid from state funds, like other government employees.

The minister said no municipalities would survive if they cannot earn enough to meet their annual expenditure.

### NO CATTLE MARKET ON ROADS

The DCs have been instructed not to allow any cattle market on roads and highways ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha next month.

"We sought their cooperation in this regard," said Nazrul Islam, secretary of Road Transport and Highway Division.

In many cases, cattle markets are set up on roads and highways, blocking traffic movement.

Nazrul Islam took part in the meeting with the DCs as Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader is abroad for medical check-up.

## Dawn editor wins

FROM PAGE 16

and former board member who died in 2016.

"The award is presented annually to an individual who has shown extraordinary and sustained achievement in the cause of press freedom," notes the CPJ website.

Notable past recipients of the award include Alan Rusbridger, former editor-in-chief of The Guardian who was awarded in 2012, The Associated Press's Kathy Gannon who was the recipient in 2015, and CNN's Christiane Amanpour who received it in 2016.

In a statement released by the CPJ to announce the award, it observed that at a time when journalists and media in Pakistan were facing extraordinary pressure, Abbas continued to be a vocal supporter of steps taken to keep journalists safe. He was elected as the chairman of Editors for Safety in 2015, a body of editors who work to provide protection to journalists who faced threats.

"Zaffar Abbas is the embodiment of journalistic courage, which is why the board is so pleased to honour him with the Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award," said Kathleen Carroll, chair of the CPJ board.

"Every day he fights to deliver facts to Dawn's readers in the face of pressure, obstacles, and blockades from the institutions in Pakistan that

would much prefer to go about their business without scrutiny from the press or the public."

Abbas, who was named Dawn's editor in 2010, started his journalism career in 1981 as a junior reporter for The Star, a Karachi-based newspaper.

He started working with the Herald magazine in 1988 as an investigative journalist and later joined the BBC as the network's Pakistan correspondent in 1992. He joined Dawn in 2006 and covered the insurgency and civil war in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation, post-9/11 events and their impact on the region which included the rise of religious extremism.

Abbas has been subjected to intimidation and physical torture more than once in his journalism career. He and his brother were attacked at their house by armed men in 1991 when he reported on the activities of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. A few years later, when he was working at the BBC, the network's office in Islamabad was set on fire by militants and Abbas and his colleague were physically assaulted. The violence was said to be a reaction to two videos broadcast on the BBC regarding sectarian killings in the country.

In recent years, Dawn has come under increasing pressure and its circulation has been disrupted in several cities on multiple occasions after the paper published an exclusive

report in 2016 pertaining to relations between the civil and military leadership. The CPJ statement, quoting Abbas, said that he and the reporter of the news story were subjected to hours of interrogation by members of intelligence agencies but refused to reveal their sources.

"Even discussing politics or serious conflicts can be a red line," the CPJ quoted Abbas as saying.

The committee will also honour journalists from Brazil, India, Nicaragua, and Tanzania with the 2019 International Press Freedom Awards "amid the erosion of press freedom in democracies around the globe", the body's press release stated.

"In all honesty, it is a tribute to Dawn's highly dedicated editorial team," said Abbas in his reaction to the award.

"Despite the unending intimidation, harassment, demands for self-censorship, disruptions in advertising and distribution of the newspaper, and significant pay cuts due to immense financial pressures on the newspaper, these thorough professionals have continued to work tirelessly to defend press freedom and disseminate the truth. It is precisely for this reason that even many of its detractors regard Dawn as one of the most credible newspapers in South Asia. So, thank you CPJ for honouring us. I am humbled," he added.

## Amid attacks, Pak media dwindle

FROM PAGE 16

what it called "brazen censorship".

The Committee to Protect Journalist last year warned that the powerful Pakistani military had "quietly, but effectively, set restrictions on reporting". RSF, in a report in April last year, said the extremist groups and intelligence agencies of Pakistan were already on the list of its predators of press freedom.

The RSF places Pakistan on 139th position on its press freedom list.

The Pakistan government has defended its record, and last week Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told a media freedom conference in London that there was "no question of gagging" journalists after being challenged on his country's record.

Prime Minister Khan, a cricket hero who captained the national team to World Cup victory in 1992, was elected last summer after running a fiery campaign -- vowing to crack down on corruption and build an Islamic welfare state.

