

22 migrants die as boat sinks off Turkey

7 children among them

AFP, Istanbul

Twenty-two migrants including seven children have drowned after a boat capsized off the Turkish coast, local officials said yesterday.

Two people were rescued by the Turkish coastguard and another two managed to make it out of the water on their own, officials said. The victims' nationalities were not yet known.

The boat capsized off Turkey's largest island, called Gokceada or Imbros, which is located in the Aegean Sea off the coast of the northwestern province of Canakkale, near Greece's Lemnos island.

"The Turkish coastguard found the bodies of 22 people including seven children," the local governor's office said in a statement.

The search and rescue operation was backed by one airplane, two helicopters, a drone, 18 boats and 502 personnel, it added.

Turkey is hosting nearly four million refugees, mostly Syrians.

Many migrants try to reach the Greek islands from Turkey's western coasts hoping to eventually reach prosperous European Union countries, with many dying in the perilous sea crossing.

There has been an increase in migrant crossing attempts in the waters between Turkey and Greece in recent weeks.

The Turkish coastguard indicated that it had rescued or intercepted several hundred migrants, including children, attempting to cross to Greece since the start of the week.

The EU border agency Frontex said this week that the number of irregular border crossings into the bloc in the first two months of this year reached 31,200 – similar to the level from a year ago, according to preliminary calculations.

In the eastern Mediterranean, the second most active migratory route after the Western African route, the number of detections more than doubled to 9,150 in the first two months of the year, it said.

The Mediterranean Sea has for several years been the centre of migrant flows from Africa and the Middle East to Europe.

The influx peaked in 2015 as migrants, many fleeing the Mideast upheaval caused by Syrian civil war, sought refuge in Europe.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Vehicles and rickshaws are caught in a long tailback on the road in Dhaka's New Market area. Traffic was heavy in some areas of the capital yesterday as Eid shoppers thronged makeshift shops along the roads and shopping centres on the first weekend of Ramadan.

Indian SC to hear pleas seeking stay on CAA rules

New Delhi dismisses Washington's concern about its citizenship law as 'misplaced'

AGENCIES

India's Supreme Court yesterday said it will hear a batch of petitions seeking a stay on the implementation of the contentious Citizenship Amendment Rules, 2024.

Several petitioners, including the Indian Union Muslim League, moved the apex court after the union government notified the rules, by filing interlocutory stay applications in their pending writ petitions.

A bench, consisting of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, acknowledged the arguments put forth by senior lawyer Kapil Sibal, representing the IUML. Sibal asserted that once citizenship is granted to migrant Hindus, it cannot be revoked, thus emphasizing the need for an expedited hearing on the matter.

"We will hear this on Tuesday. There are 190 plus cases. All of them will be heard," CJ Chandrachud said.



Under the Citizenship Amendment Act, "persecuted" Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains who entered India from three of its neighbouring countries till 2014 are eligible to get citizenship.

The rules for implementing CAA were notified on March 12, more than four years after the law was passed by Indian parliament.

Meanwhile, Indian the foreign ministry yesterday said comments by the United States expressing concern about India's implementation of the contentious citizenship law are "misplaced, misinformed, and unwarranted".

India's move this week sparked sporadic protests, with critics, including Muslims groups and opposition parties, saying the law was discriminatory and undermined the country's secular constitution.

In a statement, the US State Department said it was "concerned" about the notification of the law, citing "respect for religious freedom and equal treatment" as a fundamental democratic principle.

"We are of the view that it is misplaced, misinformed, and unwarranted," Randhir Jaiswal, a spokesperson for India's Foreign Ministry, said yesterday, in response to the US statement.

"Lectures by those who have a limited

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Pedestrian shot dead as 2 groups clash

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Abdul Mannan, superintendent of police in Cumilla, said the clash occurred over establishing supremacy but political rivalry did not play a role.

He said two people were detained over the incident and additional police personnel were deployed in the area.

Locals said the clash broke out over taking control of the racket of extorting money from the bus, human haulier and CNG-run autorickshaw stands in the area.

Police and locals said there was a long-standing dispute between two factions known as "Abul Kashem Group" and "Molla Bari Group" over control of the stand. Both groups had the backing of top Awami League

leaders, they said.

