



Workers remove mud accumulated around buses near a landslide-affected area in the aftermath of Cyclone Ditwah in Maspenna of Sri Lanka yesterday. Tropical storms and monsoon rains have pummelled Southeast and South Asia in December, triggering landslides and flash floods that killed at least 639 people in Sri Lanka and nearly 1,000 in Indonesia. PHOTO: AFP

Junta denies deadly Rakhine hospital strike

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's military junta yesterday denied killing civilians in a hospital air strike that left more than 30 people dead.

A military jet bombed late Wednesday the general hospital of Mrauk-U in western Rakhine state, bordering Bangladesh, two aid workers said.

"Those killed or injured were not civilians, but terrorists and their supporters," said an article in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM).

The United Nations on Thursday demanded an investigation, saying the attack could constitute a war crime.

Health workers and patients were killed, and "hospital infrastructure was severely damaged, with operating rooms and the main inpatient ward completely destroyed," said World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on X.

Rakhine state is controlled almost in its entirety by the Arakan Army (AA), an ethnic minority separatist force active long before the military toppled the civilian government of democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

'Peace is not far away'

Says Erdogan after Putin meeting; US envoy to meet Zelensky, Europe leaders in Berlin on peace plan

AGENCIES

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, fresh from a meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin, said he hopes to discuss a Ukraine-Russia peace plan with US President Donald Trump, adding that "peace is not far away".

Erdogan met Putin in Turkmenistan on Friday, and they evaluated "comprehensive peace efforts" to end the war, a statement from Erdogan's office said, with Turkey reiterating its readiness to support peace efforts.

"After this meeting with Putin, we hope to have the opportunity to discuss the peace plan with US President Trump as well. Peace is not far away; we see that," Erdogan told reporters on his return flight from Turkmenistan.

Erdogan had told Putin on Friday that a limited ceasefire in the war, focused on energy facilities and ports in particular, could be beneficial.

"The Black Sea should not be seen as a battleground. Such a situation would only harm Russia and Ukraine," Erdogan said in comments released by his office on Saturday.

"Everyone needs safe navigation in the Black Sea. This must be ensured."

Meanwhile, Trump's special envoy will meet with Volodymyr Zelensky and other European leaders in Berlin this weekend, the White House said, as Washington

presses for a plan to end Russia's war with Ukraine.

Ahead of the meetings, Zelensky yesterday warned that Russia "still aims to destroy" Ukraine, as Kyiv said "massive" Russian strikes on energy facilities overnight had left thousands without power across the country.

Russia said it had hit Ukrainian facilities with hypersonic ballistic

missiles, in what it called retaliation for Ukrainian attacks.

The 28-point proposal has triggered a flurry of diplomacy between the United States and Ukraine's European allies, with Kyiv officials recently saying they had sent Washington a revised version.

Full details on the updated plan have not been released.



missiles, in what it called retaliation for Ukrainian attacks.

An 80-year-old woman was killed when a Russian shell hit a residential building in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region, said the regional governor.

Trump has been stepping up pressure on Kyiv to reach an agreement since revealing a plan to end the war last month that

was criticised as echoing Moscow's demands, including Ukraine ceding crucial territory.

A White House official confirmed to AFP on Friday that Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff will meet with Zelensky and European leaders over the weekend to discuss the status of peace negotiations.

Hadi's condition critical, police identify suspect

FROM PAGE 1

Chowdhury announced at the Secretariat yesterday.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus also assured Hadi's family that all those involved in the attack would be identified and brought to justice.

Based on video and photo analysis, investigators identified the suspect as Faisal Karim Masud, alias Rahul, alias Daud Khan, 35.

Originally from Patuakhali, Faisal lives in the capital's Adabor area with his family. He became a member of the Chhatra League's central committee on May 11, 2019, sources said.

CCTV footage shows Faisal entering the Inqilab Cultural Centre on December 4 with three others and later speaking to Hadi there.

Another video from December 9 shows Faisal seated next to Hadi at a meeting. A photo also shows him campaigning with Hadi near Shilpakala Academy.

Investigators reported a match on the clothing of two motorcyclists linked to Friday's shooting and said the duo are believed to have previously taken part in a voter outreach programme with Hadi.

