DRIVE AT ROHINGYA CAMP

# 2 Rab men shot by criminals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two Rab members got shot when criminals opened fire on them during an anti-narcotics drive at a Rohingya camp in Teknaf yesterday.

"A team of Rab went to a Rohingya camp in Nayapara to recover yaba pills. When the team was returning after arresting suspects, criminals opened fire on Rab members from behind," said Rab Director (Legal and Media) Lt Col Sarwar-Bin-Quasem.

Following a tip-off, the team from Rab-15 raided the camp around 4:00pm to recover a large consignment

Solider Imran and Corporal Shahab Uddin were shot. One of them was shot in the leg while the other in the

"They are now out of danger. They will be taken to Dhaka for better treatment," Lt Col Sarwar told The Daily Star last night.

Seeking anonymity, a community leader of Nayapara refugee camp said a group of criminals opened fire on the Rab team in broad daylight leaving two Rab members injured.

#### All loans at 9pc by August last year, but in the end they

FROM PAGE 1 in 2008, didn't the US print dollars?"

"Banks are in agreement with the government's instruction," said Md Nazrul Islam Mazumder, chairman of Asked whether banks would face

Kamal said the government would provide support to banks for a while to tide them over. For instance, 50 percent of the government funds will be kept in

losses because of the latest decision,

private banks from now on. Previously, they were deposited with state banks. This would provide the banks a

steady supply of funds. When his attention was drawn to a

previous identical government measure, he said: "This time we will make sure this instruction is executed properly." The fund will be kept at 5.5 percent

interest rate in state-run banks and at 6 percent in private banks, Kamal said, adding that the private banks would get funds in line with their paid-up capital. "No bank will be allowed to take deposit beyond six percent."

But there would be some losses for banks as they will have to cash out a portion of their fixed deposit receipts (FDR) before their due date, Kamal

Banks earlier pledged to bring down the interest rate to less than 10 percent

did not keep their word despite bagging

a number of facilities to bring down

lending rate. The government provided various benefits to banks, including a reduction of cash reserve ratio -- which is the percentage of total deposits banks must maintain in the form of cash reserve with the central bank -- and repo rate -- which is the rate at which the central bank lends money to banks.

Asked why banks had not kept their previous promise of bringing down the interest rate on lending to single digit, Mazumder, who is also the chairman of Exim Bank, said there has been a difference between the two commitments. "We earlier tried to lower the rates as

per our own decision despite the fact that we did not enjoy full government support to do this," he said, adding that the government agencies did not keep their deposits in private banks as agreed then.

The latest decision will be implemented soon because of the finance minister's strong role here, he

"We strongly believe that the decision will not fail under any circumstance and no additional support will be required for banks for implementation of the decision."

#### Rail services halted

Rab released the man later in the evening.

Hundreds of passengers suffered at different stations and onboard the trains due to the delay.

Maron Chandra Das, manager of airport station, told The Daily Star that gateman Al Amin lowered the barrier at Kasaibari level crossing as Karnaphuli Express approached around 11:00am.

Several Rab men, in a vehicle, asked him to lift the barrier, Maron said, adding that Al Amin told the Rab men that the gate had already been locked. The Rab men then picked him up, he

As the news spread among gatemen of

nearby crossings, they suspended work. Operation of trains remained suspended from 2:50pm-4:40pm, officials said. Dhaka-bound Maitree

from Kolkata

stranded at Tongi, Rajshahi-bound Silk City Express at cantonment, Tangail Commuter at airport, and Upakul Express at Tejgaon stations.

Akbar Hossain, in-charge of Airport Railway Police Outpost, said the gateman was picked up following an altercation with Rab men. The work abstention began about two hours later.

Top officials of Bangladesh Railway talked with Rab officials, Maron said adding that Al Amin was released around 6:00pm.

Contacted, Rab Director (legal and media) Lt Col Sarwar-Bin-Quasem said Al Amin was detained because of allegations of drug peddling and extortion against him.

