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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Dhaka seeks effective role from Asean

4-day summit of the regional bloc begins in Bangkok today

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh wants a strong and effective role of the Asean in the Rohingya repatriation as the regional bloc begins its four-day summit in Bangkok today.

Dhaka says the problem, created by Myanmar, is now turning into a regional crisis, with the Rohingyas spreading across the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). The crisis will aggravate in future if it is not resolved.

"As a member of Asean, Myanmar's role is more important now than ever before," Col (retd) Faruk Khan, chair of the parliamentary standing committee on the foreign ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He led a parliamentary delegation to Thailand, the current chair of Asean, and Singapore, with the specific objective of convincing those countries to come forward with a stronger role in making sure that Myanmar creates conducive conditions in Rakhine for the return of the Rohingyas.

The delegation highlighted the negative consequences of the Rohingyas' prolonged stay in Bangladesh and some other Asean countries, and requested them to strongly raise the Rohingya issue at the summit with due importance.

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A beastly act

Differently-abled girl raped multiple times by neighbour in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A differently-abled girl was raped by a neighbour in Jashore's Monirampur upazila on multiple occasions. She is now four months pregnant.

Victim's mother filed a case against Bhagirat Biswas with Monirampur Police Station on Thursday night.

Victim's aunt Krishna Rani said the girl's father was not alive. Her mother is also a differently-abled woman. The girl is a student of a school for children with disabilities in Monirampur.

Bhagirat's wife Maina Biswas, on several occasions, took the 14-year-old girl, who has speech impairment, to their house by luring her with food. Bhagirat then raped her, Krishna alleged.

Bhagirat and his wife went into hiding. On Tuesday, the girl vomited several times and was taken to a hospital. After medical tests, doctors said she was four months pregnant.

Shikdar Matiar Rahman, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Monirampur Police Station, said police were looking for the accused.

The girl was admitted to Jashore Medical College Hospital, he said.

Double murder in the capital

Throat-slit bodies of woman, household found at Dhanmondi apartment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman and a female domestic help were found murdered in a flat in the capital's Dhanmondi area last night. Police have detained two people for interrogation.

The victims are Afroza Begum, 65, and her domestic help Bithi, 17. Police found deep cuts to the victims' throats.

The two were killed hours after Afroza recruited a new female domestic help, who was absconding since the double murder, said police.

Some valuables, including three mobile phones, jewellery and money were missing from the apartment.

Abdul Latif, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi police station, said they recovered the bodies from the flat of a building on Dhanmondi Road-28 around 7:55pm.

Afroza's family members said she used to live in one of the apartments of his son-in-law Kazi Monir Uddin Tarin, deputy managing director of Creative Group. Monir lived with his family at an adjacent flat.

Police detained Monir's bodyguard Bachchu and Belayet, an electrician, over the incident.

Talking to The Daily Star, Monir said the owner of a local beetle leaf shop introduced the new female domestic help to Bachchu.

Around 3:30pm yesterday, Bachchu brought the house help to Afroza's flat when she was not there.

As she returned to the flat about an hour later, Bachchu introduced the domestic help to Afroza, said Monir.



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'RDX' found in bag at Delhi airport

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The authorities of Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi curbed passenger movements for a couple of hours as they recovered a bag full of suspected RDX content in the wee hours yesterday.

The material was first detected around 1:00am (Delhi time) by a member of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) in the arrival area of Terminal-3.

According to Delhi police, the RDX content was recovered on information and was later kept in a cooling pit.

Sanjay Bhatia, deputy commissioner of Delhi police (airport), said, "The bag was removed with the help of CISF and shifted to another place. It has not been opened yet. It seems like there are some electric wire inside it. We have increased the security of the

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Lab grows mustard plants for Mars



REUTERS, Prague

Czech scientists have opened a lab to experiment growing food for environments with extreme conditions and lack of water, such as Mars.

The "Marsonaut" experiment by scientist Jan Lukacevic, 29, and his team at the Prague University of Life Sciences is based on aeroponics - growing plants in the air, without soil, and limiting water use to a minimum.

The plants grow horizontally from a vertical unit and are stacked one above the other to minimize space. Researchers experiment with light and temperature changes, Lukacevic said.

The team has already succeeded in growing mustard plants, salad leaves, radishes and herbs like basil and mint.

Scientists ate their first harvest last week.

"They taste wonderful, because they grow in a

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ONION CRISIS Long-term plan needed

Say traders, CAB leaders; price hits Tk 150 per kg

AKANDA MUHAMMAD JAHID

Onion prices have gone beyond the general people's reach as per kg of the cooking ingredient was selling for Tk 150 at kitchen markets in the capital on Thursday, despite government's measures to pull the reins.

Both Indian and local onions were sold at Tk 20 to 30 a kg between January and May.

Many people alleged that the prices are soaring as the wholesalers jacked up the prices despite having no shortage of onion supply due to recent imports of the ingredient.

Multiple traders and consumer association leaders told The Daily Star that the imported onion cannot help bring back normalcy in the market as the import cost except from India is very expensive.

Saying that there is no immediate remedy for the crisis, they suggested the

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Khoka in a critical condition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sadeque Hossain Khoka, two-time mayor of undivided Dhaka City Corporation and vice-chairman of BNP, is in critical condition and fighting for life at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan, New York.

Khoka's son Ishraque Hossain yesterday told The Daily Star that Khoka was kept at the intensive care

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PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 2

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Trump to rally loyal base against 'sham' impeachment

AFP, Washington

A defiant US President Donald Trump, buoyed by strong Republican support and good employment figures, was to take his fight against impeachment to a Mississippi rally yesterday.

Trump's rally in Tupelo will be his first since the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly, but along sharply divided party lines, to put the impeachment probe on a formal track.

That vote Thursday set in motion a likely unstoppable surge toward Trump becoming only the third American president to be impeached, this time by a Democratic-led House.

He is accused of abusing his office by withholding military aid to pressure Ukraine into opening a corruption probe against one of his 2020 election rivals, Joe Biden.

But while Democrats are advancing against the president, Trump appears

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Iraqi protesters gather at Tahrir Square during an anti-government demonstration in Baghdad on Thursday. The country's president vowed to hold early elections in response to a month of deadly protests, but the demonstrators said the move fell far short of their demand for a political overhaul.

Health emergency declared in Delhi

Schools shut, construction activity banned until November 5 as air pollution spikes since Diwali

NDTV ONLINE

An unprecedented public health emergency has been declared in Delhi and nearby areas by the pollution control body mandated by the Supreme Court, as the region has been trapped in a toxic smog since Diwali. Schools in Delhi will be closed till Tuesday, November 5, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted yesterday.

Schools in the capital have been asked to stop all outdoor activities and sports till November 5 to minimise exposure of children to pollution.

The Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) has also banned construction activity till November 5 as the pollution level in the region entered the "severe plus" or "emergency" category late Thursday night, the first time since January.

The pollution authority has also banned the bursting of crackers during the winter season.

Chief Minister Kejriwal yesterday described the city as a "gas chamber" while distributing masks to schoolchildren. He also blamed the neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab, where thousands of farmers at this time of year burn crop stubble, sending vast clouds of smoke drifting across northern India.

If the air quality continues to be in the "severe plus" category for more than 48 hours, emergency measures such as odd-even car rationing scheme and banning entry of trucks are taken under the Graded Response Action Plan, the official said.

People have also been advised to not exercise in the open till the pollution level reduces and special care should be

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