

2 Rohingya leaders stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two Rohingya community leaders were stabbed to death by unknown assailants yesterday evening at a Balukhali refugee camp in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar.

Mohammad Anwar, 38, and Mohammad Yunus, 35, were residents of Block-F.

Police said they were talking to local volunteers near Block-18/A of Camp 13 around 6:00pm when a gang of some 15 to 20 men attacked them with sharp weapons, said Faruk Ahmed, assistant superintendent of Armed Police Battalion-8.

Yunus died at the scene while Anwar succumbed to his injuries around 8:45pm at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital, said the officer.

Additional law enforcers were deployed in the area to avert further violence, he added.

Tensions soar as West Bank violence rages on

AFP, Jerusalem

Two Palestinians were critically wounded yesterday by Israeli military fire in the northern West Bank, the Palestinian health ministry said, amid heightened tensions in the occupied territory.

One Palestinian was hit by "live bullets to the chest" during clashes with Israeli troops in the village of Qarawat Bani Hassan, southwest of Nablus, the ministry said, adding that another was also critically wounded.

Both were taken to hospital in the nearby town of Salfit.

The Israeli army said in a statement that "suspects hurled rocks" at soldiers who responded to "a violent riot" near Qarawat Bani Hassan.

The troops used live fire "to stop the suspects", the army said, adding that "hits were identified."



PHOTO: COLLECTED

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir addressing a large rally on the premises of Mymensingh Polytechnic Institute.

US to send more munitions, military vehicles to Ukraine

Under pressure, Saudi Arabia announces \$400m in humanitarian aid

AGENCIES

The United States will send munitions and military vehicles to Ukraine as part of a new \$725 million security assistance package aimed at bolstering the country's defence against the Russian invasion, the Defense Department said on Friday.

The package is the first since Russia's barrage of missiles fired on civilian population centres in Ukraine this week. It will bring the total of US security assistance since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb 24 to more than \$17.5 billion.

The contents of the latest package, first reported by Reuters, includes high-speed anti-radiation missiles (HARMs) and

precision-guided artillery as well as medical supplies, the Defense Department said in a statement.

President Joe Biden issued a statement delegating the secretary of state "to direct the drawdown of up to \$725 million in defence articles and services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training" to aid Ukraine.

Moscow has called its actions in Ukraine a "special military operation".

A US official told Reuters the aid package was designed to bolster Ukraine's ability to beat back Russia in the counter-offensive that has yielded large territorial gains in recent weeks.

Separately, Ukraine expects the United

States and Germany to deliver sophisticated anti-aircraft systems this month to help it counter-attacks by Russian missiles and kamikaze drones, Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov said on Friday.

Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) allows them to be shipped to Ukraine in the coming days. It allows the United States to transfer defence articles and services from stocks quickly without congressional approval in response to an emergency.

This is the second PDA package of the US government's 2023 fiscal year which is functioning under a stop-gap funding measure and allows Biden to tap up to \$3.7 billion in surplus weapons for transfer to Ukraine through mid-December.

BNP men brave hurdles to join rally

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Many of them stayed in Mymensingh overnight to dodge the ruling party men and the law enforcement agencies, they added.

In the absence of transport, party men reached the venue on boats and trains.

On Friday night, many BNP activists were seen sitting or sleep at the venue, while others made their sleeping arrangements on a footpath nearby.

Syed Imran Saleh Prince, BNP's organising secretary, told the media that party activists from Jamalpur, Sherpur, Netrakona and Kishoreganj faced numerous challenges while trying to join the rally as the bus service remained suspended since morning "on the government's directives".

"Our leaders and activists are still coming to the rally using all available transport. Many drivers of rented vehicles suddenly refused to carry our people to Mymensingh, citing safety concerns."

However, many bus operators said they suspended their operations fearing damage to their vehicle after similar incidents at the Chattogram rally.

Mahbubur Rahman, general

secretary of Mymensingh District Motor Owners' Association, said vehicle owners stopped their services on safety grounds.

PUBLIC BUS SUSPENDED

All buses and CNG-run auto-rickshaws wen toll the roads from Jamalpur bus terminal since Friday night, reports our correspondent.

BNP leaders said the AL was involved in attempts to prevent BNP activists join the rally.

The Transport Owners' Association, however, claimed that bus drivers have expressed their reluctance to operate the vehicles due to previous cases of vandalism during such rallies.

Mahbub Alam, president of Jamalpur Bus Workers' Union, told The Daily Star, "Nobody ordered us to suspend services. The drivers did not agree to go to the rally venue fearing vandalism."

Passengers, especially the elderly, women, and children, of long routes suffered immensely due to lack of public transport. Many were seen walking.

"There was no bus at the Jamalpur bus terminal. I have to report to the office [in Dhaka] tomorrow. I'm at a loss ...," Khadir Ali, of Islampur upazila,

told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I have to go to Dhaka today [yesterday] for an important work. But how will I go? There is no bus on the road," Sneha, of Jamalpur municipality, told The Daily Star.

Jamalpur BNP President Faridul Kabir Shamim told The Daily Star that ruling AL men threatened their leaders and activists not to attend the rally.

There were no buses on the inter-district routes in Mymensingh. No bus was seen leaving for Kishoreganj, Sherpur and Netrakona from there.

