

Jerusalem bus shooting wounds 8

Suspect arrested

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli police yesterday arrested a suspect in a pre-dawn shooting spree targeting a bus just outside Jerusalem's Old City that wounded eight people, including a pregnant woman and several US citizens.

"The terrorist is in our hands," police spokesman Kan Eli Levy told Israeli public radio hours after the bloody attack not far from the Western Wall, the holiest prayer site for Jews.

Several American citizens were among the wounded, said the US embassy, which declared that "we are shocked and saddened by the terrorist attack" but gave no further details on the victims, citing privacy concerns.

The gunman started spraying bullets at the public bus and people on the street in the attack at the Tomb of David bus stop near the Old City's Zion Gate, recounted bus driver Daniel Kanievsky.

One of the wounded was a pregnant woman, whose baby was delivered by Caesarean section after the attack, a spokesman at Jerusalem's Shaarei Tzedek Hospital told AFP.

"She remains intubated and in serious condition," he said. "The infant was delivered and is in serious but stable condition."

Local media reported a US Jewish family of four who had been waiting for a taxi were among the casualties.

Following an hours-long manhunt, police said a suspect had turned himself in. Prime Minister Yair Lapid told his cabinet meeting that "this is a lone assailant, a resident of the city with a criminal record".

The Palestinian militant Islamist group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, hailed a "heroic operation" without claiming responsibility for the attack.

The shooting came a week after the end of a three-day conflict between Israel and Islamic Jihad militants in Gaza. At least 49 Palestinians, including Islamic Jihad fighters and a number of children, died in the violence.



People watch as a bulldozer clears the rubble of a building that was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in the latest round of fighting between Israel and Palestinian militants, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. An Egypt-brokered ceasefire reached late on August 7 ended the intense fighting that killed 49 Palestinians including children and wounded many others, according to Gaza's health ministry. PHOTO: AFP

Trump vs Biden again?

Political analysts say the documents scandal makes it more likely

AFP, Washington

If you think you've seen this movie before, it's because you have -- except the second time will be even more nerve-racking. Yes, world: get ready for Biden vs Trump 2.

That's a potential takeaway from the scandal embroiling Donald Trump over his alleged hoarding of secret government documents almost two years after losing reelection to Joe Biden.

If Trump was previously considered likely to announce a 2024 comeback bid, one school of thought is that the FBI search of his Florida estate, allowing Trump to depict himself as a martyr, makes that decision almost certain.

"I believed he was gonna run before -- I'm stronger in my belief now," Republican Senator Lindsey Graham told Fox News.

If Trump does run, goes the theory, then Biden surely does, too. Despite being the oldest man ever in the job at 79, Biden sees it as his mission to rid the United States of Trump.

And so, after surviving the tense, at times nightmarish 2020 election, Americans may do it all over again.

This time it would be in reverse -- the incumbent a by-then 81-year-old Biden and the challenger a 78-year-old Trump.

Given Trump's constant lies that he won the 2020 election and searing evidence of his



role in stoking the violent January 6 assault on Congress, a rematch would be ugly.

"If you think Trump's 2016 and 2020 campaigns were nasty, you ain't seen nothing," said American University history professor Allan Lichtman, a leading authority on US presidential elections.

To practitioners of the dark political arts, the FBI raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort is a game-changing moment that, ironically, could benefit either side.

For Biden the logic is obvious.

The biggest name in the Republican Party is on the ropes, facing not only the FBI probe, but legal cases linked to allegations of everything from subverting the election, to fraud and rape.

That's embarrassing for Republicans and energizing for Biden's Democrats, who increasingly dream of avoiding a predicted

wipe-out, or even scoring their own surprise victory, in November midterm elections to decide control of Congress.

"Trump is like a steroid boost for Democrats," Jim Kessler, told The Hill.

Yet Trump will also see benefits.

Once again he's dominating the national psyche, while his fervent base has a new conspiracy theory to feed off, lighting up right-wing social media with calls to arms and threats of Civil War 2.0.

