

Nine killed in bus attack in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

Nine people, including two off-duty army personnel, were killed when gunmen opened fire on a bus travelling through northern Pakistan, causing it to crash into an oncoming truck and catch fire, officials said yesterday.

The bus was attacked at around 6:30 pm local time (1330 GMT) on Saturday from both sides by at least five militants.

“Following the firing, the bus lost control and collided with an oncoming truck. Subsequently, both vehicles caught fire. Among the casualties are both drivers,” said Arif Ahmed Khan, a senior government official for the district.

He said eight people died at the scene while one person later died in hospital.

Two army troops who were taking leave were among those killed, while 25 others were wounded.

The attack happened near Chilas in Gilgit-Baltistan, along the Karakoram Highway that connects the capital Islamabad to the mountainous north and China, tracing one of the many paths of the ancient Silk Road.

The bus was travelling south to the garrison city of Rawalpindi, which neighbours the capital.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but the region has long grappled with sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Chilas, a town within the popular tourist destination of Gilgit-Baltistan, lies close to the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, a Chinese-backed mega project being built on the River Indus.

Afghan Shia women protest against attacks on community

AFP, Herat

Dozens of Shia women demonstrated in western Afghanistan yesterday against attacks on the Muslim minority at the funeral of several members of their community killed days before.

The women shouted, “Death to the murderers” and “We need security” during the funeral in Herat city’s Jebrael area, Hussain Azimi, a member of the ulama, or council of religious scholars, told AFP.

They were among several hundred people gathered to mourn six victims of the attack in Herat on Friday.

Any trade sanction to hit economy hard

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Regarding the problems in the banking sector, Ahmed said the governor is not the only one responsible for that state.

“The issue of governance is to blame but that is common in the whole country,” he added.

The government is not taking evidence-based policies, so many of their plans are not working out, said Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

As a result, Bangladesh’s GDP is growing, but the export-to-GDP ratio and the revenue-to-GDP ratio are going in the other direction, he added.

Inflation spiralled in Bangladesh due to the wrong policies of the government, said Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, chairman of the University of Dhaka’s department of development studies.

The government is taking loans from the government and printing money, both of which are fuelling the inflationary pressure, he added.

The government is taking loans in foreign currency but it has no concrete plan on how the funds would be utilised and how the amounts would be paid back to the lenders, said Mushtaq Khan, professor of economics at the UK’s SOAS University.

“If this continues, you are bound to default once.”

The power plants were established at a high cost and those will be a big burden for the economy, he added.

NOAB President AK Azad presided over the meeting held at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon. Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Matiur Rahman, editor of Prothom Alo; Shamsul Huq Zahid, editor of Financial Express; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor of Bonik Barta; and Mozammel Haque, editor and publisher of the daily Karotoa, were also present.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Story of Dhaka’s FISH TRADE

RBR

Bachchu Miah and I have had a thriving business relationship for the last 27 years. I met this young vendor while I was living in Kalabagan and now after 19 years of being in Uttara, the not-so-young Bachchu still delivers his fresh catch to me.

My friend has a similar relationship with Chand Miah to the extent that if he finds a 10 or 12 kg sweet-water fish, he insists on us friends sharing the deal. Chand Mia knows us too and any good supply in his watch routinely comes to us.

These men refuse to understand that we might not need it or we are broke and will defer their payment or pay in instalments. Perhaps, money is not their priority and giving their old clients the best catch of the day makes both these men happy.

They do take advantage of our trust in them but we forego those annoying issues of selling a few extra kilogrammes or secretly packing other

rare varieties of fresh fish that we actually did not order.

These men roam the city streets and sell fish to long-time regular clients like us. They have our number on speed dial and a call from them at six in the morning, informing us of how good the fish market looks that day, is a frequent routine.

Then there are fishmongers on the footpath. They are a tad different from Bachchu and Chand. They sit in a group; a few friends make a pop-up fish bazaar and sell the catch. They buy their fish, which are usually an organic catch, from other small fishermen in the urban villages of the city outskirts. If you are fond of small fish or fish fries from the rivers then these men have the best catch.

They, however, complain that now with the high cost of living their profit margin has been compromised. They do not take up shops in local bazaars because they do not want to bear the rent or the utility costs. Rather, they sit under the scorching sun and sell till midday.

Then there are the local fish bazaars and superstores to get your fish; even online sites advertising for cut, cleaned, and de-scaled fishes. Frankly, I am grateful to the local fishmongers who persistently stay with you and maintain a win-win fish sale.

There is another shadow hand who works with these fishmongers; the women, men, or young children, who sit beside the vendor, in the fish market or on footpaths. They do the scaling and cutting of the fish we buy from the local traders, with their long-curved blades stuck to a wooden platform. They do this relentlessly for a meagre fee depending on the size and quantity of the fish.