But, nearly one year later, his rule has been marred by a crackdown on civil rights activists, the rounding up of opposition leaders, and increased pressure on the press.

On Tuesday, Pakistani journalists held nationwide protests to denounce rampant censorship by the country's powerful security services, massive layoffs and months-long delays in payments of their wages due to budget cuts.

The rallies, dubbed Day of Protests, were spearheaded by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, which said that journalists, who face the "roughest phase" in the country's history, have decided to "fight the unprecedented censorship."

In the last few months, hundreds of journalists have been laid off as media houses came under financial constraints after government advertising was drastically reduced, reported AP.

Ashraf Khan, president of the union of journalists in the port city of Karachi, said authorities are also

using the country's cybercrime law as a tool to crack down on social media freedoms.

Authorities are also asking social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to suspend accounts and take down pages for a variety of reasons, Khan added.

Zafar Abbas, editor of the leading Dawn daily which has faced increasing pressures, said Pakistani journalists have seen severe restrictions in the past, including shutting down of newspapers, imprisonment of journalists and direct censorship.

"But what we are witnessing today in the form of pressures from the state institutions ... news blackouts and self-censorship, is far worse," Abbas said.

Abbas, it was announced Tuesday, will receive the prestigious Committee to Protect Journalism's 2019 Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award "recognising extraordinary and sustained achievement in the cause of press freedom."

## Minni placed on 5-day

FROM PAGE 16

day remand. We hope that many more important information will come out in remand," said the officer-in-charge of Barguna Police Station.

Minni is the key witness of the murder that took place in front of her college on June 26. Rifat Sharif, a 25-year-old internet service provider, was indiscriminately hacked by a group of youths there.

In a video footage of the incident that went viral in the social media, Minni was seen screaming and trying in vain to save her husband from the assailants.

On Tuesday morning, Barguna police took Minni and her father Md Mozammel Hossain Kishor to the police lines to record Minni's statement, but arrested Minni around 9:00pm.

"We have found Minni's involvement in the murder after interrogating her," Maruf Hossain, superintendent of Barguna police, said at a press conference that very night.

Mozammel said his daughter had fallen ill as police abused her mentally throughout the 11-hour long interrogation. "It is unfortunate that police have turned her into a perpetrator whereas she is the witness. She tried to save her husband," he told this paper.

He submitted a bail petition to the court yesterday claiming that his daughter was unwell but got turned down.

IO Humayun brushed off Mozammel's claim. "We arrested her because we found her involvement in the murder," he said.

Five days ago, Abdul Halim Dulal Sharif, father of Rifat and plaintiff of the case, demanded immediate arrest of Minni alleging that she had a hand in the murder.

He claimed that Minni had married Sabbir Hossain Nayan alias Nayan Bond, one of the killers, before she tied the knot with his son. Her family had kept the matter a secret, Halim had told a press conference.

In response to that, Minni said propaganda was being spread by a certain group to hide the real killers.

"Whatever my father-in-law has said is false and baseless. My father-in-law is suffering from dementia," Minni said while addressing a press conference at her father's house in Nowakata village of Barguna Sadar upazila on Sunday.

Rifat's father had started the case against 12 people the very day his son died.

Ten out of 13 arrested in the case so far have given confessional statements. They are: Rabbi, Oli, Tanvir, Chandan, Hasan, Sagor, Najmul, Tiktok Redoy, Ratan, and Saimon.

Three accused -- Rifat Farazi, Rabbi Akon, and Arian Shrabon -- are currently facing remnants of different durations.

The prime accused of the case, Nayan, was killed in a reported gunfight with police in Barguna Sadar on July 2.

Five FIR named accused: Risan Farazi, 20, Md Musa, Mohaiminul Islam Sifat, 19, Rayhan, 19, and Md Hasan, 19 are on the run.

## 1.3m people sign up

FROM PAGE 16

The intense secrecy surrounding the facility has made it fodder for alien conspiracy theories and it has long featured in pop culture, including the "The X Files" TV show and the movie "Independence Day."

The Facebook event's creators explained: "We will all meet up at the Area 51 Alien Center tourist attraction and coordinate our entry."

"If we naruto run, we can move faster than their bullets. Let's see them aliens."

