

21 Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 12 heading to the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, said Mohammad Yasirul Haque, officer-in-charge of Moulvibazar Police Station.

He said they detained the Rohingyas acting on a tip-off. Additional Superintendent of Police Ziaur Rahman said during primary interrogation, the Rohingyas told them that they reached Kulaura upazila on Friday night through the Shikri border point from Kalighat area of India's Tripura.

Later, they managed to make it to the bus stand area, where they were caught, he said.

Ziaur said they had already contacted the Cox's Bazar camp authorities and were deciding on what to do with the detainees.

'Criminal' killed

FROM PAGE 12 murder, claimed police.

Abdullah Mohammad Sheikh Sadi, assistant director (media) of Rab and also a senior assistant superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar, said a team of Rab conducted an operation in Borobill area around 4:00am after receiving a tip-off that Ashraf and his associates gathered there.

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, criminals opened fire on the team. The Rab members fired retaliatory shots in self-defence triggering the "gunfight", Rab claimed.

After sometime the gang managed to flee. The Rab team then found Ashraf lying dead at the scene, said the Rab official.

Sheikh Sadi claimed that Rab recovered three guns and six cartridges from the spot.

The body was sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

The Rab assistant director said Ashraf was the prime accused in a case filed over a double murder in Cox's Bazar town's Rumaliarchhaora on May 31.

The Rab filed a case with Cox's Bazar Sadar Police Station yesterday in connection with the "gunfight".

On Thursday and Friday, two people, including a Rohingya man, were killed in two "gunfights" with Border Guard Bangladesh and Rab in the district.

Carrier

FROM PAGE 12 Speaking to The Daily Star, Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, Biman's managing director and CEO, yesterday said the national flag carrier lost around Tk 7 crore in the last 48 hours due to cancellations of tickets.

He said most of the cancellations were of trips on Middle Eastern routes.

The Biman boss urged all passengers not to pay heed to any misinformation about pilots' going on strike.

"In an official letter, they [pilots] showed their discontentment over the continuation of salary cuts but [they] didn't give even hint that they may go for any strike over the issue," he told this correspondent.

Since July last year, Biman had been cutting salaries of all its employees, including pilots, and reduced its maintenance and operational costs.

On Thursday, the airlines decided to restore normal salaries for all employees, except pilots who have served the carrier for more than five years.

Revising the salary-cut structure, Biman said that from July it would cut five, instead of the usual 20, percent pay of pilots serving it for five to 10 years. It also said senior pilots working for the airlines for over 10 years would get 25 percent pay cut instead of 40 percent.

Sources in Biman said if the pilots do not fly additional flights, Biman might have to cancel flights to popular destinations, including Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dammam, and Dubai.

Scientists listen

FROM PAGE 12 powerful "rumbles" with their vocal chords that are at such a low frequency they are almost inaudible to the human ear.

These rumbles create sound waves that travel not only through the air but also -- because of the elephant's weight -- through the ground.

And these rumbles are thought to carry a wealth of information.

"Elephants use many different vocalisations in a variety of contexts, for example mating, greeting, or warning each other of an imminent threat," said Michael Reinwald, of the University of Oxford's Department of Zoology, who led the study published in the journal Royal Society Interface. "They really seem to be saying a lot!"

The researchers monitored African elephants in Kenya by listening for their vocalised rumbles using microphones and seismometers -- often used for measuring earthquakes and explosions.

Reinwald said the elephants "generate 'mini earthquakes' with every footstep but also when they rumble", allowing the researchers to record the sound waves at distances of several hundred metres and then estimate their position based on this data.



Muslim pilgrims perform Tawaf around Kaaba in the Grand Mosque in the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Pilgrims arrive in Makkah

FROM PAGE 1 the Kaaba, a large cubic structure draped in golden-embroidered black cloth, towards which Muslims around the world pray.

Many carried umbrellas to protect themselves from the scorching summer heat.

