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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

China's role as mediator very crucial

Analysts say it is likely to work for a solution after tripartite meet with Bangladesh, Myanmar

PORIMOL PALMA

China's role in Rohingya repatriation is turning out to be a decisive factor in resolving the crisis as the country embarked on the role of a mediator between Bangladesh and Myanmar and is likely to continue it until a solution is found, analysts have said.

The country has taken up the role as the international community's pressure on Myanmar has yielded nothing concrete so far.

A member of the UN Security Council and also a close ally of Myanmar, China is trying to establish its global standing as well as maintain and increase its economic and geopolitical influence on Myanmar, the analysts observed.

On Tuesday, China brokered a tripartite virtual meeting, generating hope in Bangladesh of starting the repatriation by June this year, about four years after the influx of some 750,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh following a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017.

The UN Security Council also could not take any concrete measures to hold Myanmar accountable as China and Russia opposed any such move. Since the beginning of the crisis, China has been seeking a bilateral solution instead of

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Labels from plastic soft drink and water bottles being burnt in the capital's Rayerbazar. While the bottles seen in the background are recycled there is little use for the labels and so those are burnt. This creates environment and health risks as the labels contain plastic and some harmful chemicals, which produce noxious fumes when they are burnt. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

No one held, a month after the murder of a disabled man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Family members of a man who was killed over land dispute in Mymensingh on December 25 alleged that they were being threatened by the accused.

The victim, Mozammel Hossain Babul, 50, had been running a small grocery shop at his home in Kalyanpur village of Mymensingh Sadar since 2007.

No accused has been arrested yet in this connection.

Talking to this correspondent, Babul's wife Sheuly Akter, 45, who works as a domestic help in the capital, said her husband used to pull rickshaw in Dhaka. In 1995, he had an accident and was admitted to the Pangu Hospital, where his right leg had to be amputated.

The lone bread earner of this family at that time, Babul had to start pulling rickshaw again and a photograph of him pulling

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Prowling at night to rob ride-seekers

6 held in N'ganj after video clip of 2 men being thrown out of vehicle went viral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vegetable traders -- Apan Mia and Nazrul Islam -- were waiting near the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on the night of December 28 last year for a vehicle to go to Karwan Bazar when a pick-up van stopped in front of them.

They boarded the vehicle. But as the van started moving, those who took in Apan and Nazrul mugged the duo and threw them off the running van, according to police.

Apan died on the road, while Nazrul sustained injuries.

The horrifying incident was captured by a CCTV camera installed near Kawla area. Detectives later arrested six men in Narayanganj's Rupganj area on Tuesday night, said AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner (detectives) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

A case was filed in this regard with the Airport Police Station after the incident, police said.

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UK Covid strain spreads to 60 countries

Says WHO; India exports vaccines to Maldives, Bhutan

AGENCIES

The UK coronavirus strain has spread to at least 60 countries, the World Health Organization reported yesterday, as 1.6 million residents were banned from leaving Beijing after two cases linked to the new strain were found in the Chinese capital.

Covid-19 has claimed more than two million lives globally since it was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan more than a year ago, while the total number of reported cases is edging towards 100 million.

The arrival of mass inoculation drives in the United States, Europe and Asia had brought hope that the end of the epidemic was in sight.

But deep concern over new variants of the deadly pathogen has triggered governments around the world to toughen constraints on restriction-wary populations as officials grapple with how to slow infections until vaccines become widely available.

In its weekly update, the WHO announced the strain first found in the UK was now in 10 more countries than seven days ago.

It said the South African variant -- which similarly is believed to be more transmissible -- has been reported in 23 countries and territories.

The global health body also said schools should only close as a last resort while research is under way into whether the new variants affect children differently.

"The arrival in late 2020 of new more transmissible variants of SARS-CoV-2 requires additional analysis by sex and age to measure how and if the new variants impact children differently," it said.

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Road crash claims 4 lives in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Four people, including three women, were killed and 24 more injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Khulna highway at Bagail in Faridpur's Bhanga upazila yesterday.

The accident happened around 12:00 noon, said police, quoting locals.

The dead are Rashid Mollah, 58, of Chuadanga's Jibonnagar upazila, and Jahanara Begum, 48, of Faridpur's Nagarkanda upazila, said police.

Mohammad Omar Faruq, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Highway Police Station, said rest of the two could not be identified immediately.

According to the police official, a Barishal-bound bus of Duranta Paribahan hit a roadside island in the area as its driver lost control of the vehicle.

Three people died on the spot whereas another was declared dead by on-

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Stolen 500-year-old Leonardo da Vinci copy found in Italy



AFP, Rome

Italian police have found a 500-year-old copy of Leonardo da Vinci's Salvator Mundi in a Naples flat and returned it to a church that had no idea it had been stolen.

Officers said late Monday they had arrested the 36-year-old owner of the apartment on suspicion of receiving stolen goods, after the painting was found in his bedroom cupboard.

Depicting Jesus Christ with his hand raised in a blessing and holding a crystal orb, the painting is part of the Doma Museum collection within the San Domenico Maggiore church complex in Naples.

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REFUGEE CAMP

5 Rohingyas held with firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Members of Armed Police Battalion (APBn) detained five Rohingya men with firearms in their possession from a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

The detainees are Mohammad Ismail, 22, Khairul Islam Majhi, 22, Jamal Ahmed, 32, Mohammad Salam, 22, and Mohammad Harun, 32, said SP Tarikul Islam, captain of APBn-16.

On information, a team of APBn conducted a raid at Ukha's Chamarkul 21 Rohingya refugee camp around 1:00am yesterday and detained five Rohingyas men.

A rifle, two rounds of bullet and 19 machetes were recovered from their possession, said the APBn captain.

A case against them was underway, he added.

Poacher held with tiger skin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A team of Rab and forest guards has arrested a poacher and recovered a tiger skin from his possession in Bagerhat's Sharankhola upazila.

The arrestee is Gaus Fakir, 45, of Dakkhin Southkhali of the upazila. Previously, he used to earn his living by catching fish in various rivers and canals in the Sundarbans area.

Mohammad Belayet Hossain, divisional forest officer (DFO) of the forest department (East Sundarbans), said, "We had information that Gaus was trying to sell the skin of a tiger. In the guise of a potential buyer, we contacted him and bargained over the price for three to four days ... At one

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 21

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:43 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:47 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A brief spell of rainfall in the morning brought the temperature in the capital down and a thick fog descended, reducing visibility. In this photo taken near the Army Golf course on Airport Road around 1:00pm yesterday, the footbridge just around a hundred yards away is barely visible.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

LOW-INCOME PEOPLE

Rain adds to their plight in biting cold

STAR REPORT

The severity of cold intensified yesterday as some rainfall occurred in many parts of the country, including in the capital.

Meteorologist Hasibur Rahman of Bangladesh Meteorological Department said, "The situation may continue till Thursday and the temperature may rise on Friday."

"Light rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions and weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country," said a 24-hour BMD weather bulletin released yesterday morning.

"Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during midnight till morning and it may continue at places over the country till noon."

Night temperature may rise slightly and day temperature may fall slightly over the country, the bulletin added.

Yesterday's lowest temperature was recorded as 11.3 degree Celsius in Sitakunda, Sylhet.

In Dhaka, cold and gloomy weather prevailed as no sunlight was seen all day yesterday. The situation worsened at noon when city dwellers witnessed some rain.

Officegoers were seen wrapping up warmly in heavy winter clothes yesterday morning.

"I think today is the coldest day in the capital this season," said Javed Hossain, a private jobholder, who was

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