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21 Bangladeshis survive boat tragedy off Greece coast

At least 22 die after six-day ordeal at sea

AFP, Athens

Twenty-one Bangladeshi migrants have survived a boat tragedy off the coast of Greece that killed at least 22 fortune-seekers.

The Greek coastguard, citing survivors, late Friday said 26 people, including a woman and a minor, were rescued by a European border agency vessel off the island of Crete. Apart from the Bangladeshis, four South Sudanese and a Chadian citizen had emerged from the ordeal alive.

Survivors said the bodies of those who had died were thrown into the Mediterranean Sea on the orders of one of the people smugglers aboard the ship.

Two survivors were taken to a hospital in Heraklion on Crete, the coastguard said. The nationality of the deceased could not be ascertained immediately.

Based on survivor statements, the
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Vehicles, mostly buses carrying Eid holidaymakers returning to Dhaka, wait in bumper-to-bumper traffic on and under the Mayor Hanif flyover in Jatrabari yesterday.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

MPs rebuke transport boss for loose talk

PM orders stern action against fuel hoarders at BNP parliamentary party meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several lawmakers yesterday criticised the performance of Sheikh Rabiul Alam, the minister for road transport and bridges, railways and shipping, and also raised concerns about some of his remarks in the media.

The development came at a meeting of the BNP Parliamentary Party held at the Jatiya Sangsad, The Daily Star has learned from people informed with the discussions.

They told him to be more careful while speaking in public, saying that his words should be clear, measured and helpful.

People want to see both careful words and visible action from the minister, they said, while asking him to focus more on showing the government's positive steps in the transport sector, especially work that can ease public worries and build trust.

In recent days many accidents have occurred, leaving
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Russian strikes kill 4 in Ukraine, damage port

AFP, Kyiv

Russian air attacks across Ukraine early yesterday killed at least four people and damaged critical infrastructure, including a port and a maternity hospital, authorities said, as Russia's pressed on with its war with Ukraine.

In southern port city of Odesa, two people were killed and at least 13 wounded, Sergiy Lysak, head of the city's military administration, said, adding one of the hits damaged a maternity hospital roof.



A port in the Odesa region was also damaged in the shelling, after several hits were recorded on its infrastructure, Ukraine's state ports authority said.

Russia launched 273 drones at Ukraine overnight, 252 of which were shot down, the Ukrainian air force said on Saturday.

In Kryvyi Rih, a man was killed in a morning strike that hit an industrial enterprise, said Oleksandr Ganzha, head of the Dnipro regional administration. He said fires erupted at the site.

In the central Poltava region, one person was killed after Russian drones hit a residential building and industrial facilities, regional authorities said.

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Dhaka seeks EU help for LDC grad deferment

Muktadir raises issue at WTO meet

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA,
from Yaounde in Cameroon

Bangladesh yesterday sought the European Union's support for deferring its graduation from the group of least developed countries.

Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir raised the issue at a bilateral meeting with Maros Sefcovic, EU Trade Commissioner, on the sidelines of the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference in Yaounde, Cameroon.

Speaking to The Daily Star after the meeting, Muktadir said, "We have sought EU support for the deferment as we need it."

Bangladesh will need backing from a majority of UN member countries at the upcoming General Assembly in September in New York to secure a three-year deferment.

"We are hopeful that not only the EU, but other countries will support us in securing the deferment," the minister said.

Last month, the UN Committee for Development Policy, initiated a process to

Nepal ensures 33% women representation in cabinet

Ex-PM Oli, ex-home minister arrested over protest deaths

AGENCIES

The newly formed 15-member Nepali cabinet has five female ministers, ensuring 33 percent representation of women for the first time, as enshrined in the country's constitution.

Rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah was sworn in as prime minister of Nepal on Friday, tasked with restoring political stability and creating jobs in the poor Himalayan nation long troubled by fragile governments and weak growth prospects.

His move to appoint one-third women ministers to the cabinet has been hailed as a historic step toward inclusive governance.