Interestingly the fish oil, entrails, or innards thrown away by these cutters are in turn sold and picked by people who have pet cats; apparently, it is a treat for them. The cherished fish oil is also bought by the masses and it makes for a delicious and nutritious lunch if cooked with seasonal greens.

Dhaka is such an interesting city. At every corner, something remarkable is happening to be in awe of. The inspiring spirit of the city’s toiling people rekindles us and we appreciate their innovative ways of surviving in this city.



\$8b climate fund rolled out for Bangladesh

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to allocating more than half of its 2024-26 allocation for Bangladesh (\$5.5 billion) in support of the government’s climate agenda.

The Korean government pledged \$50 million and the AIIB is considering the provision of an additional \$400 million in 2024 at the request of the government.

The UK, through its Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance, will support improved coordination of bilateral climate finance, as well as support to the government to increase access to all sources of climate finance, building on a country-owned programmatic approach to climate finance.

The GCF is supporting several public and private sector projects, totalling over \$400 million, including national direct access entities and in sectors

such as energy, agriculture, water management and resilient livelihood.

In addition, several other multi-country programs, which include Bangladesh, are in the GCF’s pipeline.

Team Europe has committed to providing an EU-guaranteed EIB Loan of \$381.5 million in support of renewable energy projects in Bangladesh.

The Renewable Energy Facility is expected to mobilise up to \$763 million in investments and contribute to the installation of an estimated 750 MWp of new renewable energy capacity in Bangladesh.

The EIB support will be accompanied by an EU Grant worth \$49 million, including Technical Assistance (\$6.5 million) and an Investment Grant (\$42.5 million) provided under the EU Global Gateway strategy.

AFD is processing a \$320 million

climate policy-based loan program, aligned and complementary to the IMF, WB and ADB commitments.

JICA will support the BCDP by enhancing its project pipelines aligning Bangladesh’s climate change agenda through a combination of technical assistance, concessional loans and grants.

UNDP will continue providing technical assistance to the government on strategic climate change-sensitive planning and budgeting management and strengthened climate public finance governance.

Bangladesh is currently receiving funding for nine private-sector climate projects with contributions of \$441.2 million from the GCF, \$135.5 million from other development partners, national implementing entities, and private banks.

Gaza ‘seems like a death zone’

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difficult to heed Israeli evacuation orders because of patchy internet access and no regular supply of electricity.

“Everywhere you turn to, there are children with third-degree burns, shrapnel wounds, brain injuries and broken bones,” James Elder, Unicef’s global spokesperson, told Al Jazeera from Gaza.

“Mothers crying over children who look like they are hours away from death. It seems like a death zone right now,” Elder said.

On top of the risk of being killed in an Israeli air strike, disease is the second biggest threat to children, he added.

“We risk seeing as many children... that die from a lack of water, protection and sanitation,” Elder said.

Since the conflict started on October 7, 15,523 people, including 6,000 children, have been killed in Gaza, according to Gaza’s health ministry.

“I cannot find words strong enough to express our concern over what we’re witnessing,” the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said yesterday on X, formerly Twitter, demanding a

“Ceasefire. NOW.”

The Israeli military yesterday said its war planes and helicopters had struck Hamas targets including tunnel shafts, command centres and weapons storage facilities. Naval forces had hit Hamas vessels on the coast, it said.

The Israeli military yesterday said it had carried out around 10,000 air strikes since the war started.

Palestinian health officials said air strikes destroyed several houses in the Al-Karara town near Khan Younis overnight, killing several people including children.

Residents and Hamas media also reported intensive bombing in the east of Zeitoun in Gaza City and in Tel Al-Zaatar in northern Gaza Strip.

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA said at least 160 Palestinian deaths were reported in two incidents in northern Gaza Saturday: the bombing of a six-storey building in Jabalia refugee camp, and of an entire block in a Gaza City neighbourhood.

In a sign of growing US concern about the human cost of the war, US Vice President Kamala Harris said too many innocent Palestinians had been killed in Gaza, and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin deemed it a “moral

responsibility” for Israel to protect civilians.

“Frankly, the scale of civilian suffering, and the images and videos coming from Gaza, are devastating,” Harris told reporters in Dubai on Saturday.

Austin weighed in with perhaps his strongest comments yet on Israel’s need to protect civilians in Gaza.

“If you drive them into the arms of the enemy, you replace a tactical victory with a strategic defeat,” Austin told a defence forum in Simi Valley, California.

Israel, in an unprecedented bombing campaign, has pounded Gaza since October 7, when Hamas fighters intruded into the Jewish nation and killed 1200 people. They also took 243 hostages with them.

Israel has unleashed a relentless air and ground campaign since then, demolishing most of Gaza Strip and killing thousands, mostly civilians.

Meanwhile, fuelling fears the conflict could spread to destabilise the region, Yemen’s Iran-allied Houthi movement said it attacked two Israeli ships in the Red Sea with an armed drone and a missile on Sunday, in a move to stand with the Palestinians.