Abul Kashem Group has been controlling the bus stand area for long but local AL leaders a couple of months ago gave control of the area to Rabbi Alauddin-led "Molla Bari Group", intensifying their rivalry, they said, adding that both groups used to have showdowns with firearms since then.

Yesterday, Abul Kashem group went to the bus stand area to retake control, leading to the clash with their rival group. Arnab was shot in the chest as the groups exchanged fire, the sources said.

Arnab's father Md Azharuddin said he was on his way to the Satata Paribahan bus counter from his nearby house in Shashongachha area. He was killed despite not being

involved in the clash, Azharuddin said.

Locals said Shashongachha is a hub of buses plying from Cumilla to Dhaka, Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Munshiganj, Brahmanbaria and Sylhet.

Besides, there are human haulier and CNG-run autorickshaw stands nearby. So, extortion in the area is a very lucrative business, they said.

Sadar upazila AL Organising Secretary and transport leader Ahmed Niaz Pavel told The Daily Star that the issue was about establishing dominance in the area, and not an intra-party feud. There were Awami league men among the injured, as well as among those accused of carrying out attacks, he said.

Fire incidents keep rising

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Former fire service chief Ali recommends that every building has its own team of first responders.

According to a fire service official, officers often do not sue the violators because they "do not want to attend court hearings throughout the lengthy trial proceedings. Besides, some building owners are powerful people, and they harass the inspectors. The fire service also does not have its own executive

magistrates to run mobile courts".

Talking to The Daily Star, Lt Col Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations) of fire service, said, "Our inspectors issue notices. Then we go for mobile courts and file cases. Our only limitation is we do not have magistrates like the city corporations and Rajuk have. This is why we hold fewer mobile courts compared to other organisations."

Govt sets prices of 29 food items

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government is no longer effective. "What is more important is that the supply is increased and the costs at producer and wholesale levels are reduced. Otherwise, fixing the prices of some products won't work," he observed.

On March 11, the commerce ministry fixed the price of dates, one of the key items for iftar. The price of low-grade dates was fixed at Tk 150 to Tk 165 per kg. However, traders did not follow the rate.

Visiting Shewrapara, Ibrahimpur, Kochukhet, and Karwan Bazar kitchen markets in the capital yesterday, The Daily Star found that retailers were selling the cheapest dates for Tk 200 a kg. However, the quality of the dates was not good. Traders said they were unable to

purchase dates at the government-set rate.

Akhter Hossain, proprietor of Modina Fruits Collection at Kochukhet kitchen market, said he was selling dates for Tk 300-Tk1,800 a kg, depending on varieties.

The Daily Star also found that the prices of local and imported fruits increased by Tk 20-50 a kg.

A kg of apple (gala) was being sold for Tk 360-380, up from Tk 320-340 last week; malta for Tk 360-380, up from Tk 320-330; grape for Tk 280-300, up from Tk 240-260, and papaya for Tk 160-200, up from Tk 140-180.

The prices of oranges and pears have also surged by Tk 10-20 per kg, according to traders.

Kanu Miah, a fruit seller at Kochukhet kitchen market, said customers blamed them for increased

prices. "The price fluctuation is not within our control. When our purchase prices increase, we are forced to sell fruits at higher prices," he said.

The price of potatoes has gone up by Tk 5 per kg compared to last week. Yesterday, potatoes were sold for Tk 35-40 a kg, up from Tk 30-35.

Although the prices of some essentials including onions, aubergine, lemon, green chillies and coriander leaves have come down, those were still being sold at prices higher than those fixed by the government.

Jahid Hossain, a vegetable seller at Karwan Bazar, said the prices of some vegetables have dropped as the demand has decreased.

"Once the demand increases, the prices will go up again," he said.

Bangladeshi expatriate killed in Oman fire

UNB, Dhaka

A Bangladeshi expatriate was killed in a sofa factory fire in Al Buraimi, Oman, on Tuesday.

The victim, Hossain Miyaji, 22, was the son of Abdus Salam of Nizmehar village in Chandpur's Shahrasti municipality.

He was one of the victims of the fire that broke out in the factory following a gas cylinder explosion early Tuesday.

Family members requested the government to bring his body back.

Contacted, Mizanur Rahman, ward councillor of the municipality, said that all necessary steps would be taken to bring his body home.

He went to Oman in 2019.

College student drowns in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A college student drowned while bathing in a pond of Gazipur's Kapasia upazila yesterday afternoon.

