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Five shot by pellets during BNP campaign in Teknaf

Victims include children, Rohingya refugees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

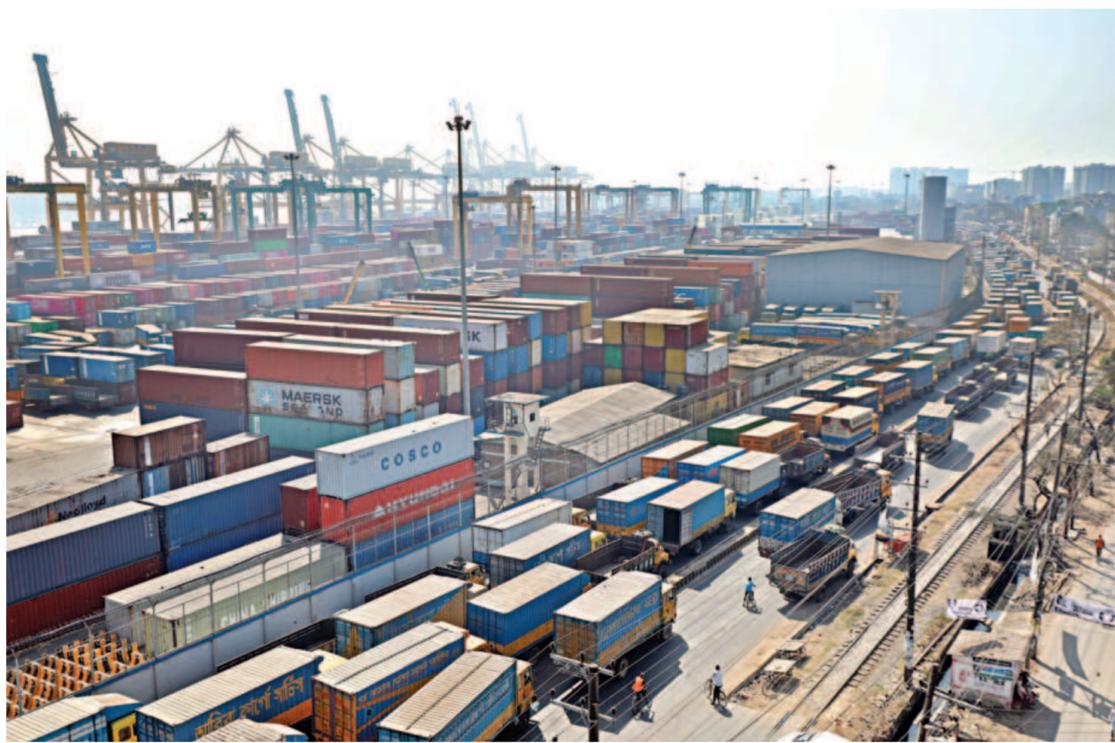
At least five people, including three children and two Rohingya refugees, were injured in a shooting incident during an election campaign for the BNP-nominated candidate in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, on Thursday night.

The incident took place around 8:00pm near a market adjacent to the Alikhali Rohingya refugee camp under Hnila union.

Among the injured are three residents of Hnila union: Bacha Mia, 45, of Mosni village; Shahab Uddin, 11, son of Nurul Islam of Alikhali village; and 18-month-old Nusrat Jannat, daughter of Abdul Jalil of the same area.

The two others are Alikhali Rohingya camp residents: Abdur Rahman, 37, of Block D/5 in Camp 25, and Md Jisan, 13, son of Nurul Haque of Block D/4.

Teknaf Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Saiful Islam said all five victims sustained pellet injuries. SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



A long tailback of trucks stretched along the approach to Chattogram port yesterday as operations resumed the day before following a six-day strike. The strike, which had brought port activities to a halt, left shipments piled up and transport schedules disrupted, leading to the heavy rush once work restarted. PHOTOS: RAJIB RAIHAN

'A graft-free Bangladesh grounded in Islamic values'

Khelafat Majlis unveils 22-point manifesto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the 13th parliamentary election, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, a partner of the 11-party electoral alliance, has unveiled its 22-point election manifesto aimed at building what it calls a "just, corruption-free and humane Islamic system of governance."

The manifesto was unveiled yesterday by party Ameer Mamunul Haque at the party's central office in Purana Paltan.

It identifies six priority areas: balanced development and citizens' fundamental rights; good governance and a corruption-free state system; a strong defence framework and national security; an independent, dignified, and interest-based foreign policy; a universal, unified, and ethical education system; and employment generation with a focus on youth.

The party, which is contesting 28 constituencies, said the six priorities are complementary and together form a practical roadmap for building a just SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Suicide blast at Islamabad mosque claims 31 lives

Over 170 injured; Pakistan police say attacker was stopped at the Shia mosque gates

REUTERS, Islamabad

An attacker opened fire at the gates of a Shia mosque in Islamabad yesterday before setting off a suicide bomb and killing at least 31 people, in the deadliest attack of its kind in Pakistan's capital in over a decade.

More than 170 others were wounded in the explosion, detonated after guards challenged the attacker as he made his way into the Khadija Tul Kubra Imambargah compound on the outskirts of the city, officials said.

Images from the site showed bloodied bodies lying on the carpeted mosque floor surrounded by shards of glass, debris and panicked worshippers. Dozens more wounded were lying in the gardens of the compound as people called for help.

The man blew "himself up in the last row of worshippers," Defence Minister Khawaja Asif wrote on X.