"Every three hours, 6,000 people enter to perform the tawaf of arrival," hajj ministry spokesman Hisham al-Saeed told AFP. "After each group part in 2019, is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken by all Muslims with the means at least once in their lives.

It consists of a series of religious rites, formally starting today, which are completed over five days in Islam's holiest city and its surroundings in western Saudi Arabia.

Among the chosen ones this year was Ameen, a 58-year-old Indian oil contractor based in the eastern city

of Dammam, who was picked for the ritual along with his wife and three adult children.

"We are overjoyed," said Ameen. "So many of our friends and relatives were rejected," he told AFP.

Earlier this month, the hajj ministry said it was working on the "highest levels of health precautions" in light of the pandemic and the emergence of new variants.

Like the other countries of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia is home to significant expatriate populations from South Asia, the Far East, Africa as well as the Middle East.

"I feel like I won a lottery," Egyptian pharmacist Mohammed El Eter said after being selected.

"This is a special, unforgettable moment in one's life. I thank God for granting me this chance, to be accepted among a lot of people who applied," the 31-year-old told AFP.

Chosen from more than 558,000 applicants through an online vetting system, the event is confined to those who have been fully vaccinated and are aged 18-65 with no chronic

illnesses, according to the hajj ministry.

Pilgrims will be divided into groups of just 20 "to restrict any exposure to only those 20, limiting the spread of infection," ministry undersecretary Mohammad al-Bijawi told official media.

Saudi Arabia has so far recorded more than 507,000 coronavirus infections, including over 8,000 deaths.

More than 20 million vaccine doses have been administered in the country of over 34 million people.

The hajj went ahead last year on the smallest scale in modern history. Authorities initially said only 1,000 pilgrims would be allowed, although local media said up to 10,000 eventually took part.

No infections were reported as authorities set up multiple health facilities, mobile clinics and ambulances to cater for the pilgrims, who were taken to the religious sites in small batches.

In normal years, the pilgrimage packs large crowds into congested

religious sites, but even this year's downscaled events are seen as a potential mechanism for contagion.

"The biggest challenge of this hajj season will be for it to pass off without any Covid-19 infections," a doctor working at a hospital in Makkah told AFP by phone.

Worshippers were last year given amenity kits including sterilised pebbles for the "stoning of Satan" ritual, disinfectants, masks, a prayer rug and the ihram, a traditional seamless white hajj garment, made from a bacteria-resistant material.

Hosting the hajj is a matter of prestige for Saudi rulers, for whom the custodianship of Islam's holiest sites is their most powerful source of political legitimacy.

But barring overseas pilgrims has caused deep disappointment among Muslims worldwide, who typically save for years to take part.

And in addition to the many virus-related obstacles, the price of participating in this year's hajj, including official taxes, is 12,000 riyals (\$3,200).

Death toll rises to 157

FROM PAGE 12 Luxembourg and the Netherlands were also hammered by heavy rains, inundating many areas and forcing thousands to be evacuated in the city of Maastricht.

A burst dam in Germany's Heinsberg district 65 kilometres (40 miles) southwest of Duesseldorf overnight prompted the emergency evacuation of more than 700 residents.

In some affected areas, firefighters, local officials and soldiers, some driving tanks, have begun the colossal work of clearing the piles of debris clogging the streets.

"The task is immense," said Tim

Kurzbaach, mayor of Solingen, a city in the south of the Ruhr area.

The real scale of the disaster is only now becoming clear, with damaged buildings being assessed, some of which will have to be demolished, and efforts under way to restore gas, electricity and telephone services.

The disruption to communication networks has complicated efforts to assess the number still missing, and most roads in the submerged Ahr Valley are out of service.

Roger Lewentz, interior minister for Rhineland-Palatinate, told local media up to 60 people were believed

to be missing. More than 600 were injured.

The government has said it is working to set up a special aid fund, with the cost of damage expected to reach several billion euros (dollars).