Buses from those three districts to Dhaka via Mymensingh were also not running.

However, bus service from Mymensingh to Dhaka was normal.

Sasum Ahmed Bhuiyan, superintendent of police in Mymensingh, said adequate security measures for the BNP rally were taken by the police administration. However, he did not know about suspension of bus services.

AL MEN ON ROADS

AL men took to the roads at different points in Mymensingh to prevent BNP men from joining the rally. They were seen standing on the road with sticks.

At that time, locals complained

about AL men stopping and searching their cars, misbehaving with them and assaulting their drivers.

Md Mainuddin, officer-in-charge of Trishal Police Station, however, denied any such incident.

In different parts of Gazipur's Bhaluka and Sreepur, AL men were seen taking to the streets, chanting slogans against the BNP.

A labourer came under attack yesterday, allegedly by AL men at Mymensingh's Galargaon.

Mobarok Hossain, 33, was admitted to Galargaon Upazila Health Complex.

Meanwhile, Faruk Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Galargaon Police Station, said he was not aware of any such incident.

This was the party's second divisional rally. The first was held in Chattogram on October 12.

The BNP on September 27 announced its division-level rallies in 10 cities to protest the ongoing power crisis, unusual price hikes of daily essentials and the killing of five of its activists during protest in Bhola, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Jashore.

They party said it would conclude the rallies through a mass gathering in capital on December 10.

We will force this regime

FROM PAGE 1

Fakhrul said the government must quit and dissolve parliament by forming a neutral government.

"A fresh Election Commission must be constituted under the neutral government to conduct a credible election for establishing a government and a parliament of the people."

As part of the party's planned divisional programmes, Mymensingh city BNP organised the rally on the Polytechnic Institute ground. Thousands of activists and leaders attended rally, presided over the unit's Convener Prof AKM Shahiqlul Islam.

A chair was left vacant on the stage for the chief guest – BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The rally was organised to denounce the price hike of daily essentials and fuel, the death of five party men in police actions in Bhola, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Jashore, and to demand Khaleda's unconditional release.

BNP leaders and activists from Mymensingh, Sherpur, Jamalpur, Netrakona, Tangail, and Kishoreganj thronged the rally braving various obstacles, threats, and attacks on their way.

The Polytechnic Institute was packed and the air was filled with slogans and the beats of drums.

The BNP alleged that an undeclared transport strike was enforced in Mymensingh division to prevent BNP men from joining the rally.

Fakhrul, in his speech, said their party, if voted to power, would restore democracy, lower the prices of daily

essentials, fuel, and establish peace in the country.

Amid claps and slogans against the AL government, Fakhrul said, "People have now woken up. The Awami League will be swept away by the turbulent wave of our movement from Teknaf to Tentulia."

Yesterday's rally was the second BNP rally at the divisional level. The first one was held in Chattogram on Wednesday. The party would conclude the rallies with a mass gathering in Dhaka city on December 10.

Fakhrul said, "It's a great victory. The brave sons of Mymensingh have demonstrated that they're ready to make any kind of sacrifice to protect democracy."

He added that their men overcoming all barriers and odds have sent a message that the people of Bangladesh would no longer bow down.

"They must free this country from misrule."

He further said, "They [AL] have done the biggest damage by destroying the election system and depriving us of our ownership of the country and our right to change the government after every five years through votes."

The BNP leader also said the government must free Khaleda without any condition and withdraw all political cases against opposition leaders and activists.

"We'll surely force this regime to quit and hold the election under a non-party administration through the united efforts of people."

(Our Mymensingh correspondent contributed to this report)

3 AL leaders expelled for backing an independent

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Three leaders of the Patuakhali Municipality Awami League unit were expelled for campaigning against their nominee for the Zila Parishad polls.

Faruq Mridha, president of the municipal AL's ward -2, Anisur Rahman, president of ward-5, and Nasrullah Sikder, executive member of the same ward, have been showing support for independent candidate Hafizur Rahman for the upcoming election, said Tarikuzzaman Moni, general secretary of AL unit.

The expelled leaders are in the midst of business deals with Hafizur, a contractor, and have been actively participating in his election campaigns for around a week.

After Zila Parishad Chairman Khan Mosharrof Hossain, also the general secretary of the district Awami League, passed away, Khalilur Rahman was nominated as chairman in 2019.

He will be contesting in this year's Zila Parishad election, to be held on October 17.

2 more die from Covid, 295 infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people have died from Covid-19 while 295 others tested positive for the disease in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, said a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services.

The positivity rate has increased to 7.78 percent from the previous day's 7.15.

The new cases were lodged after 3,794 samples were tested across the country during this period.

With the new figure, the number of Covid-19 deaths has reached 29,395.

Meanwhile, 516 people have recovered from the infection, with the recovery rate now at 97.12 percent.

The deceased were a male and a female, both aged between 41 and 70.

Baira suspends passport submission to KSA embassy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) yesterday suspended all submissions of passports to the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Dhaka from Sunday, protesting its decision to process passports and visas of workers through a third party, reports UNB.

They also urged the Saudi government to stop passport and visa processing of workers through the private organisation, Shapla Centre, to bring an end to the "syndication" in the country's labour market.

A Baira executive committee member, who attended the meeting, said they had been submitting passports to the embassy directly for processing until they suddenly asked recruiting agencies to submit those via a third party.