"Donald Trump has more than \$100 million in his political war chest. But he has something even more valuable -- an active FBI investigation against him," wrote Richard Lowry, editor of the conservative magazine National Review.

"It has put him front-and-center again. It has made it easy for him to portray himself as an embattled victim."

In a Republican primary, Trump's political footprint would likely crush the strongest of rivals.

And Trump getting in would also essentially trigger Biden's decision to follow -- scotching any thoughts he may privately have of stepping aside for a younger figure before 2024.

Voters may not want either man.

A July poll by NewsNation/Decision Desk HQ found 60 percent said Biden shouldn't run in 2024 and 57 percent said the same of Trump.

Man accused

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with the clearing and forwarding agency.

Alam, who was nabbed by immigration police, was yesterday produced in court, according to Shakil Khandakar, deputy director of the CIID. The court sent him to jail.

"Now it will be possible to arrest the other members of this gang and find out the final destination of the illegally imported goods," he told The Daily Star.

Can govt hike fuel

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In reply, DAG Arobinda told the HC that the energy ministry can raise fuel prices as this is a policy decision of the government.

The ministry has issued a notification increasing the prices of diesel, kerosene, petrol and octane under the directive from the president of the republic, he argued.

Earlier in the day during the hearing, petitioner Eunus Ali Akond, also a Supreme Court lawyer, told the court that Sheikh Md Belayet Hossain, deputy secretary of energy ministry, issued the gazette notification on August 5 hiking the fuel prices under the directive from the president, "though the responsibility does not lie with the president".

The lawyer said the "unreasonable" hike of fuel price will impact very adversely on the livelihood of common people, including farmers.

The HC also heard opinions from lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, who has earlier moved several cases on price hike of fuel, gas and electricity.

The lawyer told the court that the government has increased the fuel price in violation of section 34 of the BERC Act, 2003.

After concluding yesterday's proceedings, the HC bench adjourned the hearing of the petition till 2:00pm tomorrow.

On August 8, Eunus filed the petition as a public interest litigation. In the petition, he requested the HC to primarily pass a stay order on the government notification.

I understand your pain: PM

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international market.

"We will adjust the prices of fuel oil whenever it comes down in the world market. I have given that directive too," she said.

Referring to ongoing power crisis and the countrywide load-shedding, she said people must endure this pain for some more days.

"When the coal-fired electricity stations go into production, our problems with power will fade away," she said.

The prime minister admitted that the government has given the opposition parties to go for movement against it.

"Our opposition is getting a scope to wage movement. Let them do that. I also want that," she said.

In this connection, she said she has directed relevant authorities to allow the opposition to continue their agitation and not to arrest anyone.

"If they want to besiege the Prime Minister's Office, let them do that," she said.

She also said that people know very well that her government has

tried with utmost sincerity to tackle the fuel oil price and electricity production.

"Opposition will try to utilise this, but if they do anything excessive people will ultimately suffer more. They must realise that," she said.

She said she has doubts about the success of the opposition protest movement that surely will harm the country.

"But we will be able to handle that, I have that belief" she stated.

PM Hasina blamed Ukraine-Russia war, the subsequent sanctions and counter-sanctions for the current economic problems of the country that hit when it was turning around from the grip of coronavirus pandemic impact quite well.

"The USA and Russia are the most gainers from the sanctions and counter-sanctions as the prices of US and Russian currencies have increased," she said.

She also said that middle and lower-middle class people around the world are the worst sufferers of the war, sanctions and counter-sanctions.

Rare microscopic

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Assynt and Smoo Cave in Sutherland measuring just about 1mm (0.04 inches) in size.

The discovery of the crabs took place during a preliminary expedition in which researchers spent six years investigating 32 caves in different parts of Scotland, said a study published in the Journal Cave and Karst Science.

The researchers are still validating the fact if these crabs are a part of a species that has already been detected in other parts of Europe, the outlet further said.

According to Newsweek, the majority of stygobites are obligatory, which means that their only homes are underground. An odd and unusual home for them is the hyporheic zone of rivers, which is

the porous silt beneath a stream bed where shallow groundwater and surface water mingle.