He said the bomber had a history of travelling to Afghanistan and blamed neighbouring India for sponsoring the assault, without providing evidence.

There was no immediate response from New Delhi, which has dismissed Pakistan's accusations of backing militants in the past.

The attack was the deadliest suicide bombing in Islamabad in more than a decade, according to conflict monitor ACLED, which said it "bears SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

- Bombing targeted Shia Muslim minority
- Deadliest suicide attack in Pak capital in over a decade
- Pakistan blames India for sponsoring the assault

Talks with US in Oman 'a good start'

Says Iranian FM, agrees to 'proceed with negotiations'

REUTERS, Muscat

Nuclear talks between Iran and the United States held in Oman yesterday were a good beginning and will continue, Iran's foreign minister said, after growing concerns that a failure in the high-stakes negotiations could set off another Middle East war.

"It was a good start to the negotiations. And there is an understanding on continuing the talks. Coordination on how to proceed will be decided in the capitals," the minister, Abbas Araqchi, told Iranian state TV.

"If this process continues, I think we will reach a good framework for an understanding."

Officials from both sides, who held indirect talks through Omani mediation in Oman's capital Muscat, will return home for consultations, Araqchi said.

The US announced new sanctions to curb Iran's oil exports, including 14 vessels, moments after talks ended.

While both sides have indicated readiness to revive diplomacy over Tehran's long-running nuclear dispute with the West, Washington wanted to expand the talks to cover Iran's ballistic missiles, support for armed groups around

the region and "treatment of their own people", US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Wednesday.

Araqchi told Iran's state news agency IRNA that "any dialogue requires refraining from threats

Tehran's clerical leadership remains deeply worried that Trump may still carry out his threats to strike Iran after a military buildup by the US Navy near Iran.

"The lack of trust is a huge challenge during the talks and it should be overcome," Araqchi said. The US Virtual Embassy in Iran issued a security alert earlier in the day urging American citizens to "leave Iran now" and prepare departure plans that don't rely on US government assistance.

In June, the US struck Iranian nuclear targets, joining in the final stages of a 12-day Israeli bombing campaign. Tehran has since said its uranium enrichment work has stopped.

The US naval buildup, which Trump has called a massive "armada", has followed a bloody government crackdown on nationwide protests in Iran last month, heightening tensions between Washington and Tehran.

Trump has warned that "bad things" would probably happen if a deal could not be reached, ratcheting up pressure on the Islamic Republic in a standoff that has led to mutual threats of air strikes.

World powers and regional SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

- US has significant naval buildup in the region
- Ballistic missile programme non-negotiable: Iran
- US imposes new sanctions on Iran oil exports

Dhaka signs historic EPA with Tokyo

It is Bangladesh's first such deal with a developed nation

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh and Japan yesterday signed a historic Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in Tokyo, aimed at attracting Japanese investment and retaining preferential trade benefits after Bangladesh graduates from the least developed country (LDC) category in November this year.

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin and Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs HORII Iwao signed the agreement at 3:00pm Japan Standard Time, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star over the phone from Tokyo.

"The EPA will come into force once a notification is published. We are returning to Dhaka tomorrow [Saturday] and will issue the notification the same day," Mahbubur said.

He added that the agreement would significantly widen Bangladesh's market access to Japan. "This is a unique achievement for Bangladesh as it is our first full-fledged EPA with a developed country. Attracting Japanese investment is our main target. This is also Japan's first EPA with any LDC," he said.

Mahbubur also said the 1,500-page agreement was finalised after lengthy negotiations between leaders and officials SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Voting for Jamaat 'not permissible' for Muslims

Says Hefazat ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Hefazat-e-Islam Ameer Muhibullah Babunagari has said it is "not permissible" for Muslims to vote for Jamaat-e-Islami.

He made the remarks on Thursday night while addressing a programme at Kajir Hat Boro Madrasa in Fatikchhari upazila of Chattogram.

During his speech, the Hefazat leader also expressed conditional support for BNP-nominated candidate Sarwar Alamgir in the Chattogram-2 (Fatikchhari) constituency.

A video of the speech has gone viral on social media.

In the video, speaking in Chattogram's dialect, the Islamic scholar is heard saying that Jamaat-e-Islami is not Islam and that Muslims should be told voting for Jamaat is "haram" (not permissible).

Pointing to Sarwar Alamgir, who was seated nearby, Babunagari said Hefazat was not directly supporting the BNP SEE PAGE 9 COL 3



A man reacts while being comforted after a deadly explosion at a Shia mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan, yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Michelangelo's foot sketch fetches record \$27.2m

AFP, New York

A newly discovered Michelangelo drawing of a foot sold for \$27.2 million at a US auction Thursday, a new record for any work created by the Renaissance master.

The tiny, red-chalk sketch is one of around 50 studies Michelangelo made for the Sistine Chapel, among his most famed works alongside sculptures David and Pieta.

New York-based Christie's said the drawing sold for almost 20 times its low estimate after a 45-minute bidding war. It did not share the buyer's identity.

Only around 10 Michelangelo drawings are known to be in private hands. Christie's identified the sketch as an original by Michelangelo after the owner sent a photograph to its online auction estimate request portal.

An expert established that it represented the right foot of the figure of the Libyan Sibyl, at the far east end of the Sistine ceiling.

"This was an exceptional piece with a wonderful story," Andrew Fletcher, global head of the Old Masters Department at Christie's, said in a statement.