The victim, Rakib, 24, son of Shahidul Alam of Pabur village, was a third-year student at Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College in the capital.

Quoting his family members, Dewan Mohammad Azad, in charge of Kapasia fire station, said Rakib drowned in the middle of the pond while trying to swim it across.

3 killed, 27 wounded as Al-Shabaab's Mogadishu hotel siege ends

AFP, Mogadishu

Three people were killed in an hours-long siege by Al-Shabaab jihadists at a popular hotel near the presidential palace in the Somali capital Mogadishu, police said yesterday.

Armed fighters stormed the SYL hotel in a hail of bullets late on Thursday before security forces announced they had brought the situation under control after more than 13 hours.

It broke a relative lull in violence by the Al-Qaeda-linked group, demonstrating its continued ability to strike despite a major military offensive against the militants.

"Three people died in the attack and 27 others including 18 civilians and nine soldiers were wounded," Somali police spokesman Colonel Qasim Ahmed Roble told a press conference, adding that the injury toll included three lawmakers.

Security forces also killed five assailants in a gunbattle, he added.

"The situation at the hotel is back to normal now," Roble said.

The attack on the SYL hotel – which has been targeted several times in the past – occurred at the start of the holy Muslim month of Ramadan and was claimed by Al-Shabaab.

Nissanka ton helps SL level series

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a partnership that is now the highest fourth-wicket stand for Sri Lanka against Bangladesh in ODIs. They broke a 34-year-old record, surpassing Arjuna Ranatunga and Aravinda de Silva's 139-run fourth-wicket stand during an Asia Cup game against the Tigers at Eden Gardens in 1990.

Having posted a commendable total of 286 for seven – thanks to a career-best 96 unbeaten from Towhid Hridoy and Soumya Sarkar's 68 off 66 deliveries – Bangladesh started proceedings with the ball

in hand extremely well. Lead pacer Shoriful Islam had Avishka Fernando nick one back to slip cordon in the second delivery of the innings. Taskin induced an edge off the willow of Kusal Mendis, taken by wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim, in the fifth over before Shoriful struck again to remove Sadeera Samarawickrama in the next over to see the visitors in a spot of bother at three for 43 after 6.1 overs.

After that, almost nothing went Bangladesh's way till the 37th over when off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz had

Nissanka caught at deep midwicket. Taskin returned to the attack to make Asalanka his 100th dismissal in ODIs in the very next over, and suddenly the Tigers had their tails up.

Tanzim Hasan Sakib had Janith Liyanage trapped in front in the 42nd over as Bangladesh put pressure on the Lankans at the death. However, Wanindu Hasaranga, who started with the ball in hand with a four-wicket haul, ensured the visitors went over the line with a quickfire cameo of 25 runs off 16 deliveries, featuring two maximums and one boundary.

Pirates take it further north of Somali coast

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takeover of Bangladesh-flagged cargo ship off the coast of Somalia.

After taking control of the ship around 500 nautical miles off the Somali coast in the Indian Ocean, the pirates first anchored it around 20 nautical miles off Garacad port on Thursday morning. At 7:48pm on Thursday, it was anchored around 7 nautical miles off the shore.

Mizanul Islam, media adviser of KSRM Group which owns the ship, said the pirates moved the ship because they might have felt that their earlier location was not safe.

He added that the anchor of the ship was pulled out of the water around 3:30pm and it started sailing soon afterwards.

As of last night, the pirates made no attempts to contact the ship owners or parties that represent them.

"We are prepared to respond as soon as they communicate," he said.

A UK-based insurance firm is engaging a third party or negotiator to negotiate with the pirates, he added.

An anxious father of a hostage told The Daily Star that his son sent a message before Iftar on Thursday, saying that he was okay.

"I waited the whole day today [Friday] to hear from him," he said.

Family members of another hostage met Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday at his residence in Chattogram and requested him to ensure the safe return of the crew.

According to a Reuters report, visual information showed that at least 12 alleged pirates boarded Abdullah.

For a decade leading up to 2018, Somali pirates caused chaos in important global waterways, but had been dormant until a resurgence of attacks starting late last year, says the report.



Yemenis lift placards and flags of Palestine as they march in the Huthi-run capital Sanaa yesterday, in support of Palestinians.

PHOTO: AFP