They are also frequently found in the underground water table, aquifers, springs, and several other places as well. There are many unanswered questions in this field of study, including how pollution and other disturbances brought on by humans will affect them as well as the basic biology and ecology of groundwater-dwelling creatures.

These two caves where the species may have been found are well-recognised places in the particular area. Smoo Cave is believed to have been utilised by some of the first settlers in the area, while Allt nan Uamh Stream Cave has a well-known caving network.

Russians in nuke

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A foreman who worked at the plant was killed yesterday by Russian shelling while walking his dog near his home in the city of Enerhodar, Ukraine's state-run nuclear company Energoatom said.

Local Russian-installed official Vladimir Rogov wrote on Telegram that Ukrainian forces had shelled the city and were responsible for the man's death.

Hope appears

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Bangladesh will bring up excavation of the remaining portion of Rahimpur canal so that the water of the Kushiya river could be properly utilised for irrigation as it was a matter of food security, said sources at the water resources ministry.

"Bangladesh has set up a pump at Rahimpur point in Jakiganj[in Sylhet] to pump water from the Kushiya to irrigate 5,000 hectares. We will discuss the issue in the upcoming meeting," said a top official of the ministry.

After an agreement in 2011, Bangladesh in 2018 allowed India to withdraw 1.82 cusec of water from the Feni river to meet the demand of drinking water for the people of Tripura's Sabroom town.

Dhaka and Delhi began water-sharing talks on six small rivers in August 2019 after the two countries failed to ink the Teesta deal due to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's last-minute opposition in 2011.

Bangladesh and India share 54 rivers. The two countries, however, have only one relevant treaty signed in 1996 which oversees the sharing of the Ganges river water.

Malik Fida A Khan, executive director of Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services and also a member of JIRC technical committee, said, "We want to initiate the discussion on next water-sharing treaty of the Ganges. Also, we will discuss about a joint study on the best use of the Padma river water."

The Ganges water-sharing deal will expire in 2026.

Bachelet raises

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Yesterday, the three ministers spoke separately to the media.

Foreign Minister Momen said, "There is nothing called enforced disappearance in Bangladesh. Some, however, say 76 people fell victim to enforced disappearance in the last 10 years."

Of them, 10 were found while the families of the rest have not provided necessary information. The government will inform the UN about it, he said.

Momen further said there might have been extrajudicial killings between 2003 and 2005, but not since 2008.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman said disappearance takes place for three reasons -- people flee to other countries via Myanmar and India after committing crimes, becoming bankrupt or because of family conflicts.

About the missing ones, he said law enforcers are looking for 32 people who are wanted in different criminal cases. There is no truth in the claim that law enforcers are responsible for all the disappearances.

If anyone disappears voluntarily, it will take time to find him or her, said the home minister.

Asked if the UN rights chief talked about extrajudicial killings, Momen said she did not raise the issue but he told her that no such killings take place in Bangladesh.

Anisul said Bachelet inquired him about the death of writer Mushtaq Ahmed in prison. He then read out the post-mortem report and Bachelet didn't ask any further question.

According to media reports, Mushtaq died in jail on February 25 last year following his arrest under the Digital Security Act (DSA). The post-mortem report didn't specify the cause of his death but his family alleged that he was tortured in police custody and died for a lack of treatment.

Anisul said that during the talks with Bachelet, they both agreed upon the need for training for members of the law enforcement agencies on human rights. He requested Bachelet to send a proposal to the government in this regard.

The law minister said they also spoke about the latest development regarding possible

changes in the DSA. The government formed a committee, chaired by the secretary of the Legal and Parliamentary Division, which includes officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, home, the ICT Division, and the Law and Justice Division.

The committee submitted a report to the law ministry, said the minister.

Momen said the UN Human Rights Office thinks the media in Bangladesh has no freedom and no one can speak freely due to government censorship.

"... I told her that I'm unaware of any government censorship and that the media here is very strong," he told journalists.

He also informed Bachelet that there are 2,800 newspapers in Bangladesh.

