



As the floodwater recedes, it reveals paddy of a large field destroyed. The photo was taken at Kutubpur of Shariakandi in Bogra where the collapse of a dyke had flooded several villages.

PHOTO: STAR

Stalked, schoolgirl kills herself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolgirl committed suicide in the capital's Nandipara last night after allegedly being stalked by a local youth.

A sixth grader in a city school, Umme Kulsum Ritu, 14, took poison at her house around 8:00pm.

Family members and locals whisked Ritu to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead.

Both garments workers, victim's father Ashik Mandal and mother Sathi Akhter had been at workplaces when Ritu poisoned herself.

Talking to The Daily Star, Ashik said one Shimul Chandra yesterday came to their house and abused Ritu verbally. The youth had long been stalking the schoolgirl.

Mostafiz Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station, said locals complained about Shimul stalking Ritu.

A case was filed with the police station in this connection. Police were trying to nab Shimul.

Last straw also lost

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too seems to have gone.

"Now there's nobody left for me. Who will take care of me now?" Farzana cried in front of her father's body.

Yasin Mia, 50, died in a road accident in the capital's Pallabi area when he was hit by a bus around 10:30am in front of Purabi cinema.

A hairdresser at Gulshan Club, he was on his way to buy some medicine for his ailing daughter.

Following the arson attack, Yasin had told The Daily Star several times that he was very concerned about her daughter's health. The attack was allegedly carried out by aides of a local lawmaker.

Even in the cruellest turn of his life, he had managed to find a footing hoping his teenage daughter would start a new life once she recovered fully.

"She [Farzana] is the only reason I am still living. I want her back, fully recovered," Yasin had told The Daily Star when Farzana was admitted at DMCH with 17 percent burn injuries.

Witnesses said he was standing on the footboard of a local bus when

another bus hit him from behind, smashing his torso against the handle of his bus.

He was rushed to the Islami Bank Hospital in Mirpur and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

Doctors at the DMCH declared him dead around 1:45pm, according to Syed Ziauzzaman, officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station.

Quoting sources, the OC said a bus of ETC transport caused the accident. Police, however, could neither arrest the driver nor seize the bus.

Sources at the DMCH morgue, where an autopsy of the body was performed yesterday evening, said Yasin's lung and several of his chest bones were hit severely, which caused huge internal bleeding.

Yasin's septuagenarian mother Sagira Khatun, who came to Dhaka from Bogra hearing the news, lamented that her son never paid any heed when she had requested him to settle back in Bogra for ever.

"Yasin thought of Farzana's better treatment in Dhaka and also of the fact

that nine of his dear ones were buried here," she said.

However, while talking to The Daily Star in front of the Gulshan Club a week ago, Yasin had said he was considering going back to Bogra after Farzana's recuperation.

Asked if he would file any case against the arson attack, he said he was looking up to the decision of his community leaders in this connection.

Farzana, too, said her father was taking very good care of her when these correspondents had visited her in Kalshi last week.

"Several times I wanted to visit our burnt house but my father never allowed me to, thinking I will not be able to bear the pain," she told The Daily Star.

After her release from the DMCH a couple of weeks earlier, she has been living in a relative's house near the Bihari camp in Kurmitola. She is yet to be fully cured.

Yasin was laid to eternal rest beside the nine departed members of his family at the Kalshi graveyard last night.

People reel from flood

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The DDM has instructed the district administrations to distribute 20 kg rice and Tk 1000 to each of the affected families, but the calculation suggests that each family received 7.96 kilograms of rice and Tk 14.94 on an average.

"Many district administrations are not following instructions. I think the local administrations have exaggerated the number of victims," said Iftekharul Islam, director (relief) of the DDM.

Amid such anomalies, the flood victims in many areas are facing immense problems due to shortage of food and cash.

"My house is damaged in the flood and I am now living at a relative's house. But I was neither included in the government list nor provided any relief," said Nazrul Islam, a farmer at Bachamara village of Daulatpur upazila of Manikganj yesterday. He is one of the so many victims in Daulatpur.