"After primary interrogation, we released him on a bond," he said. He refuted the allegation of detaining Al Amin because he asked the Rab men to wait until the train crossed the area.

# 43 Bangladeshis killed

remained

Earlier in June at another DG-level talks in Dhaka, the then BSF director general Rajni Kant Mishra had termed border killings as "unfortunate deaths" and said the number of such incidents increased.

Border killings have continued for years despite a commitment from top BSF officials that the number of such deaths would be brought to zero.

Apart from killings, torture frequently takes place on the borderline.

During the last week of April, BSF members tortured a Bangladeshi man by pulling out all 10 of his fingernails with pliers after he was caught for

"illegal entry". Such incidents of torture have caught media attention and the BSF has been heavily criticised by human rights

defenders. Talking to this newspaper, Mizanur

Rahman, former chairman of National Human Rights Commission, termed such incidents "high-handedness of India".

...Unfortunately our government is not that vocal about this issue. Our ministers or secretaries always say that they bring up the issue for discussion with their Indian counterpart. But we don't see any improvement.

"Our government will keep on saying that the bilateral relationship with India is better than any time in the past. On the other hand, such border killings

BERC to get

He said prices of energy go up and

down in the international market and

the government needs to adjust the

prices in the local market accordingly.

And that was why the amendment was

Yesterday, the cabinet also gave the go-

ahead to the drafts of two university Acts

-- Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

University Act, 2019, and Sunamganj

Science and Technology University Act,

2019. The two institutions will be set up

With the establishment of the two

in Kishoreganj and Sunamganj.

a year.

proposed.

will go on ... It's very unfortunate," he said, adding that now the government should step up its efforts to address the

Talking to The Daily Star earlier, Brad Adams, executive director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division, had said despite promises by successive Indian governments to end abuses and hold its forces accountable, there appeared to be complete impunity for BSF soldiers.

He mentioned that there has been a renewed push by the Indian government to stop illegal cattle trade at the border since 2014. "However, a duty to prevent cattle smuggling or other illegal activities at the border does not give the BSF a licence to kill," he said.

Since 2000, more than 1,000 Bangladeshi nationals have been killed in border areas, according to rights defenders who described the areas as "killing fields".

Of the killings, the Felani murder caught everyone's attention. The 15-year-old was gunned down by some BSF members on January 7, 2011, when she, along with her father, was returning home from India through Anantapur border along Phulbari upazila of

Kurigram. The photo of Felani's body hanging upside down from barbwire fence sparked outcry and condemnation throughout the country. Nearly nine years on, her family's wait for justice

seems far from over.

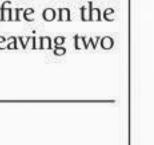
new universities, the number of public Under the existing law, the BERC universities in the country will reach 50. can change energy prices only once Of them, 46 are in operation now. The cabinet also gave nod to the draft

of Marine Fisheries Act, 2019. According to the proposed law, fishing within the maritime boundary of Bangladesh by a foreigner will carry a jail term of up to five years and a fine of up

to Tk 5 crore. Under the existing law, a foreigner

can be handed a jail term of up to three months and fined up to Tk 1 lakh for committing the offence.

The cabinet secretary said the draft law has a provision enabling the authorities to operate mobile courts in the country's maritime area.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina comforting Tuhfa Zaman Ali, wife of veteran diplomat Syed Muazzem Ali, after he passed away at the Combined Military Hospital in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

### 31 injured as police, left activists clash

FROM PAGE 16

Coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon Zonayed Saki, and General Secretary of Bangladesher Biplobi Workers' Party Saiful Haq. Nine policemen were also among the injured.

