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5 killed in Ctg, B'baria clashes

Over 100 hurt as Hefajat, cops, ruling party men clash in Dhaka; BGB deployed across the country

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed in Chattogram and one in Brahmanbaria in clashes between supporters of Hefajat-e-Islam and policemen after Juma prayers yesterday.

Around the same time, another clash broke out in the capital's Baitul Mukarram National Mosque area between Hefajat activists and Chhatra League men. Police fired tear gas canisters and rubber bullets to disperse the groups.

The incidents in the three districts left at least 100 people, including two photojournalists and a reporter of The Daily Star, injured.

Later at night, members of Border Guard Bangladesh were deployed across the country, including the capital, to avert any untoward situation. This was confirmed by Lt Col Faizur Rahman, director (operations) of BGB.

Hefajat men also blocked rail lines in Brahmanbaria, snapping communication for hours between the district and Chattogram, Sylhet and Noakhali.

In another development, the Islamist organisation announced that it would enforce a dawn-to-dusk nationwide hartal tomorrow, protesting the killings and attacks on its men by members of law enforcement

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Members of the alumnae association of the Bogura Zilla School unfurl a gigantic Bangladesh flag on the occasion of the country's Independence Day yesterday. The association made the flag, measuring 150 feet in length and 90 feet in width, over the past month and says it is the largest one in Bangladesh.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

From friendly opposition to strong critic

Top JP leaders' harsh remarks about govt raise eyebrows

RASHIDUL HASAN

The recent strong criticism of the government by Jatiya Party has raised questions in the country's political arena about its intentions.

Many considered the main opposition party in parliament a "friendly opposition party" due to its close relations with the ruling Awami League since 2014. That's why the JP is still suffering from an image crisis.

The party now says it wants to win people's confidence by making them believe it is really an independent political party with own characteristics and identity.

Top JP leaders, including Chairman GM Quader and Secretary General Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu, in recent public meetings strongly criticised the government, giving a hint that the party has changed its political stance.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Quader said, "We are suffering from an image crisis in the eyes of the people. People considered Jatiya Party to be a fake opposition party and many still think of it like that. We want to change this image for the very survival of the organisation as a political party."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Rare Van Gogh painting sells for \$15.4m



AFP, Paris

One of the few paintings by Vincent Van Gogh still in private hands sold for more than 13 million euros at auction Thursday, Sotheby's said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Covid will not respect borders

Says UN, urges divided world to unite as vaccine diplomacy threatens global inoculation goals

AGENCIES

The United Nations has urged a divided world to unite against a virus that ignores all borders, saying the pandemic could delay by a decade its goal to end global inequalities as vaccine diplomacy threatens global inoculation goal.

The European Union warned Thursday it would block certain coronavirus vaccine exports, while India yesterday said it had to limit vaccine exports to meet its domestic demands.

A new UN report estimated that the novel coronavirus has unleashed the worst recession in 90 years, threatening to derail its ambitious list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

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Amjad Ali no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Amjad Ali, a dramatist, actor and producer of Bangladesh Betar, who retrieved war-time documents from an Al Badr camp in Rajshahi in 1971, passed away on Thursday night.

He was 72. Amjad breathed his last at his home in the city's Ranibazar around 11:30pm, said his cousin Ahmed Shafi Uddin.

Amjad left three daughters, and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

On December 18, 1971, Amjad went down a well at a house in Ranibazar which was being used as the divisional camp of Al Badr during the Liberation War. He then pulled out a bag that his cousin Ahmed Shafi, also a journalist back then, had seen floating in the well.

The bag, an important discovery, contained documents of over 2,000 pages left by Al Badr leaders. The documents revealed how ruthless Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and Al Badr

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Zia makes radio announcement

MARCH 27, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CHATTOGRAM RESISTANCE

As Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh, resistance began in Chattogram city and many other areas. Intense fighting broke out between the Pakistan military and the freedom fighters.

On behalf of Bangabandhu, Maj Ziaur Rahman, at 7:45pm on March 27, made a radio broadcast from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra in Kalurghat, north of Chattogram city.

"This is Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra. I, Major Ziaur Rahman, at the directive of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, hereby declare that the independent People's Republic of Bangladesh has been established... In the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, I call upon all Bangladeshis to rise against the attack by the West Pakistan army. We shall fight to the last to free our motherland. By the grace of Allah, victory would be ours. Joy Bangla."

INDIRA GANDHI DEPLORES 'SUPPRESSION' Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today described the military imposition of martial law in East Pakistan as "not merely suppression of a movement, but meeting unarmed people with tanks."

"An opportunity has been lost in East Pakistan for Pakistan to strengthen herself," Indira Gandhi told cheering members of the Indian Parliament.

"The opportunity has been lost in a manner which is tragic and agonising, about which we could not find strong enough words," she added.

BLOOD'S SITUATION REPORT

American Consul General Archer K Blood wrote in

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REFUGEE CAMP

Fire guts office of an int'l NGO

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Fire gutted the office of Relief International, an international NGO, at Leda Rohingya Camp at Hnila union in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

Mukul Kumar Nath, an official of Teknaf Fire Service, said the source of fire could not be known yet.

A team of firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the fire after they were informed around 2:10am, he said.

Mohammad Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, said a house alongside the office was also burned down.

The police are investigating into the matter, he added.

The Daily Star could not get the version of the INGO in this regard.

Earlier, on Monday, a devastating blaze that

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 27

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-45 6-20 7-45
JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 5-00 6-25 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

BUDS OF DELIGHT...
Little mango buds appear on the branches of a tree in Tangail's Madhupur upazila. With summer approaching, people all over the country will be eagerly anticipating a rich yield of this popular fruit.



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

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