Several photos on Faisal's Instagram and Facebook show him wearing a distinctive wristwatch similar to the one on

the gunman's left hand, investigators added.

On November 8 last year, Rab arrested Faisal as the prime suspect in a robbery case involving the armed looting of Tk 17 lakh at a school in Adabor.

Two foreign pistols, magazines, and ammunition were recovered from him. He was granted bail on February 16, which was extended for one year on August 12, according to the Supreme Court website.

After his name surfaced in connection with the attack on Hadi, photos of him with former president Abdul Hamid and leaders of Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League and Chhatra League units circulated on Facebook.

Faisal's LinkedIn profile lists him as the owner of three companies: Apple Soft IT, Wasiyou Technology, and Enlist Work. According to his profile, Faisal got a bachelor's degree in computer science from a private university in Dhaka in 2013 and later completed an MBA from another private institution.

In 2016, Wasiyou Technology developed a computer game called "Battle of 71" about Bangladesh's Liberation War and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, with support from BASIS and the government's ICT Division.

In the 2018 general election, Faisal was part of the Chhatra League's seat-based election coordination committee for Dhaka-12, where Awami League candidate and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan contested.

Sources said Faisal was active on the ground with Awami League and allied leaders during the crackdown on the July 2024 mass uprising.

DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali said yesterday that police are looking for the suspect. "Hopefully, we will be able to catch him soon. We are seeking public cooperation."

Detective Branch sources said the shooter fled towards Agargaon after firing at Hadi on Box Culvert Road. The suspect used two SIM cards, one of which was switched off at 11:45am and the other around 8:00pm on Friday. Police believe he is currently staying in an area adjacent to Dhaka.

No case had been filed over the incident as of the filing of this report at 6:30pm yesterday.

'EXTREMELY CRITICAL' A 14-member medical board led by Dr Md Zafar Iqbal, senior consultant and coordinator (ICU and HDU) at Evercare Hospital, was formed yesterday to oversee Hadi's treatment.

Hospital Director Dr Arif Mahmud confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

The board has provided a written observation on Hadi's condition to his family so that they can facilitate his treatment abroad if required.

According to the board, Hadi's overall condition remains "extremely critical".

The board observed that Hadi has sustained severe brain and lung injuries. As surgery has already been completed, he is now being managed conservatively under a brain protection protocol. Another CT scan may be done once his condition stabilises.

Ventilator support is continuing, with a chest drain tube in place due to ongoing blood drainage. His kidney function has returned, while earlier signs of disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) are largely under control.

Fluctuations in blood pressure and heart rate are being observed due to brainstem injury. Blood pressure support is ongoing, and the team is ready to place a temporary pacemaker if required.

GOVT ASSURANCE Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday met Hadi's family and assured justice and the best possible treatment, including treatment

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1

Khaleda has developed several additional complications, including ineffective endocarditis, acute pancreatitis, and severe bacterial and fungal infections.

On Thursday, the medical board overseeing her treatment confirmed that she is also undergoing regular dialysis due to kidney dysfunction.

Doctors diagnosed acute pancreatitis on November 27, and treatment for it is ongoing.

Khaleda, 80, has long been battling multiple health complications, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and chronic issues affecting her kidneys, lungs, heart, and eyes.

She was admitted to the hospital on November 23 on the advice of her medical board after being diagnosed with infections in her heart and lungs.

Her treatment has been administered according to the guidelines recommended by both local and foreign doctors, the doctors said.

Dr Zubaida Rahman,

Trump features in newly released Epstein photos

REUTERS, Washington

Congressional Democrats released 19 new images from the estate of the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein on Friday, including photos of now-President Donald Trump, as a deadline for an extensive release of documents related to the disgraced financier nears.

Trump is featured in three of the photos shared by House Oversight Committee Democrats, who said they are reviewing more than 95,000 images produced by the estate.

In one black-and-white photo, Trump is seen smiling with several women — whose faces are redacted — on each side of him. A second image shows Trump standing beside Epstein, and a third, less-clear image shows him seated alongside another woman, whose face is also redacted, with his red tie loosened. It was not clear when or where the photos were taken.

