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ROHINGYA CAMP FIRE

Death toll
AT LEAST 11

Injured
560

Missing
400

Affected
45,000

Houses burnt
10,000

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO

Refugees gather at the Balukhai Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya yesterday to see for themselves the damage caused by a fire the previous day. Around 10,000 shanties were gutted and about 45,000 refugees became homeless.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Gone with the blaze

45,000 refugees lose their homes, belongings

MOSTAFA YOUSUF *and* MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT *from Cox's Bazar*

Fleeing a crackdown by the Myanmar military, 35-year-old Chubera Begum, along with her four children, arrived in Ukhiya from Rakhine State in August, 2017. She then found shelter in a tent at Balukhali camp, the largest refugee camp in the world.

In a span of three years, the Rohingya woman was able to build a house with bamboo and corrugated iron sheets with her income from a tea stall.

But all her hard work came to naught as she helplessly watched her home and all belongings turn to ashes in the devasting blaze that erupted at Balukhali Camp-18 in Cox's Bazar on Monday.

"I was just making preparations for lunch. Suddenly, I heard people screaming. I stepped out of my home and saw a huge fire spreading quickly towards our home," Chubera told this newspaper yesterday.

She then rushed back, immediately took her daughter and sons out of the house, and ran to safety.

"My home, all my savings and belongings went up in flames," she said.

Visiting the sprawling Rohingya camp in West Balukhali, charred objects were found scattered across the vast swathes of the camp which resembled a war zone. Smokes were still billowing out of the ravaged houses in some places even hours after the blaze was doused.

Some people were seen sifting through debris to find anything that could be of use. Several women were wailing,

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New cases jump to 9-month high

3,554 Covid cases detected in 24 hours

MOUDUD AHMMED SUJAN

The health directorate yesterday reported the highest number of new Covid-19 cases in nearly nine months.

A total of 3,554 cases were detected against 25,954 tests in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday. This is the highest since July 2 last year, when 4,019 new cases were detected in the country in a single day.

It also marks a nearly sevenfold increase in three weeks from the 515 cases recorded on March 2.

Yesterday's positivity rate of 13.69 percent is more than four times that of the 3.36 percent recorded on March 2.

In the same 24 hours, 18 patients died due to the viral infection, raising the total death toll to 8,738. Besides, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 5,77,241.

Amid this steeply rising trend in transmission, experts feared the situation may turn worse in the coming days unless it is ensured that everyone wears masks, washes hands and maintains physical distancing.

"Already, the hospitals are over-burdened due to the rising number of patients. There is a high chance the pressure will increase in the coming days because we are not maintaining health safety guidelines," Prof Ridwanur Rahman, an infectious disease specialist, told The Daily Star.

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Now it's Bhutan

PM Lotay Tshering in town to join twin celebration

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hold a bilateral meeting with her Bhutanese counterpart Dr Lotay Tshering at her office today to discuss ways of enhancing connectivity.

Some Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) are likely to be signed between the countries to enhance cooperation.

In the afternoon, Tshering will join the celebrations of Mujib Borsho and the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence at the National Parade Square and deliver a speech as the guest of honour.

Tshering is the fourth world leader to join the 10-day celebrations that began on March 17. Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and Nepali President Bidya Devi Bhandari have attended the celebrations.

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ATTEMPTING TO KILL HASINA IN 2000

14 Huji men get death penalty

Court orders public execution by firing squad

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER *and* EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday sentenced 14 militants to death and ordered that they be "publicly" executed by the firing squad for attempting to kill Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2000.

The convicts, members of banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji), had committed sedition through the attempt, it said.

A sedition case was filed against them for trying to kill Sheikh Hasina, the then prime minister, by planting a 76kg bomb in Kotalipara, Gopalganj.

The bomb was planted on the premises of Sheikh Lutfor Rahman Ideal College in Kotalipara where Hasina was supposed to address a rally on July 22, 2000.

The bomb was found on July 21. Two days later, another 40kg bomb was recovered from the college premises.

Delivering the verdict yesterday, Judge Abu Zafar Md Kamruzzaman of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 observed that the anti-liberation forces had been involved in various conspiracies against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman since 1971.

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Jashoreshwari Kali Temple in Ishwaripur village of Satkhira's Shyamnagar.

Why is Modi going to this temple?

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

A little-known temple in a remote village in the country's southern district of Satkhira suddenly came under the spotlight when the itinerary of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi included the sacred place for the Hindus.