The devastating floods have put climate change back at the centre of Germany's election campaign ahead of a September 26 poll marking the end of Merkel's 16 years in power.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said the storms that lashed Europe were "without doubt" the result of climate change while Steinmeier, the German president, urged a more "determined" battle against global

warming in light of the disaster.

Armin Laschet from Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, the frontrunner to succeed the veteran chancellor, spoke of "a disaster of historic proportions".

News magazine Der Spiegel said the floods would put a spotlight on the candidates' response to climate change.

German reinsurance giant Munich Re said nations would have to expect rising "frequency and intensity" of natural disasters due to climate change, calling for preventive action "which, in the final analysis, will be less costly".

Citizens' body finds 'human remains' 10 days later

FROM PAGE 12 around," Taslima Akhter, president of Bangladesh Garment Workers Solidarity and a member of the committee, told The Daily Star.

"It was probably the remains of a female as it was wrapped in a women's salwar," she said.

"As there are still bones here, there may be more corpses or body parts on the fourth floor of the factory," Taslima added.

The citizen body's convener Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua said, "We have visited the spot today [Saturday] as part of our investigation. Later, we will talk to the factory authorities and

government bodies concerned and check necessary documents.

"We will reveal our report after completion of the investigation."

Committee member Prof Anu Muhammad said the government normally forms multiple probe bodies when any accident occurs. In most cases, probe reports are not made public, resulting in the developing of a culture of impunity.

"Our purpose is not only to investigate into the fire at Hashem Foods factory, but also to portray the entire picture of how other industrial factories are run, the working environment in these factories, reasons

for recurrence of such accidents and the ways to overcome it," he said, adding they hope to publish their report within 30 working days.

Contacted, Tanharul Islam, assistant director of Narayanganj Fire Service and Civil Defense, said, "There is a stench but the reason is yet to be known. Search operations are going on to find what it is."

Meanwhile, a team of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police, led by Additional Deputy Inspector General (Dhaka range) Imam Hossain, yesterday visited the Hashem Foods factory site after taking charge of the

investigation.

"We will complete the investigation within the shortest possible time. We want cooperation of all and request those who have any video footage or information to contact us," the CID official also said, while briefing reporters after inspecting the site.

On July 8, a deadly fire broke out at the factory. Eight people, including the factory owner Abul Hashem, were subsequently arrested. Of them, Abul Hashem and five others were sent to jail after a four-day remand, while two others were released on bail.

Mission staff reaffirm loyalty to Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12 resolve the deadlock over the question of repatriation of Indian and Pakistani diplomats from Kolkata and Dhaka respectively.

Dr Bonard interviewed 64 members of the former Pakistan deputy high commission who had switched over their loyalty to Bangladesh in the presence of the Indian representative Ashoke Roy and the Pakistani deputy high commissioner Mehdi Masud.

Hossain Ali, chief of the Bangladesh mission in Kolkata, refused to appear before the Swiss representative for the interview. Later clarifying the point Hossain Ali told newsmen, "Since the Swiss representative as also the Pakistani deputy high commissioner held lower diplomatic status than myself,

I could not possibly go to them to appear for the interview."

YAHYA'S SUMMIT OFFER A TRAP:

SWARAN SINGH The Indian external affairs minister Swaran Singh today described president Yahya Khan's reported offer to meet Indira Gandhi as a trap.

The military ruler should instead talk with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to solve the Bangladesh issue, he said. Swaran Singh strongly criticised the USA for supply arms and ammunition to Pakistan and appreciated those countries who had refused to do so.

PAKISTAN BANS BOAT BUILDING Pakistan Army authorities banned building of country boats in the riverine areas of Bangladesh, reported Hindustan Standard referring to a high school teacher who arrived

in Kolkata from Bhola. He said the announcement made in early July prescribed three years rigorous imprisonment and confiscation of property for violation of the ban. Army authorities were also issuing a green and yellow identification disk to non-Awami League people.