Shahida Ferdous, deputy commissioner of Manikganj, said the district administration distributed 10 kilograms of rice to each of 1000 families of Daulatpur upazila, and was enlisting the flood victims in other upazilas for distributing relief materials later.

While some families received 10 kilograms of rice each, many others were

yet to get anything as the district administration could not reach them, report our correspondents in different districts.

Abu Noor Md Shamsuzzaman, additional deputy commissioner of Lalmonirhat, said there are sufficient relief materials in stock, and they would distribute more when necessary.

Flood victims in many villages like South Mandra, Atigaon, Bidgaon, Banari, Nagarjowar, Pachonkhola of Tongibari upazila did not get any relief, according to reports received from Munshiganj on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) in its bulletin on Saturday said flood situation was improving as the water level of all the major rivers was falling.

However, water in five points of Kangsha in Netrakona, Dhaleswari in Tangail, Lakhya in Gazipur, Old Dhaleswari in Manikganj and Balu in Dhaka was flowing above danger levels, said FFWC.

Operation of ferries in Mawa-Kawrakandi route also started becoming normal with receding of water in the Padma.

However, people of many flood-hit districts have been facing many water-borne diseases like diarrhoea and skin diseases, report correspondents.

SHEBAB LEADER KILLING

Somalia on high alert

AFP, Mogadishu

Somalia's government yesterday warned of a wave of retaliatory attacks by the country's al-Qaeda-linked Shebab rebels after their leader was confirmed to have been killed in a US airstrike.

The Horn of Africa nation's president also offered Shebab fighters a chance to lay down their arms and seize on a 45-day amnesty, telling them government troops and the African Union's AMISOM force were on the brink of overrunning their territory.

On Friday the Pentagon confirmed that Ahmed Abdi Godane, the leader of Al-Qaeda's main affiliate in Africa, perished in a Monday attack in which US drones and manned aircraft rained Hellfire missiles and laser-guided bombs on a gathering of Shebab commanders.

There was no comment from the Shebab, who throughout the week have refused to confirm or deny reports of Godane's death. Somalia's national security minister, however,

said he believed they were now bent on revenge.

"Security agencies have obtained information indicating that Al-Shebab is now planning to carry out desperate attacks against medical facilities, education centres and other government facilities," Kalif Ahmed Ereg told reporters.

"The security forces are ready to counter their attacks and we call on people to help the security forces in standing against violent acts," he said, adding nevertheless that "we congratulate the Somali people" on Godane's death.

Godane has been fighting to overthrow the war-torn country's internationally-backed government, carrying out a wave of suicide bombings, brazen commando attacks, assassinations and kidnappings.

Godane, 37, who reportedly trained in Afghanistan with the Taliban, had also overseen the group's transformation from local insurgency to major regional guerrilla threat, widening the group's reach with attacks in countries that contribute to AMISOM.

Dhaka quits UN race for Tokyo

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But that didn't happen. Abe reiterated his earlier commitment to provide up to 600 billion Yen (\$5.71 billion) in additional assistance to Bangladesh in about four to five years from 2014.

Abe had announced this financial assistance on May 26 during Hasina's visit to Japan.

Referring to Abe's commitment of an additional \$6 billion in official development assistance (ODA), Hasina said, "We understand the Japanese commitment would not be limited to the amount."

In that context, she said Japan launched a programme for Bangladesh under the "Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B)" to help it achieve economic development through improvement of investment climate and infrastructure.

Hasina also expressed Bangladesh's readiness to contribute to Japan's construction, health and nursing sectors.

Turning to Japan-Bangladesh cooperation in international affairs, she said Japan has always been supportive of Bangladesh's role in the UN peacekeeping and peace-building.

The Bangladesh PM said Japan offered technical assistance in setting up a "Peace Building Centre" in Dhaka and preliminary work for it had already started.

"We deeply appreciate Japan's offer for this cooperation as well as Japan's commitment and contribution to establishing and maintaining global peace and stability," said Hasina.

