



RSO activist shot dead by 'Arsa members'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Members of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa) shot and killed a Rohingya refugee at the Kutupalong Camp in Ukhiya upazila, Cox's Bazar on Saturday night, said police.

The deceased Mohammad Solim, 45, a resident of Camp 7, was a supporter of the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), said Additional Deputy Inspector General Harun Rashid, commanding officer of 14 Armed Police Battalion (APBn).

"In the primary investigation, we learned that some 8-10 Arsa men wielding firearms shot Solim 4-5 times around 9:00 pm at Camp 2."

The criminals then fled the scene when APBn members arrived at the spot, the additional DIG added.

Solim was taken to a nearby NGO run hospital where doctors declared

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



An election official dozes off on his desk, while the others have no work, as the Probartak School and College voting centre in the Chattogram-10 by-polls remained devoid of voters till at least 10:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

AL's Mohiuddin wins Ctg-10 by-election

Independent runner 'beaten up' at polling stations; turnout low

ARUN BIKASH DEY and FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Awami League candidate Mohiuddin Bachchu won the Chattogram-10 by-polls held yesterday amid a low presence of voters.

Bachchu bagged 52,923 votes while his nearest contender Jatiya Party candidate Shamsul Alam got only 1,572, according to the returning officer's office.

Voter turnout was 11.70 percent.

The election was held via electronic voting machines (EVMs). There were 4,88,633 voters.

Bringing allegations of being beaten up by ruling AL activists at two polling centres, independent Arman Ali boycotted the polls.

During visits to 30 polling centres out of the 156, the correspondents of this paper could not find any polling agents apart from those of the AL nominee.

At Lalkhan Bazar Jamiyatul Ulum Al Islamia Madrasa centre, only 298 votes were cast out of 2,516 until 3:00pm, said Assistant Presiding Officer Mozzamel Hoque.

Three polling stations were set up at Shahid Nagar City Corporation Girls' High School in Lalkhan Bazar. Only 331 voters out of 3,198 voted for their candidates as of 3:15pm, said Atikur Rahman, presiding officer of a centre.

Arif Mainuddin, presiding officer of another centre at



SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

U-17 KHULNA DIVISION Girls attacked for playing football, wearing shorts

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

When she is supposed to be at football practice, she is tossing and turning in a hospital bed with a bandaged head.

Mangali Bagchi, an under-17 footballer of the Khulna divisional team, and some of her teammates were attacked by a group of people on Saturday afternoon.

The reason: They wear shorts and play football.

As Mangali lay in her bed on the third floor of Batiaghata Upazila Health Complex in Khulna, her mother Suchitra Bagchi fed her. Her younger sister sat next to them playing games on her mobile and answering calls from worried relatives.

According to Mangali, some locals of Tentultala village opposed girls playing football at Super Queen Football Academy there. That complaint spurred the girls on to play with more vigour than before.

Two of them were Khulna division U-17 players - Mangali, a resident of another village but comes to Tentultala for practice, and Sadia Nasreen of Tentultala.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sadia said, "My family does not approve of my playing and so I practise in secret. When I was practising recently, a team member, Nupur, took photos and sent them to my family, along with obscene comments about me."

"When I asked her [why she did that], she beat me. I then informed other divisional players - Mangali, Jui Mondal, Hajera Khatun and more. But when Nupur's family learned about the incident, they teamed up with the other locals who opposed us playing football, and came to beat us up."

Mangali told The Daily Star, "My teammates were able

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Suicide blast kills 44 at Pakistan political rally

Dozens more wounded

AFP, Peshawar

At least 44 people were killed and dozens more wounded yesterday by a suicide bombing at a political gathering of a leading Islamic party in northwest Pakistan, officials said.

The blast targeted the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) party - a government coalition partner led by an influential firebrand cleric - as hundreds of supporters congregated under a canopy in the town of Khar, near the Afghan border.

"The tent had collapsed on one side, trapping people who were desperately attempting to escape," said Abdullah Khan, who tried to help the victims. "There was utter confusion, with human flesh, limbs, and body parts scattered throughout the area, alongside lifeless bodies."

Sabeeh Ullah, a 24-year-old party supporter who had his arm fractured by the blast, said the scale of injuries was horrifying. "I found myself lying next to someone who had lost their limbs. The air was filled with the smell of human flesh," he told AFP by phone.

As the toll kept rising, Riaz Anwar - the health minister for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province -

told AFP late yesterday 44 people had been confirmed killed and over 100 wounded. "It was a suicide attack, with the bomber detonating himself in close proximity to the stage," he told AFP.

Images from the blast site circulating on social media showed bodies strewn around the scene, and volunteers helping blood-soaked victims to ambulances.



