

Jubo League

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in Feni Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

The dead, Mohammad Manik, 30, was the vice-president of Baligaon union unit of Jubo League, the ruling Awami League's youth wing. He was the son of Mohammad Shahjahan alias Saju driver of Kuruchia village.

Locals said there was a conflict between two groups, led by Manik and Moazzem Hossain alias Ujjal, over establishing supremacy in the area.

Manik's men beat up Ujjal, the former general secretary of Baligaon union unit Jubo League, at Aftab Bibi Bazar yesterday noon.

Hearing the news, followers of Ujjal attacked Manik and shot him in Kuruchia village around 1:30pm, leaving him critically injured, alleged locals.

Manik was rushed to Feni Sadar Hospital. He died when he was being shifted to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Mohammad Shahinuzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Sadar Model Police Station, said on information, police recovered the body and sent it to Feni Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

China eyes

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was encouraging.

"We could fund the project through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and other agencies."

The four countries have agreed on building and encouraging road, rail, air and waterways connectivity among each other, besides laying power transmission lines and oil pipelines. China has started building a highway network.

"We are already constructing network of highways in our domestic territory which has a border with Myanmar. Response from Bangladesh and India is also encouraging," Li said.

The corridor will harness economic activity, promote investment and trade, and facilitate people-to-people contact, he said. To promote the concept, China organised the China-South Asia Expo in Kunming, where more than 100 Indian companies, including Tata Group firms, Infosys and Jet Airways took part.

On June 15, transport ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal signed an agreement in Thimphu, Bhutan, to facilitate seamless movement of passengers and cargo vehicles across the countries.

61 Bangladeshis

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completion of their nationality verification.

The returnees are from Cox's Bazar, Sirajganj, Narsingdi, Narayanganj, Jessore, Jhenidah, Chuadanga and Joypurhat, Sayedul Islam, counsellor (Labour Wing) at the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

"We have arranged the repatriation of 61 rescued migrants after receiving the confirmation of their nationality from Bangladesh. We will send back the rest after getting their nationality confirmation," he added.

The Bangladeshis were among over 1,051 trafficking victims, including Rohingya, rescued from Langkawi island of Malaysia on May 11. The traffickers had abandoned them in the island after holding them captive in a Thai jungle for weeks.

Sayedul said 654 more Bangladeshis are now staying at detention centres in Kedah state of Malaysia. He, however, said they would try to send back all the Bangladeshis before Eid.

Over 1,000 Bangladeshis have been rescued in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar last month after the issue of human trafficking through the Bay of Bengal got international media's attention.

Of them, 150 Bangladeshis returned home from Myanmar last week and 37 more might return today. Several thousand Bangladeshis, who had allegedly left home for jobs in Malaysia, still remain missing.

JMB man

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any headway on this account.

It was established that Naem was the assumed name of Haque only after sustained questioning of some of the arrestees and clues from the probe.

With the arrest of Haque, the number of people nabbed in the case has gone up to 21.

On October 2 last year, a blast took place at a house at Khagrachar that left one Sakil Gazi dead on the spot. Another man named Sovan Mandal died of his wounds at a hospital. The two were suspected to have terror links.

The NIA later found that the actual identity of Mandal was Karim Sheikh. He had misled the West Bengal police about his identity.

The anti-terror agency filed the charge sheet in the case in March this year against 21 people, claiming that the JMB wanted to establish Sharia rule in Bangladesh by overthrowing the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Brutal!

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tin-shed shanty, beside the railway track at Tejgaon for Tk 10,000. The buyer, however, allowed the family to stay there for some weeks following Morsheda's request.

Anis started spending most nights out. Once the money was all wasted in a few weeks, he asked Morsheda to go to work in a garment factory or as a domestic worker, but she refused.

"I said kids are small so it is hard to take a job. But he began beating me. It only worsened day by day," said Morsheda. "Sometimes I used to give him some money that I got from my relatives just to prevent him from beating me. Nothing could satisfy him."

Three months back, Anis suggested Morsheda sell one of their children. Then she decided to leave him. So she moved to her aunt Razia Begum's place in the same slum and stopped communications with him, fearing that he might sell the kids.