Bangladesh was elected twice to a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for 1979-1980 and 1999-2000 with overwhelming support from its global friends.

As per the UN system, only one

member state from the Asia Pacific region can win each election for the non-permanent UNSC seat.

In 2002, Dhaka launched a fresh bid for the seat for 2016-17 from the Asia Pacific Group. In 2011, Japan also announced its candidacy from the same group.

The Bangladesh PM said the two governments have been in close touch for upholding mutual cooperation and group solidarity in multilateral forums.

At the talks at the Prime Minister's Office, Hasina and Abe agreed to widen bilateral relations under the framework of "comprehensive partnership" and boost bilateral trade and investment.

Acknowledging the imperative and benefits of trade and investment, Abe said location, competitive incentives, improvement of infrastructure and labour supply are critical factors for Special Economic Zones.

He stressed the need for improving services rendered by Bangladesh's foreign investment regulatory authorities and making serious efforts to ensure stable supply of primary energy and power to industries.

In response, the Bangladesh PM directed the authorities concerned to address these issues as soon as possible.

All these have been incorporated in the 3,084-word joint statement issued after the hour-long bilateral talks between the two leaders.

The two premiers said both countries have the same view on economic cooperation to be pursued under the BIG-B initiative, and put emphasis on strengthening collaboration and cooperation in project formulation and implementation.

They hoped the BIG-B initiative, with maximum use of Japan's advanced technologies, would contribute to mutual benefits and prosperity of the two countries.

The three pillars of the BIG-B initiative are development of economic infrastructure, improvement of investment environment, and fostering of connectivity.

The two leaders shared their intentions to continue cooperation in the areas of transport network improvement, stable power supply, economic zone development, and private sector development such as financial accessibility promotion.

At the joint press announcement, Hasina presented Abe an album with pictures of two Bengal Tigers while Abe handed over to Hasina a box containing Bangladeshi and Japanese coins.

For the first time, Japanese mint made Bangladeshi coins with the image of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Earlier, the Japanese PM paid rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs, placing wreaths at the national memorial in Savar.

Later, he went to Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi to pay respect to the father of the nation around 3:00pm.

Abe and his 150-member entourage, including his wife Akei Abe, arrived in Dhaka around 1:00pm yesterday.

The Japanese premier will visit the Institute of Fine Arts at Dhaka University today morning.

He is due to leave Dhaka for Colombo at 10:30am.

12 killed as Yemen rebels clash with tribes, army

AFP, Sanaa

At least 12 people were killed in fierce overnight clashes between army-backed Yemeni tribes and Shia Huthi rebels pressing a protest campaign against the government, tribal sources said yesterday.

Fighting raged in Jawf province north of Sanaa as rebels sought to seize routes to the capital where their supporters have staged weeks of escalating protests against the central government.

Tribal sources said fighting in the Chayl and Majzar regions straddling Jawf and Marib, east of Sanaa, killed 12 people, raising the death toll from clashes since Thursday to 34.

Rebels used tanks and artillery against government forces and tribesmen defending the area, tribal sources said, insisting that the offensive was repelled.

AFP was unable to verify the death toll with independent sources or to obtain rebel confirmation of their deaths.

Analysts say the rebels, also known as Zaidis or Ansarullah, are trying to establish themselves as the dominant political force in the northern highlands, where Shiites are the majority community in the mainly Sunni Arabian Peninsula nation.

Man who faked

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too did nothing about withdrawing the case.

Aggrieved at harassment because of the case, Shaheen's father-in-law said he and his daughter now plan on suing Shaheen and Zahurul. He thanked Lalmonirhat police for unearthing the fake abduction.

Shaheen told The Daily Star that he had regularly contacted his parents but initially disagreed to come back. Instead, he had lived and worked at different places in Dhaka and Chittagong.

He was arrested just nine kilometres from his village home.

Lalmonirhat Superintendent of Police TM Mozahidul Islam said they got the breakthrough tracking Shaheen's phone and using informers.

Zahurul declined talking to The Daily Star.

IS recruiter in Dhaka?