TUNKU MEETS YAHYA Tunku Abdul Rahman, secretary-general of the 23-member-nation Islamic Secretariat, today discussed with president Yahya Khan the situation in East Pakistan. Tunku arrived in Pakistan yesterday on an eight-day visit to assess the needs of Pakistan and enable his organisation to help ease sufferings in East Pakistan. Tunku on his arrival from London told newsmen that he was seeking ways to organise a joint relief effort by members of the secretariat in

East Pakistan.

GERMAN STUDENTS URGE THANT TO MOVE UN BODIES

Various student organisations of Freiburg University in Germany in an open letter urged the UN Secretary General U Thant "to do his utmost in the organisations of the United Nations to prevail upon the West Pakistan government to respect human rights". They demanded that the suppression of human rights and genocide in Bangladesh should be stopped and "it should be made possible for the refugees to return to their country in which instead of systematic killings there should be freedom and right of self-determination".

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Biden vows to appeal ruling against 'Dreamers' program

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden yesterday denounced as "deeply disappointing" a federal judge's decision curbing a program that protects undocumented migrants brought to the country as children.

In a statement from the White House, Biden said the Justice Department would appeal the ruling by Texas-based Judge Andrew Hanen, while adding that "only Congress can ensure a permanent solution by granting a path to citizenship for Dreamers," the young people brought to the US as children.

DACA supporters received a temporary reprieve in June 2020 when the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-to-4 vote that the Trump administration had not provided sufficient justification for its attempts to end the program.

It made clear it was ruling largely on procedural issues, and left open the possibility of further challenges.

Hanen's ruling was limited, however. It is unclear how the nine high court justices might rule if the case again reaches them.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, instituted by then-president Barack Obama in 2012, covers around 700,000 people, conferring legal status on them, as well as the right to work. For many, America is the only country they have ever known.

In his ruling, Hanen said Obama exceeded his authority when he instituted DACA by executive order. He called the order "unlawful."

The government must stop accepting people to the program, Hanen said, though he added it could still receive applications.

He said the ruling did not require the Department of Homeland Security or Department of Justice to "take any immigration, deportation, or criminal action against any DACA recipient, applicant, or any other individual that it would not otherwise take."

The ruling also did not immediately affect the status of people already accepted to the program.

To apply for DACA protection applicants must have arrived in the United States before age 16.

Applicants must be in school or have a high school degree or equivalent, or have been honorably discharged from the military and have a clean criminal record.

In 2017, as part of his far wider push to limit immigration, then-president Donald Trump tried to dismantle DACA, insisting Obama had exceeded his constitutional powers. That triggered the lengthy court battle that brought the case to the high court last year.

DACA was subsequently reinstated. Since taking office, Biden has looked to strengthen the program, as well as initiate wider immigration reform.

Democrats in Congress have pushed for legislation that would permanently settle the status of the childhood arrivals, but immigration policies have long stalled in the face of Republican opposition.

After Friday's ruling, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called on Republicans in Congress "to join us in respecting the will of the American people and the law, to ensure that Dreamers have a permanent path to citizenship."

Moon 'wobble', climate change seen as driving coastal flooding in 2030s

REUTERS

US coastlines will face increasing flooding in the mid-2030s thanks to a regular lunar cycle that will magnify rising sea levels caused by climate change, according to research led by NASA scientists.

A key factor identified by the scientists is a regular "wobble" in the moon's orbit - first identified in the 18th century - that takes 18.6 years to complete. The moon's gravitational pull helps drive Earth's tides.

In half of this lunar cycle, Earth's regular daily tides are diminished, with high tides lower than usual and low tides higher than usual. In the cycle's other half, the situation is reversed, with high tides higher and low tides lower.

The expected flooding will result from the combination of the continuing sea level rise associated with climate change and the arrival of an amplification part of the lunar cycle in the mid-2030s, the researchers said.

"In the background, we have long-term sea level rise associated with global warming. It's causing sea level to increase everywhere," Ben Hamilton, NASA team leader and one of the study's authors, told Reuters.