

SHIPWRECK OFF SYRIA 77 migrants killed

AFP, Damascus

At least 77 migrants drowned when a boat they boarded in Lebanon sank off Syria's coast, Syria's health minister said yesterday, the deadliest such shipwreck from Lebanon in recent years.

Lebanon, which since 2019 has been mired in a financial crisis branded by the World Bank as one of the worst in modern times, has become a launchpad for illegal migration, with its own citizens joining Syrian and Palestinian refugees clamouring to leave the country.

Around 150 people, mostly Lebanese and Syrians, were on board the small boat that sank Thursday in the Mediterranean Sea off the Syrian city of Tartus.

"The number of victims from the shipwreck has reached 77 people," Syria's Health Minister Hassan al-Ghabash said in a statement, adding that 20 survivors were being treated in hospital in Tartus.

Tartus is the southernmost of Syria's main ports, and lies some 50 kilometres north of the northern Lebanese port city of Tripoli, where the passengers had boarded.

Many of the boat's Lebanese passengers hail from impoverished regions in the country's north including the city of Tripoli, Lebanon's poorest.

Tripoli has emerged as an illegal migration hub. Wissam al-Talawi, a Tripoli resident who hails from the northern Akkar region, was among the survivors and is being treated in hospital, his brother Ahmad told AFP.

Israel does not believe in peace

Says Palestinian leader Abbas

AFP, United Nations

Israel is deliberately impeding progress toward a two-state solution and can no longer be considered a reliable partner in the peace process, Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas told the United Nations yesterday.

His remarks come a day after Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid said he supported a two-state solution, but Abbas said the proof would be immediate negotiations.

Repeating grievances, Abbas said the Jewish state has acted with "total impunity" against people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and that Palestinians' trust in the prospects for



peace is "regressing."

Israel "is, through its premeditated and deliberate policies, destroying the two-state solution," the Palestinian Authority (PA) president said in a speech to the General Assembly.

"This unequivocally that Israel does not believe in peace," he added. "Therefore, we no longer have an Israeli partner to whom we can talk."

Abbas told the General Assembly that Israel has been engaged in a campaign of land confiscation in the occupied territories.

"This is the truth: they are an apartheid regime," he said, using a comparison that infuriated Israel.



Demonstrators take part in a 'Fridays for Future' global climate demonstration in Berlin, Germany, yesterday. Youth activists around the globe yesterday protested against what they say is a dangerous lack of action by leaders over climate change.

PHOTO: AFP

Seven killed in blast near Kabul mosque

AFP, Kabul

A blast outside a mosque attended by Taliban members in the Afghan capital killed seven people minutes after Friday prayers had ended, according to a hospital.

The explosion occurred near the entrance of Wazir Akbar Khan mosque, not far from the fortified former Green Zone that housed several embassies before the Taliban seized power in August last year.

The mosque is now often attended by senior Taliban commanders and fighters.

No or group has claimed responsibility of the attack. But Islamic State militants have targetted Kabul in recent times.

Asian coastal cities sinking fast: survey

Chittagong ranks second

AFP, New Delhi

Sprawling coastal cities in South and Southeast Asia are sinking faster than elsewhere in the world, leaving tens of millions of people more vulnerable to rising sea levels, a new study said.

Vietnam's most-populous urban centre and main business hub, Ho Chi Minh City, was sinking an average of 16.2 millimetres annually, topping the study's survey of satellite data from 48 large coastal cities around the world.

The southern Bangladeshi port of Chittagong was second on the list, with the western Indian city Ahmedabad, Indonesian capital Jakarta and Myanmar's commercial hub Yangon also sinking more than 20 millimetres in peak years.

Rapid urbanisation has seen these cities draw heavily on groundwater to service their burgeoning populations, according to research by Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (NTU), published in the journal Nature Sustainability last week.

More than one billion people will live in coastal cities at risk of rising sea levels by 2050, according to UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Teacher shaves

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rather assured the students that nothing would happen if they didn't take the model test," she said.

Zahida said she shaved her head on September 13 protesting the incidents.