Two photojournalists Habibur Rahman and Sohel Ahmed Sumit of Sarabangla news portal were wounded while covering the incident. During the clash, vehicular movement at the intersection came to a halt. Of the injured, 22 DLA activists

at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Inspector Bacchu Miah, in-charge of DMCH police outpost, told The Daily "Police attacked a peaceful procession that left around 50 leaders

and nine policemen took treatment

and activists injured. Most of them are females," said Abdullah Al Kafee Ratan, coordinator of the DLA. Abul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said they asked the demonstrators not to break the barricade when they reached near

the Matsya Bhaban area, but they did not listen. "They [demonstrators] attacked us with the sticks attached to the placards, injuring at least nine policemen," he said, adding that they detained four people from the procession on charges

Asked about the "attack" on the procession, Sazzadur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Ramna division) of the DMP, said the protesters attacked police first with sticks. They also threw brick chunks, leaving the nine policemen

In chase of a commendable 174

for five, Rajshahi started decently.

However Wahab, who came in to

bowl in the fourth over, bowled an

extraordinary over featuring a maiden

and three wickets to heap pressure on

pace and bounce from the pitch,

scalped the wickets of Liton Das,

Alok Kapali and Shoaib Malik, all of

whom were caught behind. After that,

Rajshahi was unable to shrug off the

pressure and were bundled out for a

Wahab, who was able to extract

of attacking police.

FROM PAGE 1

Rajshahi.

"Police just dispersed the procession to bring the situation under control with a mild baton charge." Besides the capital, the DLA also

brought out processions to observe the "black day for democracy" in Dinajpur, Rangpur, and Gaibandha, report our correspondents there. The alliance is comprised of

Communist Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Bangladesher Biplobi Workers' Party, Bangladesher Samajtantrik (Marxist), Ganasanghati Andolan, United Communist League Ganatantrik Biplobi Bangladesh, Party, and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Andolan. BNP TO STAGE DEMO TODAY

The BNP yesterday announced that it would stage demonstrations in the capital today as it failed to hold its scheduled rally in the city due to "obstruction" by the police, reports UNB.

Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi made the announcement at a press conference at the party's central office.

As part of its countrywide programme, the party was scheduled to hold a rally in front of its Nayapaltan central office at 2:00pm to observe December 30 as the "democracy killing day".

"The BNP had earlier announced that it would hold a rally in the city today [Monday] to mark democracy killing day. But the government has become so scared that it is not allowing us to stage our peaceful rally," Rizvi

took position in front of their party correspondent.

meagre 100-run total. Wahab ended

career-best T20 figures of five for eight

Tamim and Asif helped Dhaka Platoon

post a competitive total. While Tamim

Earlier, unbeaten fifties from

office and its adjacent areas, roads and alleys since morning to obstruct their Rizvi said the Awami League could

hold rallies and meetings anytime,

anywhere but the opposition parties

had no right to do so as the entire

country had turned into "an empire of the party". In a protest against the "obstruction to yesterday's rally, he said the BNP

would stage demonstrations in all thanas of the capital today. Meanwhile, the party leaders and activists wore black badges, and a black flag was hoisted atop its central office in

observance of the "democracy killing BNP standing committee members at a meeting last week decided to observe December 30 as the "democracy killing

a demonstration in front of the Jatiya Press Club. The BNP, the Gonoforum and some other parties joined the national election under the banner of Jatiya

On Sunday, Jatiya Oikyafront staged

Oikyafront. The BNP bagged six seats in the polls and the Gonoforum two. The Oikyafront turned down the election results, bringing allegations of various irregularities, including "massive vote robbery and nighttime

ballot stuffing". They have also been demanding reelection, cancelling the December 30 polls since the announcement of the results.

BNP activists in Tangail brought out a procession to observe the "democracy He alleged that the law enforcers killing day", reports our district

scalped two back-to-back wickets in

the 13th over to put the pressure back

on the home side. However, Tamim

and Asif strung together a magnificent

unbeaten 90-run sixth-wicket stand to

explosive fifty from Cameron Delport

helped Rangpur Rangers romp to a

seven-wicket victory against Sylhet

Meanwhile, in the day game, an

regain Dhaka's foothold.

Thunder at the same venue.

in 'gunfight' following the loss of two early wickets. However, after Mahedi's departure, Rajshahi all-rounder Forhad Reza

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

'Robber' killed

Dhaka Reporters Unity.