Pakistan's national assembly is due to dissolve in the next few weeks ahead of elections expected in October or November, and political parties are already preparing to campaign.

The blast coincides with a visit to the country by a senior delegation of Chinese officials, including Vice Premier He Lifeng, who arrived in the capital yesterday evening.

No group has claimed

responsibility for the attack, but the local chapter of the Islamic State (IS) group has recently carried out attacks against JUI-F.

Last year, IS said it was behind violent attacks against religious scholars affiliated with the party, which has a huge network of mosques and madrassas in the north and west of the country.

The jihadist group accuses JUI-F of hypocrisy for being an Islamic group while supporting hostile governments and the military.

The party's leader, cleric Fazlur Rehman, started political life as a firebrand Islamist hardliner but has softened his public image over the years in a bid to forge alliances with secular parties on the left and right of the spectrum.

With the ability to mobilise tens of thousands of madrasa students, his party never musters enough support for power on its own, but is usually a key player in any coalition.

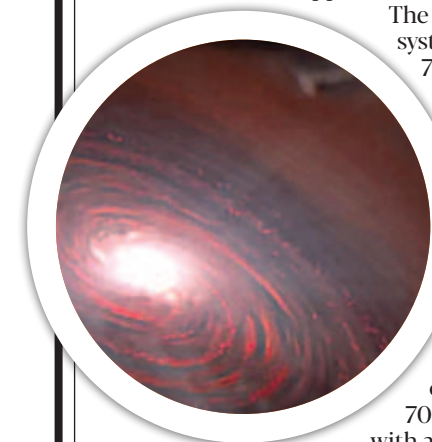
Pakistan has seen a sharp rise in militant attacks since the Afghan Taliban surged back to power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021.

Pakistan's home-grown Taliban group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), has largely directed its campaign against security officials, including police officers.

Webb spots water in nearby system

CNN ONLINE

Astronomers have detected water vapour swirling close to a nearby star - indicating that the planets forming around it might someday be able to support life.



The young planetary system, known as PDS

70, is 370 light-years away. The star at its centre is about

5.4 million years old and cooler than our sun.

Circling it are two known gas giant planets, and researchers

recently determined that one of them, PDS

70b, may share its orbit with a third "sibling" planet

that is forming there.

Two different disks of gas and dust - the ingredients necessary to form both stars and planets - surround the star. The inner and outer disks are separated by a gap spanning 5 billion miles (8 billion kilometres). The gas giants are in the gap, where they orbit the star.

The Webb telescope's Mid-Infrared Instrument detected the signature of water vapour in the inner disk, less than 100 million miles (160 million kilometres) from the star. Astronomers believe

that inner disk is where small, rocky planets similar to those in our solar system could form if PDS 70 is anything like our solar system. In our system, Earth orbits at a distance of 93 million miles from the sun.

Drug smuggling, seizures soar in 2022

Shows data from Dept of Narcotics Control

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The smuggling of narcotics, including cocaine, Phensedyl, marijuana and crystal meth, increased substantially in 2022, shows data from the Department of Narcotics Control.

There was a substantial rise in drug seizures too, according to the DNC database, which was disclosed yesterday on the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

For instance, about 4.57 kilograms of cocaine was confiscated, up from 1.55 kg the previous year. Crystal meth seizures almost trebled to 104 kg last year from 36 kg in 2021.

Similarly, 7.06 lakh bottles of Phensedyl were confiscated, up from 5.74 lakh bottles in 2021. Some 1.15 lakh kg of marijuana last year were taken in by the authorities, up from 86,000 kg in 2021.

Manjurul Islam, deputy director of DNC, acknowledged the increase in seizures as an indication of a rising trend in smuggling and demand.

He attributed the spike to the easing of restrictions

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

CIRCUS ACT! ... While four people - the driver, two passengers behind and one carrying cables on the roof - can be seen on this illegal three-wheeler plying the port city's Akhtaruzzaman Flyover, there are about 11 others sitting on a detachable portion at the back (not in photo). Driving such a vehicle was already unlawful and with so many passengers, the risks are manifold. The photo was taken yesterday.

Three-wheelers will not be banned on highways

JS standing body meeting minutes show, they cite polls as reason

RASHIDUL HASAN

The government will not ban accident-prone vehicles and battery-run easy bikes on the highway before the upcoming national election considering the negative impact it may have on voter turnout.

The issue was discussed in a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry of road, transport and bridges earlier. The contents of that meeting were placed in the form of minutes in yesterday's meeting of the committee and approved by the Jatiya Sangsad body.

According to the meeting minutes, committee member and ruling Awami

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3