Located in Ishwaripur village in Shyamnagar upazila of Satkhira, Jashoreshwari Kali Temple is an ancient holy place where the remains of Goddess Sati or Shakti,

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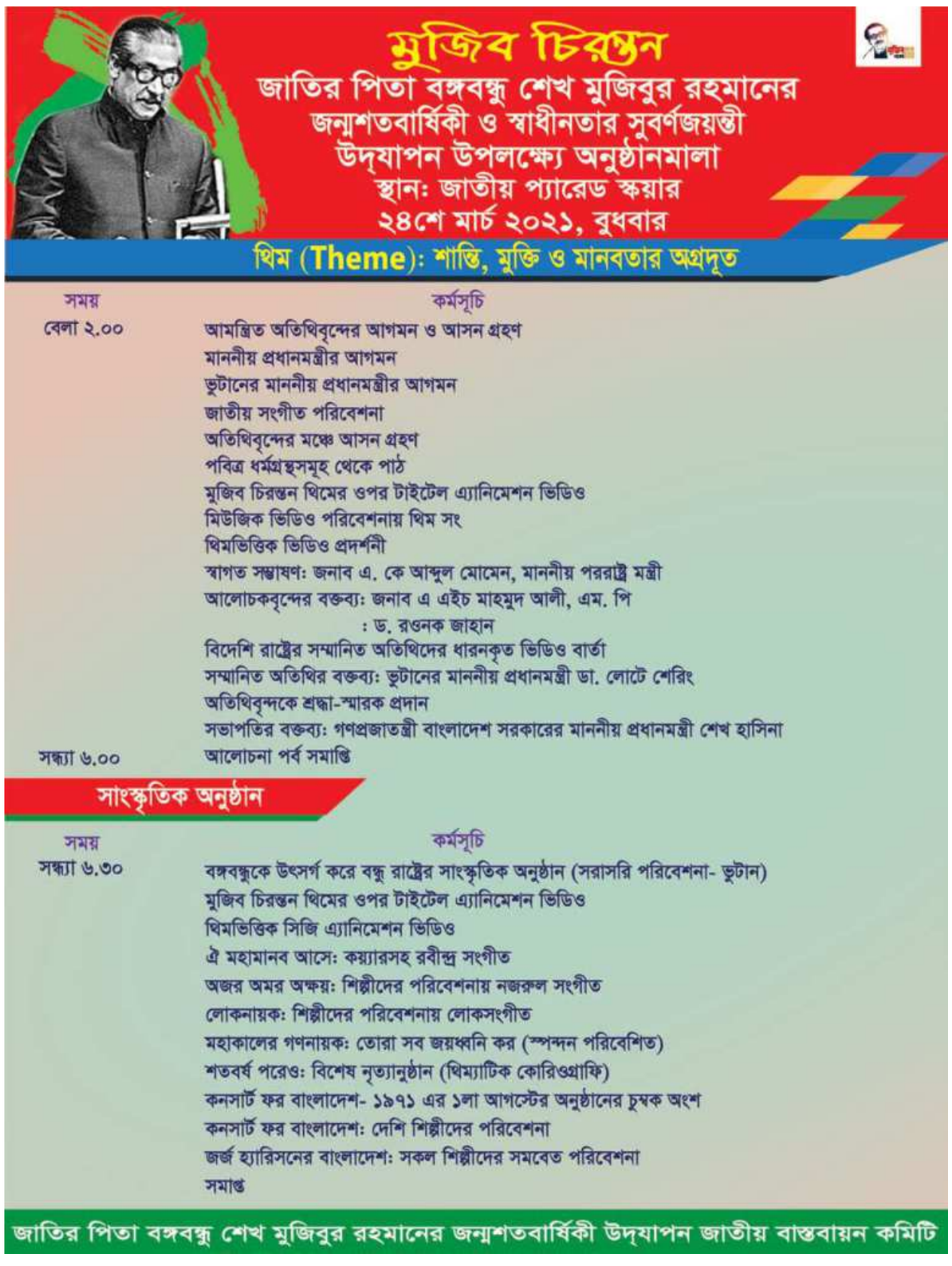

27 injured as BCL attacks anti-Modi protesters

UNB, *Dhaka*

At least 25 protesters and two photojournalists were injured as Chhatra League men on the Dhaka University campus yesterday attacked a demonstration protesting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Bangladesh.

Among the injured are leaders and activists of different left-leaning student organisations. They include Pragati Barman Tana, Meghmallar Bose, Asmaney Asha, and Sumaiya Setu. The wounded photojournalists are: Jibon Ahmed of the Daily Manab Zamin and Rubel Rasid of the Daily Desh Rupantor.

The injured students were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The attack was carried out in TSC area of Dhaka University in the evening.

As part of its demonstration programme, the progressive student alliance brought out a procession which was heading towards Shahbagh intersection. When the protesters reached

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Plagiarism found in work of two DU teachers

Asiatic Society cancels their research grant, says report filled with errors; both return advance

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Over the last few months, plagiarism at the country's premier university has been a hotly debated topic in the world of academia.

Two Dhaka University teachers had their research contract cancelled and were declined disbursal of the remaining half of the grant from the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh in November last year after their final report was found plagiarised and full of errors.

On February 25, the ASB council decided to place the matter on the agenda of the monthly general meeting for the next course of action. In the meantime, the researchers have returned the advance they withdrew for the research.

The two researchers -- Dr Eshani Chakraborty, professor of the history department, and Dr Zobaida Nasreen, associate professor of the anthropology department -- received the research grant nearly four years ago.

They were selected to carry out research on the topic "Brihottoro Dhakar Sthanik Sangskriti o Boishister Swarup Anusondhan [Exploring local culture and its distinctive features of greater Dhaka]" in Bangla in April 2017.

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