"Everybody knew this man," Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday. "He was all over Palm Beach. He has photos with everybody. I mean, almost — there are hundreds and hundreds of people that have photos with him. So that's no big deal."

The Epstein scandal has been a political headache for Trump for months, partly because he amplified conspiracy theories about Epstein to his own supporters. A Reuters/Ipsos poll this week found that just half of Republicans approve of Trump's handling of the Epstein case, well below his overall 85% approval rating in his own party.

WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS UN slams 'relentless' Israeli expansion

AFP, United Nations

The expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank is at its highest level since at least 2017, when the United Nations began tracking such data, according to a report by the UN chief seen by AFP on Friday.

In 2025, "plans for nearly 47,390 housing units were advanced, approved, or tendered, compared with some 26,170 in 2024," the report said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the "relentless" expansion, saying it "continues to fuel tensions, impede access by Palestinians to their land and threaten the viability of a fully independent, democratic, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian State."

"These figures represent a sharp increase compared to previous years," he added, noting an average of 12,815 housing units were added annually between 2017 and 2022.

Excluding east Jerusalem, which was occupied and annexed by Israel in 1967, some 500,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, along with about three million Palestinian residents.

Violence in the West Bank has soared since Israel's war on Gaza. Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 1,022 Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of the conflict, according to AFP.



Promoting Diaspora Investment and Optimal Usage of Remittance Project

প্রকল্পের উদ্দেশ্য

- ▶ অনিবাসী/অভিবাসী বাংলাদেশি কর্মীদের প্রেরিত রেমিট্যান্স যাতে তাদের পরিবার উৎপাদনশীল খাতে ব্যবহার করতে পারে, সে বিষয়ে মাঠ পর্যায়ে অনিবাসী/অভিবাসী কর্মীর পরিবারের সদস্যদেরকে রেমিট্যান্সের সঞ্চয়সহায়তা ও দক্ষতা উন্নয়ন;
- ▶ বিদেশে স্বচ্ছল বাংলাদেশি ডায়ালগের মাধ্যমে রেমিট্যান্সের বাংলাদেশে তাদের গ্রামীণ জনপদে বিনিয়োগে আকৃষ্ট করা;
- ▶ অভিবাসী কর্মীর পরিবারের রেমিট্যান্স নির্ভরশীলতা কমানো;
- ▶ অভিবাসী কর্মীর পরিবারের সদস্যদের মাঝারি ও ক্ষুদ্র উদ্যোক্তা হিসেবে তৈরী করার মাধ্যমে কর্মসংস্থানের ব্যবস্থা এবং আয়ের সুযোগ সৃষ্টি;
- ▶ বাংলাদেশের জন্য রেমিট্যান্স বৃদ্ধির ক্ষেত্রে সম্প্রসারণ কৌশল প্রণয়ন করা; এবং
- ▶ রেমিট্যান্সের সর্বোত্তম ব্যবহার সংক্রান্ত পন্থা উদ্ভাবন করা।

প্রকল্পের প্রধান কার্যক্রম

- ▶ বাংলাদেশের জন্য রেমিট্যান্স বৃদ্ধির ক্ষেত্রে সম্প্রসারণের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা;
- ▶ বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশে বসবাসরত বাংলাদেশি ডায়ালগের মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশে তাদের জন্মস্থানে বসবাসকারী আত্মীয়স্বজনদের কল্যাণে অবদান রাখতে উত্থুদ্ধ করা এবং ক্ষুদ্র বিনিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে একটি প্র্যাটফর্ম তৈরী করা;
- ▶ অভিবাসী পরিবারের ৪,৫০০ সদস্যদেরকে রেমিট্যান্সের সঞ্চয়সহায়তা (ফাইন্যান্সিয়াল লিটারেসি) সংক্রান্ত সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধির প্রশিক্ষণ প্রদান, তন্মধ্যে নির্বাচিত ৩০০ জন সদস্যকে 'ক্ষুদ্র ব্যবসা উদ্যোগ' গ্রহণের জন্য এককালীন আর্থিক প্রদান প্রদান।

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