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information of ISIS training and recruitment being conducted in the country, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said the government was not aware of any such activity by the terror outfit.

"We are going to discuss the entire terror issue at a special meeting on law and order tomorrow (today). We will talk about various issues including the Indian media report," he told The Daily Star when asked about the authenticity of the report.

The meeting was convened in the wake of an online video message of al-Qaeda, a global Islamist militant network, in which its chief Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the creation of a unit of the outfit in the Indian subcontinent to "raise the flag of jihad" across

South Asia.

The home secretary, heads of different law enforcement agencies and intelligence officials will attend the meeting.

In the 56-minute online video message, the al-Qaeda chief said the formation of the outfit's branch in the Indian subcontinent would be good news for Muslims in Myanmar, Bangladesh and the Indian states of Assam, Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir, where they would be rescued from injustice and oppression.

Senior police officials of the country said the video message was not a serious issue for Bangladesh. There is no scope for a rise in militancy in the country, they said, adding that they, however, were analysing the message with utmost seriousness.

Stay trusted

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people, she mentioned. "Since then, the bilateral bonds between the two countries have grown from strength to strength."

Hasina said as a close friend, Japan is well aware of the socio-economic progress Bangladesh made in the last few years.

She said her government, guided by "Vision 2021", is working to build a hunger-free, peaceful Golden Bangla, the dream of the Father of the Nation.

Talking about the business delega-

tion accompanying the Japanese prime minister, Hasina said they have been able to have some firsthand impression about the business opportunities, competitive investment incentive packages on offer and the friendly investment climate prevailing in Bangladesh.

"Our two countries are important contributors to the UN peacekeeping and peace-building operations, and champions of global peace and stability," she added.

The banquet was followed by a colourful cultural programme.

Single permit

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crucial countries for India to promote road transport across the sub-region.

As per the draft proposal, permits would be issued after verification of all the required documents and these would be issued by the competent authority of the respective national government. Permits for regular passenger and cargo transportation shall be for multiple entries and would be valid for one year. These permits would be renewed every year "subject to a maximum of five years".

The proposal says that any vehicle entering and plying in other countries must pass only through immigration checkpoints/ custom stations and must ply on the routes authorised by the member nation concerned by

mutual agreement. Any deviation would be treated as violation.

Sources said that protocol which would be discussed among the member nations also include details of vehicles, certificates the vehicles should have while plying in member countries, pollution under control certificate and pre-verified "jumbo passport" of the crew of each vehicle.

Government officials said that the Saarc nations are expecting to finalise an umbrella and multilateral agreement on transport vehicular at the 18th Saarc summit scheduled in November. "We are hopeful of ironing out all issues with the member countries so that a final draft can be taken up for consideration at the apex summit," a road transport ministry official said.

Militancy has 'risen'

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pain in his chest on Friday night.

However, the country did witness an unprecedented rise in extremism during the incumbency of the BNP-led government. Media reports of the time bear testimony to this.

Under the patronage of the past BNP-led government between 2001 and 2006, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), two militant outfits, had spread their tentacles in many parts of the country.

But the then prime minister Khaleda Zia and some of her government ministers kept denying the existence of the dreaded killer Siddiquil

Islam alias Bangla Bhai, who was the operations commander of JMB. The JMB even unleashed simultaneous bomb attacks across the country on August 17, 2005. The unprecedented blasts compelled the BNP-Jamaat government to take some measures, including banning JMB, JMJB and Huji, and arresting some leaders of those militant outfits.

In the 56-minute video posted online on September 3, Zawahiri announced the formation of "al-Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent" to "raise the flag of jihad" across South Asia.

Pointing to the al-Qaeda video, Fakhrul said, militancy rises when

democratic environment does not exist in a country. He also claimed that the rise in militancy in the country is due to the Awami League as there is no democracy in the country.

Replying to a query over the BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman's recent statement against religion-based politics, Fakhrul said his statement was misquoted in the media.

"Tarique Rahman believes in democracy, and there should be difference of opinions in democracy," he said, adding that those who believe in religion-based politics can also participate in democracy.