In her Facebook post, she said, "Grabbing the girls by their braids, the headteacher of my school beat them up for the offence of going to play. She also scolded them. I have shaved my hair in protest. Do I look too ugly?"

Contacted, several guardians of the underage students yesterday refused to make comments on the incidents.

Faridul Alam, district education officer of Chattogram, said an investigation would be conducted to find out if anyone violated rules.

He said if anyone is found guilty, action will be taken against them.

UNO served

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A UNO is responsible for securing the question papers in that upazila when these are kept at police station or the treasury.

According to police and the board officials, the questions were leaked from the Nehal Uddin Pilot Girls High School centre in Bhurungamari.

Police have arrested six people – five teachers and a staffer – of the school for their alleged involvement in it.

Tigresses seal

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for seven for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh and Ireland, the two finalists for Sunday, will join eight top-ranked automatic qualifiers for the Women's T20 World Cup, which will be held from February 9 to 26 next year in South Africa.

NUCLEAR TESTING LEGACY

Marshall Islands halt negotiations with the US

AFP, Majuro

The Marshall Islands halted key negotiations with the US yesterday over ongoing grievances relating to nuclear testing dating back 70 years on the atolls in the heart of the Pacific. Discussions planned for this weekend to renew the terms of the Compact of Free Association – a key international agreement between the US, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau – were broken off in Majuro.

Ukraine conflict's outlook very concerning: India

REUTERS, New Delhi

India told the UN Security Council on Thursday that the trajectory of the Ukraine conflict was very concerning and that the outlook was more so, as New Delhi sharpened its calls for peace.

As long term trade and defence partners, India and Russia have sided with each other for years. India has stepped up purchases of oil and coal from Russia since the Ukraine war began in February.

"The trajectory of the Ukraine conflict is a matter of profound concern for the entire international community," India's FM, S Jaishankar, said in New York. "The future outlook appears even more disturbing. The nuclear issue is of particular anxiety."

Addressing university students on Wednesday, Jaishankar said the world still needs nations that take independent positions in international matters.

"The world today requires independent countries, independent-minded countries who take positions," Jaishankar said. "The politics of the last six months have shown that there is a space out there for countries who are not part of a very polarised scenario."

BID TO COUNTER CHINA

US to develop drones with India

AFP, Washington

The United States and India will co-develop drones, a senior Pentagon official said Thursday, as Washington seeks closer ties with Delhi as a way

of countering China. India will build these aircraft and export them to other countries in its region, this official said. Delhi wants to diversify its weaponry, which is mainly Russian-made, and also to develop its own defense industry. "And we want to support

India on both fronts and are doing so," Eli Ratner, assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, told a group of reporters and defense experts. "In practical terms, that means that we're going to be working closely with India on co-producing and co-developing capabilities that will support India's own defense modernization goals,"



US announces

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shelter, and psychosocial support.

"We urge other donors to contribute robustly to the humanitarian response and increase support to those driven from and affected by violence in Burma," said Blinken in the statement.

Hesaid recognising that conditions in Myanmar do not currently allow for the safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return and reintegration of displaced Rohingya, the US is working with the Bangladesh government, Rohingya, and people within Myanmar towards finding solutions to the crisis.

Injured BCL activist

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brothers on Tuesday.

Shafiqul Islam, officer-in charge of Naldanga Police Station, said Jibon recently brought an allegation of corruption and irregularity against chairman Asad during a live stream on Facebook.

Following this, chairman Asad, his two brothers and 4-5 unidentified people beat up Jibon with iron rods and sticks at Ramshakajipur Amtali Bazar in Naldanga upazila around 7:00pm on Monday, according to the case statement.

Jibon's father Farhad Hossain was also beaten up as he tried to protest the attack on his son.

The injured were admitted to RMCH at night where doctors discharged Farhad the next day. However, Jibon was sent to the ICU.

Water in asteroid

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Ryugu, or its larger parent asteroid, could have "provided water, which contains salt and organic matter" in collisions with Earth, Nakamura said.

"We have discovered evidence that this (process) may have been directly linked to, for example, the origin of the oceans or organic matter on Earth."

