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ANTI-COUP PROTESTS IN MYANMAR

Junta slammed for deaths of over 40 kids

Internet blackout widens; military accused of 'forced disappearance' of hundreds of people

AGENCIES

Myanmar's junta faced fresh international criticism yesterday over the deaths of more than 40 children and the "forced disappearance" of hundreds of people in its crackdown on pro-democracy protests.

The military's ruthless suppression of demonstrations against its February 1 power grab has left 543 civilians dead, including 44 children, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a local monitoring organisation.

As well as breaking up protests with tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds, security forces have detained some 2,700 people.

Violence has ramped up in recent weeks, with Save the Children saying the death toll of youngsters had more than doubled in the past 12 days.

"We are shocked that children continue to be among the targets of these fatal attacks, despite repeated calls to protect children from harm," the charity said in a statement.

"It is especially horrifying that several of these children were reportedly killed at home, where they should have been safe from harm."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



This photo taken recently shows just one floor of the once multi-storey BGMEA Building still standing in the capital's Hatirjheel area. Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha started knocking down the building in January last year in accordance with a High Court ruling.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

REFUGEE RELOCATION

Diplomats to visit Bhasan Char today

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Ambassadors and high commissioners of nine diplomatic missions in Bangladesh are going to Bhasan Char today to see the facilities offered for Rohingyas at first hand.

Nine envoys each from the missions of Australia, Canada, Turkey, the European Union, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and the US, have been invited to join the government-led visit to Bhasan Char in Noakhali's Hatiya.

This visit comes after a UN team visited the island from 17-20 March.

Covid-19 protocols will be followed in accordance with the regulations and guidelines of the government of Bangladesh, said a joint media release Thursday.

Sources said the envoys may go to the island by helicopter and will return the same day.

The diplomats will meet relocated Rohingyas, SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

KUTUPALONG CAMP

3 Rohingyas killed in fire at a bazaar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three Rohingya youths died in a fire that ravaged eight shops at a bazaar near Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya yesterday.

The fire broke out around 2:30am and was doused hours later, Imdadul Haque, station officer of Ukhiya Fire Service Station, said, adding that the cause of the fire could not be known till last night.

Helal Uddin, a member of the local union parishad, said, "The three victims were sleeping inside one of the shops. They got trapped inside."

The deceased were identified as Arman Ullah, Faridul Alam, and Mohammad Ayaz, all employees of the grocery shop, said an official at the fire station.

Ahmed Sanjur Morshed, officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station, said several others were also injured in the incident. They were admitted to a field hospital run by an NGO, he added.

At least 15 Rohingyas, including children, were killed and over 500 others injured in a devastating fire at Balukhali Rohingya camp in Ukhiya on March 22, according to UNHCR working in Cox's SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

'The smell of death is still everywhere'

APRIL 3, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BRITONS TELL OF KILLING Some of the 102 Britons who were evacuated to Singapore by air yesterday from East Pakistan revealed today the fighting and carnage they had seen.

"Each day I could see fresh groups of bodies piled up on the pavements," said one man who had been an employee of the East Pakistani provincial government. "There were men, women, even babies, with bayonet and gunshot wounds. Some appeared to have been crushed."

"The deaths were all at the hands of troops from West Pakistan," he said. "There was fear the bodies would pollute the water supply."

There was shooting "every night, up to the time I left," the Briton declared. "The smell of death is still everywhere, and every night there are fires on the skyline." [New York Times, April 04, 1971]



UNITY AT GUNPOINT

In a report titled 'Unity at gunpoint' The Economist wrote today: "East Pakistan's Sheikh Mujib looks a loser today, but it is more likely that President Yahya has chosen the road that leads to a civil war he cannot win."

It further commented: "But though he may have pacified the main cities, shattered the Awami leadership and cowed many Bengalis into submissiveness, President Yahya's problems are only just beginning. He will find it difficult to police the countryside; much of East SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Tigresses to get Test status

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh women's cricket team are to be awarded Test status, decided an ICC meeting on Thursday. The meeting decided that Test and ODI status would be permanently awarded to all Full Member women's teams.

That means Bangladesh, along with Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, are to be granted Test status.

Australia, England, Ireland, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the West Indies are the 10 women's teams that have played Test cricket so far.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) women's wing chairman Shafiqul Alam Nadel said the women's team may play their inaugural Test as early as this year.

"The decision to grant Test status to Bangladesh women's team has been SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dig reveals oldest salt hub in western Europe



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Archaeologists working on the Yorkshire coast have unearthed the oldest salt-making complex ever found in western Europe, in a discovery that is set to revolutionise our understanding of prehistoric Britain's economy.

Dating back almost 6,000 years, the site - complete with salt-making kilns, or hearths - predates the oldest previously known British salt "factory" by almost 2,400 years.

The discovery has huge implications for our understanding of how Neolithic Britain's SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

UK imposes travel ban on visitors from Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visitors from Bangladesh, the Philippines, Pakistan and Kenya will be banned from travelling to the UK from 4:00am of April 9, according to a statement posted on the GOV.UK website.

The Philippines, Pakistan, Kenya and Bangladesh have been added to England's red list to protect the country against new variants of coronavirus (Covid-19), at a critical time for the vaccine programme, the statement said.

From 4:00am on April 9, international visitors who have departed from or transited through the Philippines, Pakistan, Kenya and Bangladesh in the previous 10 days will be refused entry into England, it said.

Only British and Irish citizens, or those with SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

FIGHTING EXTREMISM

Delhi throws its weight behind Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India has said it has always been against fundamentalism and extremism and expressed confidence that the Bangladesh government would address the challenge posed by violent street protests by Hefajate-Islam during and after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to that country.

"As far as the violence is concerned, we have always been against fundamentalism and extremism. We are confident that the Bangladesh government SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Workers carrying watermelons from boats to a nearby wholesale market in the capital's Sadarghat area. Around this time of the year, the popular summer fruit is brought to Dhaka from various regions of the country. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

India fears worse 2nd Covid wave

3.7m vaccinated in a day as the country sees record rise in cases in six months

AGENCIES

India is staring at coronavirus pandemic second wave which may turn out to be worse than the first one, officials feared yesterday, as the country stepped up inoculation drive amid record number of cases.

It was noted during a high-level meeting presided by Indian Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba that the current Covid case growth rate of 6.8 percent in March this year has surpassed the previous record of 5.5 percent in June last year, reported our New Delhi correspondent.

The country also reported 5.5 percent growth rate in daily Covid deaths in this period.

While India was reporting about 97,000 daily new Covid cases at the peak of the pandemic in September last year, the country has already reached the critical figure 81,000 daily new cases.

With coronavirus cases surging, India has ramped up its vaccination drive with more than 36.7 lakh people taking the jab in a single day, as global surge in infections brought new restrictions.

The record setting numbers came on a day when India reported 81,466 fresh cases, the highest daily number in six months. In the last 24 hours, eight states -- Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh -- recorded a sharp surge in the daily new cases, together contributing 81.25 percent of the new cases.

In the last 76 days since the inoculation programme began, India has administered more than 68.7 million SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING APRIL 3

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION