

ETHNIC VIOLENCE

## Two dead, scores hurt after police open fire in Manipur

REUTERS, Guwahati

At least two people were killed and scores injured in India's northeastern Manipur state after security forces opened fire at a mob in Churachandpur district late on Thursday, a police official said, as sporadic violence continued in the region.

Close to 200 people have died since fierce fighting broke out last May between members of the majority Meitei and minority Kuki communities in the state bordering Myanmar over sharing economic benefits and quotas given to the tribes. Thousands remain displaced in relief camps.

Churachandpur, home to the Kuki-Zo community, was among the first areas in the state to witness ethnic clashes when violence first erupted in May.

### The violence broke out after the district police ordered the suspension of a Kuki constable after purported images of him with armed men surfaced on social media.

Thursday's violence broke out after the district police ordered the suspension of a Kuki constable after purported images of him with armed men surfaced on social media.

About 400 people stormed the district police chief's office at around 7:30 pm, demanding the order be revoked. The mob attacked the complex which houses the offices of the police chief as well as the district administration, in the heart of the town.

"They climbed the gates and scaled the walls of the complex. Several vehicles were burnt, and later at night, the official residence of the deputy commissioner was torched," a senior police official said by phone.

Security forces lobbed tear gas at first in an attempt to disperse the mob and then "resorted to shooting", the official said, requesting anonymity as the person was not authorised to speak to the media.

The official said about 25 people were injured, and were being treated in hospital. Authorities have suspended mobile internet services in Churachandpur for the next five days.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), an apex tribal body, warned district police chief Shivanand Surve, who had issued the suspension order, to leave Churachandpur within the next 24 hours.



## MY DHAKA

PHOTO: JATRA

# Farewell to the old, a welcome to the new

RBR

I never knew dismantling a house, a store, a restaurant, and a bag full of memories could be an exuberant experience, until I came across a post on social media related to the beautiful crafts store, Jatra, in Banani.

The post read: The dismantling of the old shop marks a "Jatra Bhongo", paving the way for a new beginning, a "Punorjatra".

I thought it was the most sublime manner of saying – "We are moving to a new address". After all, it is just a store at the end of the day.

"The relocation of Jatra is not just a physical move; it's a celebration of growth and evolution. To bid farewell to its old location, Jatra hosted a colourful cultural programme titled "Jatra Bhongo", or a break in the journey. The three-day event served as a tribute to the place that has been home to countless moments of creativity and camaraderie.

"Following this heartfelt farewell, Jatra opened its doors to a new beginning with "Punor Jatra", a celebration of moving into its new location, which is another three-day celebration with promises to be a joyous occasion filled with music, art, and the vibrant energy that defines Jatra," says Arthy Ahmed, GM of Jatra Biroti.

Speaking about the relocation, Anusheh Anadil, founder of Jatra, expressed her excitement, saying, "As we bid adieu to our old location and embrace the new, we carry with us the memories and the spirit of Jatra. This relocation marks the beginning of an exciting chapter in our journey, and we



look forward to continuing to inspire and be inspired by the rich cultural heritage of Bangladesh."

Jatra is not only a store for its regulars, it is a place to unwind the knots. It is a place that is oozing with creativity and promoting the flavours, sounds, textures, and colours of Bangladesh in a way you have never seen before. At the same time, it is also a place that gives your inner imaginative mind a place to roost.

Appreciating this artistic flair in all the people who came to Jatra, the souls behind this store had very beautifully curated three days of graffiti experience. They asked people to feel free to paint the walls or take-home pieces of Jatra's history before it's dismantled and bless the space with their creative energy.

The farewell was celebrated with a festival of wild painting spree, singing, dancing and enjoying hearty meals. It was followed by a procession with percussion to their new location where another three days of festivity awaited the Dhaka crowd.

"The start of this artistic journey in 1999, where music, art, and crafts were in perfect symphony, paved the way for supporting and nurturing numerous

small local businesses. As Jatra grew, it extended itself to a dynamic store, shop, and meeting place, seamlessly blending tradition with urban influences and emphasising fair trade and sustainable practices.

"From its inception, the brand has dedicatedly nurtured local artisans, fostering a connection to their roots and preserving traditional crafts, inspiring a generation to think creatively, and



promote slow food," said Arthy.

Celebrating the arrival of spring on February 14, Jatra held a performance by artistes Kanganini Sufia, Shofi Mondol, and Arif Baul. On February 15, Kafil Ahmed and Shonar Bangla Circus enthralled audiences. All these electrifying activities will end with Boshonto Ullash on February 16.

I have never witnessed something so extraordinary happen while demolishing an old building to make way for urbanisation. Let us all commend this commissioning of artistic minds among the store's regulars and customers and giving them a chance to be part of an inspiring journey.

## Young man arrested over counterfeiting of bank notes

UNB, Dhaka

Rab arrested an operative of a gang involved in making fake currency from Kadamtali area of Dhaka on Thursday night.

The arrestee is Jisan Hossain Rifat, 19, who learned how to make fake currency by watching videos online.

During the arrest, fake notes of different denominations of Tk 2,30,900 and various equipment, including computers, were recovered during the drive in a house in the Kadamtali area.

Rifat and his gang members used to sell the fake notes at fish markets, launch ghats, bus terminals, and other markets and supplied fake notes worth Tk 2 crore across the country.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Mohiuddin Mahmud Sohel, company commander of the elite force, revealed this information at a press conference in the Rab-10 office of Dhaka's Jatrabari area yesterday.

Rifat used to print and supply fake currency notes in different areas of the country including Jatrabari, Shyampur, Demra, and Narayanganj.

He said that the arrestee watched videos online to learn how to make fake money out of greed and ambitious dreams to earn more money in a short time.

He also received training in making fake currency notes from gangs using various means, and later he made fake notes and supplied them in various ways, the RAB officer said.

After making the notes, he created a Facebook page to sell and supply them to different people. However, all the information was exchanged in the messenger, he said.

## One killed in clash over rivalry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A young man was killed and eight others were injured yesterday in a clash between rivals from the ruling party over previous enmity and establishing supremacy in Narayanganj's Sonargaon upazila.

The deceased Parvez Hossain, 24, son of Motaleb Mia, was declared dead on arrival at Dhaka Medical Hospital around 5:00pm, said Inspector Bacchu Mia, in charge of the hospital's police outpost.

The clash took place around 3:00pm at Kandargaon village of the upazila's Pirojpur union between followers of Jubo League's union unit president Jakir Hossain and local Awami League activist Jasim Uddin, said police.

Both Jakir and Jasim are involved in the sand mining and construction business. Both of them want to establish supremacy in the local area to facilitate their business operations, and there have been clashes between them several times before.

When contacted, Jubo League leader Jakir Hossain, said Jasim and his men attacked them without any instigation and that one of his supporters died and his younger brother was in critical condition at the hospital.

Meanwhile, when called for his comment, Jasim Uddin's phone was found switched off.

Mohsin Mia, inspector (investigation) of Sonargaon Police Station, said legal action will be taken in connection with this incident.

## UN worried by issues related to Prof Yunus

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Dujarric said the UN is very much aware about it.

"I'd have to reiterate that Mr Yunus has been very much a valued partner of the United Nations through the years. He's been an advocate for us both in official and unofficial capacity and supporting a number of initiatives surrounding the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, and our development work in general."

The comment comes following a press conference by Prof Muhammad Yunus on Wednesday when he said he and his colleagues were going through a disastrous situation due to an "unlawful" takeover of offices at the Grameen Telecom Bhaban by a group of outsiders.

On the evening of February 12, a group of people, claiming to be affiliated with Grameen Bank, barged into the Grameen Telecom Bhaban, and said the current Grameen Bank board appointed seven directors, including the chairman, for Grameen Kalyan and Grameen Telecom, two social business ventures established by the Nobel Laureate, according to the officials of the organisations.

The group was seen on the following days, they said. The office of Grameen Telecom was found locked yesterday.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said that the government has nothing to do with the cases against Prof Yunus.

"Regarding Dr Yunus, I can clearly state that firstly, the National Board of Revenue filed a case against him. The independent Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a [separate] case against him. The government has nothing to do here."



Displaced Palestinians camp near the border fence between Gaza and Egypt in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, as Israel has steadily expanded ground operations in Gaza toward the south.

PHOTO: AFP

## Boats on Naf spark fear of fresh influx

FROM PAGE 1

forcing people to flee the neighbourhoods along the border in Bandarban. Besides causing damage to properties, the bullets and explosives claimed at least two lives and injured several others in Bangladesh territory.

Yesterday, Noor Hossain, chairman of Sabrang Union Parishad in Teknaf, said locals were fearing yet another Rohingya influx.

He added that intermittent sounds of gunfire were heard from Sabrang until the evening and people in Shahporir Dwip saw troops firing weapons from helicopters.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said arms and ammunition were recently smuggled into Bangladesh from Myanmar.

"These were in abandoned condition. The border guards seized them, and the carriers were arrested,"

he told reporters in Chattogram, adding that additional forces were deployed in the border areas while the coast guards, Bangladesh Navy and BGB members were directed to be on alert at all times.

### THOUSANDS SEEK TO FLEE MYANMAR

Over 1,000 people lined up at the Thai embassy in Yangon yesterday as young people sought to leave Myanmar after the junta said it would impose military service, AFP reports.

The military said it would enforce a law allowing it to call up all men aged 18-35 and women aged 18-27 to serve for at least two years as it struggles to quell opposition to its 2021 coup.

The junta faces widespread armed resistance to its rule after seizing power from an elected civilian government, and recently suffered a series of stunning losses to an armed alliance of ethnic minority groups.

The Thai embassy in Yangon has been swamped with young men and women seeking visas to get out of Myanmar since the announcement last Saturday.

Yesterday, an AFP journalist saw a queue of between 1,000 and 2,000 people snaking through the streets near the mission in downtown Yangon.

The embassy said it was issuing 400 numbered tickets a day in order to manage the queue.

Student Aung Phy, 20, told AFP he arrived at the embassy at 8:00pm on Thursday and slept in his car before starting to queue around midnight.

"We had to wait for three hours and police opened the security gate around 3:00am and we had to run to the front of the embassy to try to get places," said the man who used a pseudonym because of fears for his safety.

## Road crash claims 7

FROM PAGE 1

35, and their son Sadman Rahman, from Ashabhat village in Phulpur upazila of Mymensingh, said Md Anwar Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Kotwali Model Police Station.

The other two were identified as autorickshaw driver, Al-Amin Hossain, 25, of Phulpur upazila, and another passenger, Golam Mustafa, 50, of Dhobaura upazila.

The inspector said the identities of the remaining two victims could not be ascertained immediately.

Quoting witnesses, the police officer said the accident took place when a Sherpur-bound bus from Mymensingh collided head-on with a CNG-run autorickshaw coming from the opposite direction, killing six passengers of the auto-rickshaw and its driver on the spot around 11:30am.

Vehicular movement on the highway remained halted for more than an hour after the accident, creating long tailbacks on both sides.

On information, police and firefighters went to the spot, recovered the bodies, and sent them to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue.

Police seized the bus, but its driver fled the scene, inspector Anwar said, adding that a case was lodged with the police station in this connection.

Quoting family members, the inspector said Bablu, along with his wife and son, was on his way to attend the namaz-e-janaza of one of his relatives at Char Ishwardai village in Mymensingh Sadar upazila.

Mymensingh Deputy Commissioner Dider-E-Alam Mohammad Maksud Chowdhury formed a three-member probe body led by an additional district magistrate to investigate the incident. The committee was asked to submit a report within three working days.

He also gave Tk 20,000 to each of the victim's family members to help with funeral expenses.

**A FAMILY IN RUIN**  
On a visit to Bablu's house following the tragedy, his family and relatives were found to be in shock and disbelief. "A happy family is now completely

ruined," Md Abul Mansur, Bablu's cousin, choked back tears as he described the unimaginable loss.

"Just last week, Bablu bought Sadman clothes after his admission to a local madrasa. Today, Sadman dressed in his new clothes. Now they are stained with his innocent blood."

Sadman was the youngest of four children of the couple. They also have two schoolgoing daughters and a son who reads at a local madrasa.

"Bablu's parents are bedridden, and we do not dare tell them what happened," Mansur said, adding that they only informed them that Bablu was sick and had been taken to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

The family moved to Phulpur upazila headquarters four years ago, where Bablu ran a small shop and his wife worked as a tailor.

"This tragedy has plunged the family into darkness. With three young lives left adrift, who will guide them through the storm?" Mansur sobbed, his voice heavy with despair.

## 11 killed in fire at Indian paint factory

AFP, New Delhi

Eleven people were killed in a fire that ripped through a paint factory in India's capital, an official said yesterday, with rescue teams still searching for survivors.

The fire broke out on New Delhi's northern outskirts late Thursday, fire services director Atul Garg told AFP.

"There was a blast in the paint factory and the building collapsed. The victims were labourers in the factory," Garg said.

"The impact was such that the fire spread to a house and a drug rehabilitation centre nearby."

Garg said the fire had since been contained and the cause of the blast was yet to be determined.