The five women ministers appointed are Sobita Gautam (law, justice and parliamentary affairs), Pratibha Rawal (general administration), Sita Badi (women and children), Nisha Mehta (health and population), and Geeta Chaudhary (agriculture).

Meanwhile, Nepal's former prime minister, KP Sharma Oli, was arrested yesterday as police investigate whether he was negligent in failing to prevent dozens of deaths in a crackdown on Gen Z-led anti-corruption protests last September, officials said.

Oli's arrest, which his lawyer



“It is the beginning of justice. The country will take a new direction now.”
Sudan Gurung, home minister

said was illegal and sparked protests by supporters who clashed with police, followed rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah's swearing in as prime minister on Friday and a recommendation by a panel investigating violence during the protests that he should be prosecuted for negligence.

His former home minister, Ramesh Lekhak, was also arrested.

Seventy-six people were killed last September during a police crackdown and arson and violent unrest during the protests, which led to Oli's resignation.

After his arrest, supporters staged protest rallies and clashed with police who tried to stop them burning tyres near the prime minister's office. Police lobbed a teargas shell and used batons to break up the protests, injuring one person, witnesses said.

Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) called his arrest illegal and said it was an act of "revenge". It demanded his immediate release and said more protests were planned for Sunday.

Shankar Pokhrel, a senior party official, told reporters that protest notes against the arrest would be handed to the government in all 77 districts of the country today.

Home Minister Sudan Gurung dismissed the criticism, saying on Facebook: "It is the beginning of justice. The country will take a new direction now."

Oli was prime minister four times between 2015 and 2025 but never served a full five-year term. In 2020, he published a new political map that included a small stretch of disputed land controlled by India, giving him a popularity boost in Nepal.

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Educationist Dilara Hafiz dies at 77

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran educator Dilara Hafiz, the wife of Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, died while undergoing treatment in Singapore yesterday.

She was 77. Survived by her husband, son, daughter, grandchildren, and a host of admirers, she breathed her last at Singapore General Hospital at 11:29am local time.

Her body will be brought back to Bangladesh this evening (March 29), after which her namaz-e-janaza will be held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad tomorrow at 11:00am, the parliament secretariat said in a release.

Dilara Hafiz was born on January 2, 1949, in Sunamganj. Her father was

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Arctic sea ice just dropped to an alarming new low

CNN

Right now, the Arctic is maxing out on sea ice — the cold of winter has built up over months of darkness, and ice has spread as far south as it will all year. It's the North Pole's sea ice maximum, except this year, it's alarmingly low.

There is roughly half a million square miles of ice missing in this year's "max," compared to average — an amount twice the size of Texas.

It's the latest profoundly worrying signal from the top of the planet, a region which has become a clear victim of the climate crisis as humans burn fossil fuels, and increasingly a geopolitical hotspot as melting ice opens up commercial and military opportunities.

Winter is when Arctic ice builds up, typically reaching its maximum extent in March. This year, when scientists from NASA and the National Snow and Ice Data Center measured it on March 15, they found the ice had reached 5.52 million square miles — roughly nine percent lower than the average between 1981 and 2010.



PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Kalai ruti had once been known as the food of day labourers but now the Chapainawabganj ruti is famous in almost all corners of the country. Renowned eateries in Rajshahi now serve kalai ruti, made by cooks from Chapainawabganj, with green chilli chutney and smashed brinjal. Customers can also order beef tripe, mutton, beef and duck meat with kalai ruti. This photo was taken yesterday at Rajshahi city's Upshohor.

'Cuba is next' Says Trump, denies losing MAGA support over Iran war

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump said Friday "Cuba is next" in his latest threat against the Caribbean island, as he dismissed concerns that recent American military actions would cost him political support.

Cuba's communist government has faced mounting pressure from Trump, who imposed a de facto oil blockade in January and mused about "taking" the country.

Speaking at the Saudi-backed FII Priority investment forum in Miami, Trump said his Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement wanted "strength" and "victory," citing the January raid where US forces seized Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

"I built this great
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