Nakamura's team, comprising about 150 researchers – including 30 from the United States, Britain, France, Italy, and China – is one of the largest teams analysing the sample from Ryugu.

The sample has been divided among different scientific teams to maximise the chance of new discoveries.

Kensei Kobayashi, an astrobiology expert and professor emeritus at Yokohama National University who is not part of the research group, hailed the discovery.

5 years gone

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well as appointment of an Independent Panel for design and structure-related consultancy.

The report said the site was handed over to the private partner on May 10, 2018, after construction of the security fence and a site office with utility services for the workers.

However, a substantial amount of construction materials needs to be imported with high import duty, the report said.

In January 2019, the company applied for 100-percent duty waiver, sending letters to the Prime Minister's Office and NBR to this effect. The amount would stand somewhere between Tk 500 crore and Tk 600 crore, Rajuk officials said.

"This issue needs to be resolved," said the progress report.

According to the project proposal, BNG Global will build 85 high-rise buildings – 60 having 20 storeys each and 25 having 25 stories each.

Flat size will range from 1,400 to 2,200 square feet.

The "earthquake-resistant" buildings will be made using the latest construction technology – Industrial Building System (IBS) – and will have lake, park, playground, school, college, hospital, mosque, market, and community spaces.

Established in 2009, BNG Global lists China, Korea, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as its clients. Its website

Shaon made accused

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accused in the case, Sub-inspector Abul Bashar, investigation officer of the case, declined to comment.

Doctors at DMCH conducted the autopsy on Shaon's body around 3:00pm yesterday.

Jannatun Naeem, lecturer in the forensic department at DMCH, said, "Two of us performed the autopsy. We are investigating what caused the wound. Some evidence was collected from his wound site. Those will be tested."

Earlier, SI Shahidul Islam of Shahbagh Police Station completed the inquest report. He mentioned in the report that there were deep wounds on the right side of Shaon's forehead and the back of his head.

His family members claimed the wounds were from bullets.

Shaon was on life support since 11:00pm on Wednesday and died at 8:40pm on Thursday, his brother Sohanur Rahman said.

Meanwhile, Shaon's family members alleged that the authorities were reluctant to hand over the body because the family wanted to take it to Nayapaltan, where BNP's central office is located.

claims it works in the area of healthcare, education, energy and sustainability, research and development and construction management, but provides no information about its previous construction works.

Seeking anonymity, a number of Rajuk officials questioned its selection for the Jhilmil project.

Architect Tarique Hasan, who designed the project, said they already handed over the architectural and structural designs to BNG Global.

"But we did not give them the detailed design yet. We cannot do so before the construction starts," he told The Daily Star.

Rajuk Chairman Anisur Rahman Miah said the project faced frequent delays due to Covid pandemic.

"Sometimes we had lockdowns in our country, and at other times Malaysia was in lockdowns. The project faced delay because of this," he said.

"We hope to sign the fresh deal on a new deadline in the next five to six months. It will take another six to seven months to start the construction work," he added.

BNG Global did not respond to our queries via email.

Its Dhaka office also declined to comment.

"We cannot comment on the project from here. You need to contact our head office for any information," an official of the company said.

Sohanur said police told them to take the body directly to Munshiganj from DMCH and they would take the body over if it was taken to Nayapaltan.

His body was handed over to family members after Jubo Dal leaders went to the hospital and intervened in the matter. Shaon's namaz-e-janaza was held in front of BNP's central office in the evening.

He was buried in Munshiganj in the presence of some central BNP leaders around 10:00pm, a correspondent in Munshiganj reported.

Apart from the case filed by Abdul Malek, Munshiganj Sadar Police Station SI Mainuddin filed a case on Thursday accusing 313 named and another 800 unnamed people.

The main accused in the case filed by the SI is Munshiganj Sadar Upazila BNP Convener Md Mohiuddin.

At least 50 people, including several policemen, were injured in the clash during a BNP rally in Munshiganj's Mukhtarpur.

Shaon, district BNP activist Jahangir Hossain, 40, and Chhatra Dal activist Mohammad Tareque, 20, were injured as police tried to stop BNP from holding the protest rally.