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74 killed in Pak train fire

Dozens injured as cooking gas cylinders of pilgrims explode; three carriages destroyed

AFP, Rahim Yar Khan

At least 74 people were killed and dozens injured after cooking gas cylinders exploded on a train packed with pilgrims in Pakistan yesterday, some dying after leaping from carriages to escape the inferno, authorities said.

Television footage showed flames pouring out of three carriages as people could be heard crying during the incident, in a rural area of central Punjab province.

Some of the passengers -- many of whom were pilgrims travelling to one of Pakistan's biggest religious gatherings -- had been cooking breakfast when two of their gas cylinders exploded, Ali Nawaz, a senior Pakistan Railways official, told AFP.

Many Pakistanis carry food on long train journeys, but gas cylinders are supposedly banned. Pakistan's railways minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed later told reporters that it had been a "mistake" to allow the cylinders on board.

Dozens of people crowded along the tracks staring at the burning carriages, which had been disconnected from the rest of the train, television images showed.

Firefighters rushed to the scene near Rahim Yar Khan district. Rescue workers and soldiers could also be seen, as bodies were carried away covered in white sheets.

"A cylinder exploded and I don't know how, fire erupted everywhere," one survivor, Muhammad Imran, told AFP from a hospital in Rahim Yar Khan.

"I jumped out of the train to save my life. There was a

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3



A handout picture released by Punjab Emergency Service Rescue shows residents gather beside the burning carriages after a train caught fire near Rahim Yar Khan in Punjab province, Pakistan yesterday. Inset, some burnt carriages.

PHOTO: AFP

Number of abused workers in KSA small

Says foreign minister; downplays horror stories returnees narrate

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen downplayed the deaths and exploitation of Bangladeshi female migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, claiming the number of such victims was "small".

"There are some 2.5 lakh to 3 lakh women [working in KSA]. How many of them have died?" he asked journalists who raised the issue of women domestic workers facing physical, mental and sexual abuses in the Kingdom.

A research by Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Program on 110 abused female migrant returnees from the KSA found that 61 percent were physically abused, 14 percent were sexually abused, 86 percent did not receive their full salaries and 24 percent were deprived of food.

Brac Migration Program recorded the returns of 1,300 female migrants from Saudi Arabia in 2018 and 900 so far in 2019 after facing abuses.

According to Brac estimates, the actual

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

ROAD TRANSPORT ACT

Law goes into effect, workers still upset

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation yesterday demanded amendments to some sections of the Road Transport Act-2018 that is going to be enforced today.

The law mentions that certain offences are not bailable. The federation also demanded that accident-related cases cannot be filed under section 302 of the Penal Code-1860 without investigation. The section deals with murder.

"We want to see accident cases are not being filed under section 302, instead of section 304(B). In investigation, if a driver is found guilty of killing someone purposely, then we'll have no complaint if section 302 is used instead of section 304(B)," said Shajahan Khan, executive president of the federation.

"We will protest if an accident is considered murder due to influence," Shajahan, a ruling Awami League lawmaker and former shipping minister, said while making a statement at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

On October 22, the Road Transport and Highways Division issued a gazette, stating that the law would be effective today, without any changes. Parliament passed it in September last year.

Section 105 of the act says no matter what this act contains, if anybody gets seriously injured or killed in a motor vehicle-related accident, it would be considered an offence under the relevant sections of the Penal Code-1860.

However, no matter what section 304(B) of the Penal Code contains, if anybody causes accident by reckless and negligent driving, and kills or injures someone severely, such person would face a maximum sentence of five years in jail or fine or both, reads section 105 of the RTA.

The offences that fall under section 105 of the act are not bailable.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

J&K formally stripped of state status

AFP, Srinagar

India's Muslim-majority region of Kashmir was formally divided yesterday, almost three months after losing its autonomy in a move that triggered violence and stoked tensions with arch-rival Pakistan.

The move, announced in early August when India imposed a lockdown and sent in tens of thousands of extra troops, saw Jammu and Kashmir cease to be a state and split into two new administrative territories ruled directly from New Delhi.

Speaking next to a colossal statue of independence hero Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in his home state of Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hailed a "bright future" for the blood-soaked Himalayan region.

Local authorities in Kashmir, meanwhile,

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

Congress formalises Trump impeachment process



AFP, Washington

Congress formally opened a new, public phase of its corruption investigation into Donald Trump yesterday as US lawmakers voted for the first time to advance the impeachment process targeting the US president.

"Today the House takes the next step forward as we establish the procedures for open hearings... so that the public can see the facts for themselves," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

"What is at stake in all of this is nothing less than our democracy." The top Democrat and Trump's chief nemesis in Congress addressed fellow lawmakers shortly before her chamber took a Halloween morning vote along party lines -- 232 to 196 -- to pass a resolution that lays out rules for the next stages of the impeachment process.

Trump has repeatedly branded the process as illegitimate and politically motivated and, true to form, his reaction was swift.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

BACCHU 'LET OFF' JS body summons ACC chief

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday summoned the Anti-Corruption Commission chairman and ACC investigators concerned to explain as to why the anti-graft body did not take action against former BASIC Bank chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu for his alleged involvement in plundering around Tk 4,500 crore of the state-owned bank.

The parliamentary standing committee on law issued the directive in a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with its Chairman Abdul Matin Khashru, a ruling Awami League lawmaker, in the chair.

The House watchdog asked the ACC chairman and ACC investigators to appear before the parliamentary committee's next meeting likely to be held within a month.

"The High Court has clear and specific directives for taking actions against

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Sheikh Kamal Cup Terengganu stifle host's dreams

SPORTS REPORTER

The Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup, which began on October 19 with eight teams vying for the title, came to a close at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. Amid much fanfare at the port city, Malaysian outfit Terengganu FC eked out a 2-1 win over Chattogram Abahani in the tournament final.

You can find a detailed report on this story on page 18 of today's issue of The Daily Star.



PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 1

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:55 12:30 4:00 5:30 7:15
JAMAAT 5:30 1:15 4:15 5:34 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



THE FLYING FLOWER

The Gaudy Baron butterfly sits on a wall in New Market area of Chapainawabganj. Nothing dull can ever offer to camouflage such a wondrous creature. But perhaps such beauty never needed a disguise to begin with, for why should it?

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এফবিসিসিআই (FBCCI) সহ দেশের বিভিন্ন চেম্বার ও এসোসিয়েশন-এর অনুরোধের প্রতিক্রিয়ায় তাঁদের সমস্যা বিবেচনা করে অনলাইনে ১৩ ডিজিটের মূল্য সংযোজন কর(ভ্যাট) নিবন্ধনের সময়সীমা আগামী ৩০ নভেম্বর, ২০১৯ খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত বৃদ্ধি করা হয়েছে। সম্মানিত করদাতাদের নির্বিলম্বে মাসিক রিটার্ন দাখিল, আমদানি-রপ্তানি ও টেন্ডারসহ অন্যান্য ব্যবসায়িক কার্যক্রম পরিচালনার লক্ষ্যে উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে অনলাইনে (www.vat.gov.bd) ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন গ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

আসুন, সবাই মিলে অনলাইনে ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন নিয়ে রাজস্ব সুরক্ষায় সরকারকে সহায়তা করি।

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