CYCLONE MICHAUNG Likely to move northwestwards, intensify further

UNB, Dhaka

The cyclonic storm “Michaung” that has formed over the southwest Bay of Bengal moved northwestwards further and is likely to intensify further, said a Met office bulletin yesterday.

Michaung was centred about 1,560km southwest of Chattogram port, 1,520km southwest of Cox’s Bazar port, 1,420km southwest of Mongla port, and 1,430km southwest of Payra port, the bulletin added.

The maximum sustained wind speed within 54km of the cyclone centre is about 62km/h rising to 88km/h in gusts or squalls.

Maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox’s Bazar, Mongla, and Payra have been advised to hoist Distant Warning Signal No 2.

All fishing boats and trawlers over the north bay and deep sea have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.

Tourist couple drown in the ocean

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s Bazar

A married couple who had gone to visit Cox’s Bazar beach town drowned in the sea yesterday.

The bodies of Abul Kasem Bakul and his wife Sabikun Nahar Suma were found floating in the ocean near Laboni Point around 10:30am, said Sub Inspector Chan Mia of Cox’s Bazar Tourist Police.

The middle-aged tourists were from Natore’s Bonpara, he added.

Noor Mohammad Rabbi, the manager of Seagull Hotel, said that the couple checked into the hotel on Saturday morning.

“On Sunday morning, the husband and wife went swimming in the sea. After a few hours, their bodies were recovered,” he said.

Osman Gani, lifeguard supervisor at Sea-Safe, said the bodies of the couple were recovered and taken to Cox’s Bazar Sadar Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared them dead.

Their bodies have been kept in the morgue, said the hospital’s Resident Medical Officer Dr Ashikur Rahman.

Student found dead in septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The body of a madrasa student was found in a septic tank of a mosque in Patuakhali Saturday night.

Police recovered the body of Atiqul Islam, 11, from the septic tank of Rahman Munsil Bari Mosque at Pakdal village in Baulal upazila.

Atiq, son of Sarwar Sardar from Jirail in Barishal’s Bakerganj, was student at Fazlur Rahman Rahmania Darul Ulum Nurani Hafezi Madrasa.

Md Ismail, 18, a student of the same madrasa, was arrested in connection with the incident, said OC Arichul Haque of Baulal Police Station.

The victim’s body was sent for autopsy, he added. Following the incident, locals vandalised the madrasa.

Nine dead in attack on Peru gold mine: ministry

AFP, Lima

Nine people were killed and more than a dozen injured in an attack on a gold mine in northern Peru, authorities said on Saturday.

A group of “armed criminals” raided the Poderosa mine in the province of Pataz, Peru’s interior ministry said in a statement on social media platform X, “violently confronting the company’s internal security.”

The ministry said that seven attackers had been apprehended and that police had “taken control of the

situation.”

Among the dead were seven security guards who tried to repel the attack and two miners.

The latter were killed when the assailants threw explosives into the mine shaft, authorities said.

The ministry reported that 15 people had been wounded, but local media later put the number at 23.

Authorities said they were still investigating the motive for the attack, according to local press reports.

In May, at least 27 workers died in a fire at a gold mine in Peru’s southern Arequipa region.

Another 22 BNP-Jamaat

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No convicts were present at the court when a Dhaka court delivered the verdict.

Nine prosecution witnesses testified before the court in the case.

According to the case statement, a group of leaders and activists of BNP and Jamaat and their front organisations held a secret meeting in the home of local Jamaat leader Ataur Rahman in Bhatara around 3:25am on September 5, 2018.

But sensing the law enforcers’ presence, they fled after blasting crude bombs. Police, however, detained one Ali Miah from the spot.

Police filed a case against 23 people, including Ali, with Bhatara Police Station.

On May 31, 2019, police pressed charges against Ali and 10 other accused, and the court framed charges against them on August 21 this year.

Another Dhaka court sentenced five activists of BNP-Jamaat to 24 months’ imprisonment over violence in Ramna in April 2013.

The court also acquitted three other accused.

The five convicts are Jakir Hossain,

Nabi Hossain, Mohammad Sohel, Ripon Mia, and Mohammad Shipon.

Five prosecution witnesses testified.

According to the case statement, some leaders and activists of BNP-led alliance illegally gathered in Ramna’s Matshya Bhaban area around 5:30pm on April 6, 2013, assaulted police, and prevented law enforcers from discharging their duties.

Police sued six named and 800-900 unnamed people.

On February 2, 2015, Ramna police submitted a charge sheet against eight accused before the court.

A Dhaka court yesterday jailed four BNP activists for 36 months over violence in the New Market area in March 2013.

No convicts were present in the court when the judgment was delivered.

Fifteen other accused were acquitted.

In another development, a Dhaka court jailed two BNP activists for 24 months’ over torching and vandalising a vehicle in December 2012.

The convicts were not present during verdict delivery.