Momen said he told the UN rights chief that the civil society is very vibrant and active in Bangladesh and several thousand NGOs are carrying out activities here.

Bachelet thanked Bangladesh for sheltering the Rohingyas and acknowledged its great difficulty in dealing with the refugee crisis. She assured that the UN would carry on its efforts to ensure their safe and voluntary return to Myanmar.

Asaduzzaman said that as Bachelet raised the issue of attacks on religious minorities, he told her that such incidents happen because of comments on social media as the people in Bangladesh are very sensitive about religion. The authorities act immediately in such cases.

"They [the UN] appreciated all the steps and praised us," he added.

When Bachelet wanted to know about the situation in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), The home minister elaborated on the government's efforts to fully implement the CHT Peace Accord.

Bachelet appreciated Bangladesh's regular reporting to human rights treaty bodies, and suggested a mechanism for further streamlining this.

She also talked about the possible visits of several special rapporteurs of the UN to Bangladesh, as well as the country's efforts to implement the Universal Periodic Review recommendations.

The UN rights chief also met Education Minister Dipu Moni.

Rice prices go up again

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"Transport cost has increased. But the price of rice has gone up disproportionately compared to the rise in transport cost. There is no scope to deny that there are some dishonest businessmen," he said while talking to journalists at his office at the Secretariat.

"Besides, we are now between two seasons -- Boro season is already over and Aman cultivation is beginning. People in many areas are fearful of poor Aman harvest due to drought," said Sadhan.

Meanwhile, price of rice of various brands shot up by Tk 4 to Tk 6 per kg in Kushtia's Khajanager -- the country's second largest rice hub.

Every day, about 200-250 trucks laden with rice go to different districts including Dhaka and Chatogram from Khajanager.

According to locals, the price of rice has increased by Tk 4 to Tk 6 after the government hiked fuel prices.

Umar Farooq, managing director of Fresh Agrofarm in Khajanager, said the transport cost has shot up by Tk 2,000 per truck.

Rice mill owners have to use generators due to load shedding, which has also impacted rice prices.

On June 23, the government cut import duty to 25 percent from 62.5 percent in order to encourage imports, increase supply of the staple in the domestic market, and cool down its prices.

On July 7, the food ministry had also given approval to 380 private organisations to import 10 lakh

tonnes of rice in July.

Until Thursday, 34,000 tonnes was imported since the approval, said Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, senior assistant secretary (external procurement) of the ministry.

However, some importers are choosing not to import rice due to high prices in India.

Md Shahjalal, proprietor of Jalal Auto Rice Mill, said his brother Arshad Ali, who owns Dada Agro Food Products, is among those who received approval for importing rice.

"The quality of the Indian variety is not as good as the native one. After bearing all costs, the price becomes higher than the local ones. We've sent our people to India but seeing the high price we have refrained from importing rice," he said.

Saying that the price of paddy has shot up, Shahjalal also claimed that farmers are selling paddy at Tk 1,800 per maund (37.32 kg). "After processing [the paddy into rice], the cost is Tk 3,700 [per maund]," he said.

50 LAKH FAMILIES

The food minister said the government was going to introduce an FFP for 50 lakh poor families.

The families will be able to get 30kg rice per month at Tk 15 per kg. "About 4 crore people will get the benefit, if we assume each family to have four members," he said.

He also said the government will expand its OMS programme to upazila level through 2,013 dealers and double the daily sale limit to 2 tonnes.

Each person will be able to buy 5kg rice per day at Tk 30 per kg.

AFP, Khartoum

Flooding caused by torrential rains in Sudan have killed at least 52 people and damaged or destroyed thousands of homes, state media reported Saturday.

Heavy rains usually fall in Sudan between May and October, and the country faces severe flooding

every year, wrecking properties, infrastructure, and crops.

"A total of 52 people have been killed and 25 others wounded due to torrential rains and floods since the beginning of the fall season," SUNA reported, quoting Abdel Jalil Abdelreheem, spokesman for Sudan's National Council for Civil Defense.