"Naruto," for those uninitiated in Japanese anime, is a popular character known for leaning forward as he sprints with his arms outstretched behind him.

The event has already spawned countless memes, many centering around how best to distract the guards so others can sneak in (try searching for "Area 51" on Twitter).

Others speculate that the FBI may

track those who plan to attend the event.

In a pinned post on the Facebook page, one of the event's "organizers" took the precaution of issuing a disclaimer lest he attract the wrong kind of attention.

"P.S. Hello US government, this is a joke, and I do not actually intend to go ahead with this plan," wrote Jackson Barnes. "I just thought it would be funny and get me some thumbs uppies on the internet."

The Air Force was apparently not amused, telling the Washington Post: "[Area 51] is an open training range for the U.S. Air Force, and we would discourage anyone from trying to come into the area where we train American armed forces."

"The U.S. Air Force always stands ready to protect America and its assets."

## Govt plans to introduce

FROM PAGE 2

speedy trains, goods transport would be easier and faster, creating opportunities for enhanced business and trade.

"The economy will become stronger ... we'll be able to establish poverty- and hunger-free golden Bangladesh as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and for what the freedom fighters fought and laid down their lives," she said.

The PM mentioned that the current distance between Dhaka and Benapole by railway is much longer -- 385 kilometres.

"There's good news! On completion of the Padma bridge, we'll set up Bhangra as a railway junction ... we'll link Jashore with Faridpur, and then there'll be no problem to go to Benapole through that route. The distance will get reduced by 180 kilometres and the journey time by 4-5 hours. Anyone will be able to travel to Benapole from Dhaka at a minimum time," she said.

In this regard, she asked the authorities to recruit necessary manpower to the railway and provide modern training to make its staffers capable of operating such modern trains.

"Such steps will strengthen both the railway communications and the national economy fulfilling the desire of establishing a prosperous

Bangladesh."

Hasina thanked the Asian Development Bank for always supporting Bangladesh in developing its railway sector.

She said trains could carry a greater number of passengers and goods at lower cost which is very much important for a densely populated country like Bangladesh.

"But it's regretful that during the BNP regime they had wanted to close this sector. After returning to power, we created a separate ministry for the railway sector and made separate allocation in the national budget so that they could provide services to people."

Termining communications very important for development, the PM said the aim of her government was to take communications services closer to mass people.

About the new trains, Hasina said these are the gifts of her government for the people of Rajshahi and Khulna Division ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon and ADB Country Director Manmohan Parkash also spoke on the occasion. Railways Secretary Mofazzal Hossain highlighted various achievements of the railway through a power-point presentation.

A video documentary was also screened at that time on the development of Bangladesh Railway.

## Flood ravages

FROM PAGE 16

stations across the country. Of these, 23 stations showed that water was flowing above danger levels.

Meanwhile, rail communication between Gaibandha and other districts remained shut since around 11:00am as the rail track was submerged in Sadar upazila's Trimohoni area.

Thousands of people were suffering due to the floods across the country.

"My house, furniture and all other household items have been washed away by water from the Dharla river. I am now homeless," said Ziaul Rahman, 32, a resident of Kumarpur village in Kurigram's Sadar upazila.

Razia Begum, a resident of Aurar Para char in Bogura's Sariakandi upazila, said, "We cultivated jute in eight hectares of land. But the sudden flood has washed away our jutes. We cannot understand how will we recover the loss."

In Naogaon's Manda upazila, the flood-control embankment on the right bank of Atrai river breached

early yesterday, causing floods in low-lying areas of at least eight villages.

People of hilly areas have also fallen victims to floods.

U Chai Marma, a resident of Bandarban town, said, "My house is totally damaged in the flood. I don't have any money to repair it. I don't know how my family will survive the upcoming days under the open sky."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed yesterday said the armed forces were ready to help if the flood situation worsens, reports UNB.

He made the remark while replying to a question at the end of the first session of the deputy commissioners' conference yesterday.

General Aziz said they have informed everyone that the Army, the Navy and the Air Force were ready to help if needed.

(Our correspondents from Rajshahi, Bandarban, Tangail, Kurigram, Jamalpur, Pabna, Nilphamari and Bogura contributed to the report.)