New Year's Eve

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

can be avoided.

said yesterday.

consequences.

No outdoor

celebrations

this time too

Like the previous year, Dhaka

Metropolitan Police has banned

holding of any programmes in open

spaces, including roofs of buildings, in

the capital on the New Year's Eve today.

inform it about any sort of indoor

celebration beforehand so that law

enforcers can provide safety to people

and that any sort of untoward incident

roads, flyovers, rooftops or in any

open spaces will be prohibited from

the dusk of December 31," DMP

Commissioner Md Shafiqul Islam

both in uniforms and plainclothes,

will be deployed in different parts of

people not to use fireworks or

crackers for celebration, adding that

the violators would have to face

to stay at Hatirjheel and Dhanmondi

Rabindra Sarobar after 8:00pm today.

on Dhaka University campus after

6:00pm. Resident teachers, students,

and staffers have been requested to

show valid identity cards to the security

personnel at the university entrances.

entry points of Gulshan and Baridhara

asked to return home by 8:00pm.

Mohakhali's Amtoli intersection.

said the commissioner.

from 8:00pm today.

Meanwhile,

31st night.

Checkpoints will be set up at the

Residents of these areas have been

The two areas will be only

accessible through the Kamal Ataturk

Avenue from Kakoli intersection and

Bir Uttam AK Khandakar Road from

areas after 8:00pm will only be

allowed to do so after a body check,

down before 6:00pm and people

with gun licence will not be allowed

to carry their firearms for nine hours

Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday

said law enforcement agencies had

taken all necessary security measures

to ensure a peaceful celebration of the

the New Year without any trouble,"

he said after inaugurating the annual

general meeting of Crime Reporters

Association of Bangladesh (Crab) at

"Hopefully, people will celebrate

Residents wishing to enter these

Bars have been instructed to shut

Home

Minister

He also requested city dwellers not

No outsiders will be allowed

the capital, the DMP boss said.

A large number of law enforcers,

The DMP chief also instructed

"All forms of public gathering on

DMP also wants city dwellers to

A suspected robber was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Noakhali's

Companiganj upazila early yesterday. Shahadat Hossain Swapan, 39, was the member of a robber gang and was accused in 23 cases filed with different police stations, said Arifur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Companiganj

Police Station. A team of police arrested Shahadat from Chowmuhani area in the district's Begumganj upazila on

Sunday afternoon. During primary interrogation, Shahadat told the law enforcers that his gang members were going to commit a robbery in Chhotodholi village in Companiganj upazila few

hours later. When a police team, along with Shahadat, reached the spot to arrest the robbers around midnight, the criminals opened fire on them, forcing

them to fire back that eventually triggered a "gunfight", OC Arifur said. Shahadat suffered bullet injuries during the incident, the OC said, adding

that he was taken to Companiganj Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

Police recovered a firearm, nine bullets and sharp weapons from the spot, the OC added.

#### Dozens of migrants intercepted in

AFP, Lille

French authorities said yesterday that 19 migrants were intercepted overnight trying to cross the English Channel to Britain, after 31 were rescued and brought back to France early Sunday.

The operations cap a year of growing attempts to brave the frigid and choppy waters off France's northern coast by

migrants from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Rights groups have linked the crossings to a police crackdown to prevent the establishment of migrant

camps in Calais and other areas along

the French coast. Naval authorities said the 19 rescued on a small boat Sunday night included a woman and two children, and some of the migrants were suffering from hypothermia when they were returned to France shortly after midnight.

#### BSCIC estates in a shambles

in 3.4 overs.

Wahab fifer downs Rajshahi

FROM PAGE 1

and ash is piled up here and there. Industry owners said the roads were so bad that truckers do not want to come inside the estate.

Visiting the area, this correspondent found that the drainage system was poor and did not cover the entire BSCIC area. Where there was drainage system, the drains were clogged.

They alleged that the government did not take sufficient care of the infrastructure there.

"There is no good road inside the BSCIC estate, no drainage system. So, when there is a small amount of rain, the whole area is submerged. The estate should also have its own water supply system but it doesn't," Mohan Patwari, owner of Patwari Business Ltd, told The Daily Star.

Patwari added that in the rainy season the situation gets worse as factories get flooded and their operations suspended.

acknowledged the problem and said the situation was similar in other BSCIC estates. A report by the Bangladesh Institute

Dinajpur BSCIC officials also

of Development Studies (BIDS), released earlier this year, sheds light on the challenges the BSCIC estates have been facing over the years. The BIDS study, conducted between

September 2017 and March 2018, is the first such study to identify problems since BSCIC started its journey in 1957. The report said that except for

a few BSCIC estates, all face severe waterlogging due to poor maintenance of the existing drainage system. It also stated that none of the BSCIC estates has boundary walls, a major

concern for industry owners and employees who need to protect their equipment and goods. Street lights too are not available in most of the estates, deteriorating security.

bat through the innings with a 52-ball 68, it was Asif whose late 55-run 28-

played the anchor-role, carrying his ball surge saw Dhaka end on a high. An initially watchful Tamim was

running out of partners before his 37run third-wicket stand with Mahedi Hasan brought back some stability

functioning of the industrial units. "Almost all of the estates have an electricity connection while only 57 percent of the estates have a gas supply connection. About 80 percent of the estates have water supply facilities and one estate has CETP [Savar tannery]. In about 37 estates, ETPs [effluent treatment plants] have been established by individual enterprises," the report

It also said around 22 percent of BSCIC industrial plots have remained unutilised years after years. Weaknesses in rules and regulations, problems in the selection process, infrastructure bottlenecks (such as poor gas/ electricity connections) were the key reasons behind the plots not being The study also found that around 34

percent stakeholders argued that plots in the estates were allocated based on political and other influence. Other factors included a weak

selection process of entrepreneurs for the plots and corruption of BSCIC officials. Some entrepreneurs applied for plots only to resell for profit. Monsur Hossain, senior research fellow and study director of BIDS, said

if the site selection process was better, the BSCIC estates could have been more effective. "The low utilisation of BSCIC plots is alarming. The government's decision to set up BSCIC in all the districts is not

logical and this type of initiative was not successful even in India and China," he For example, Khagrachari BSCIC is almost empty, so special incentives

could be given to the entrepreneurs to encourage them to utilise those BSCIC plots, he added. The BIDS report said the plot and Jhenidah contributed to this report.

utilisation rate is the lowest in Barishal The report also said the absence of a dedicated gas and electricity supply division (50 percent) and the highest in connection and red tape hamper proper Rajshahi division (95 percent).

BSCIC Chairman Mostaque Hassan said there were 496 vacant plots but those would be filled as soon as advertisements had been published to allot the plots. Jhalakathi, Panchagarh,

Sunamganj, Kurigram, Srimangal and some other places there is a crisis of potential entrepreneurs. For example, in Srimangal, there are 80 plots but we got only 10 applications. On the other hand, in Mirsarai, we have got more application than the number of plots," said Mostaque Hassan. Regarding the poor facilities, the

BSCIC chairman said: "Yes, it is true that in some cases the infrastructure of BSCICs is not good but we are trying to improve the situation." He also said most of the times plots

were allotted fairly. "But in reality, we found that some

industries suffered as they started with bank loans [which they could not repay]. When we take the initiative to cancel the plot allotment, the bank concerned files a case. In that case, we can't do anything until the issue is settled," said Hassan about ailing entrepreneurs whose units are "sick" or have shut down completely. The BSCIC estates were established

in six phases since 1960, the latest phase being completed in 2010. A total of 1,969 acres were used for establishing 74 estates -- of which 3.6

percent was for administrative and other purposes (mosques/banks/green spaces etc.) and 19 percent was used for roads and drainage system, the study report said. A total of 10,389 plots were

developed and 96.8 percent of them were allotted to entrepreneurs. Our correspondents in Barishal, Kushtia,

# **English Channel**