Then came the dreadful night. In the early hours of Friday, someone hit the door of Razia Begum's house and shouted to open it. As Anis tried to

break in, Razia opened the door.

"As soon as I opened, Anis stabbed me on the back with a large pair of scissors. I cried aloud and fell down. He then targeted Morsheda's elder sister Lipi. As she ran to dodge him, Anis found his wife Morsheda in a corner and stabbed her forcefully in the abdomen," said Razia.

Neighbours rushed to the spot. After injuring Sujan, Morsheda's cousin, he got onto a running train and escaped.

Morsheda was rushed to the DMCH. After a surgery, doctors claimed the fetus was unhurt and alive. However, after examining an ultrasound report yesterday evening, doctors said the embryo is not moving.

"The embryo died as it was hit by the scissor. Morsheda now needs to be operated immediately, otherwise she may die," a doctor at DMCH was quoted as saying by one of Morsheda's brothers.

Morsheda's sister filed a case against Anis and police are trying to arrest the accused, said Tejgaon Police Station OC Mazharul Islam.

The 'Waterman'

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dwindling – most villagers had left their homes after the local Arvari river had dried up in the '40s, and the only people who remained were either too old or too poor to move elsewhere.

Singh, driven by a strong desire to help the villagers, took on the task of bringing water back to those lands.

He came up with a unique strategy, drawing on principles from the ancient Indian knowledge of geology, hydrology, and ecology. He introduced the concept of 'johads' – rainwater storage tanks built with stone, dirt, concrete, or whatever materials are available.

Singh built the johads on streams that flowed into the river, hoping to replenish both ground and surface water levels. He also built 'check dams' across streams to improve the downstream flow.

A johad stores water collected during the rainy season so that it can be used for human or animal consumption throughout the year. Also the stored water slowly percolates into the ground and replenishes groundwater supplies.

Check dams are very similar to johads, only instead of collecting rainwater, they are set up on small rivers and streams. They do not completely stop the flow of water, instead they form

pools that locals can use for their needs. Excess water keeps flowing downstream. Like johads, check dams also help replenish groundwater supplies.

For two years, Singh worked tirelessly, building johads and check dams that didn't yield much success. Local elders ridiculed him, but he continued to work with enthusiasm. And his zeal proved infectious – seeing he was sincere in wanting to help bring water back to their lands, the locals soon began to chip in, offering suggestions on appropriate locations to build more dams and johads.

Eventually, his strategy worked. The water captured by the johads during the monsoons gradually rejuvenated vegetation in over 1,000 villages. Aquifers used for local drinking water were refilled, and the water retention capacity of the soil increased.

It wasn't long before the Arvari river came back to life, along with four other rivers in the region. Since the beginning of his amazing campaigns, groundwater levels have increased by about 20 feet and the forest cover has increased by 33 percent. People who had abandoned the districts slowly began to move back home, returning to their traditional way of life.

More money flies

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Apart from Bangladesh, a number of other countries, including the UK, Germany and Italy, saw their exposure to Swiss banks increase during the year, resulting in the rise in funds held by foreign clients at Switzerland's banking institutions.

Overall, the money held in Swiss banks by their foreign clients from across the world rose to 1.5 trillion Swiss franc in 2014 from 1.32 trillion franc in 2013.

However, Indian citizens' deposits with Swiss banks fell by more than 10 percent to 1.8 billion franc last year amid the Indian government's efforts to bring back the unaccounted money.

Switzerland is not the only country that has received Bangladeshi funds, as the names of Canada, Malaysia and the UAE are also on the list.

Bangladeshi lawmakers discussed the issue in parliament last year.

At that time, Salehuddin Ahmed, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, blamed chaotic politics and lack of security for the rise in flows of money to Swiss banks.

"Many Bangladeshis have stashed in Swiss banks their incomes from external sources," he told The Daily Star.

The government would have to rise over partisan politics and take punitive measures for stalling illegal flow of money. The law and order, and governance must also be improved, he said.

Malaysia says committed to MH370 hunt

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia on Thursday insisted it was committed to completing the hunt for missing flight MH370 despite not renewing its contract with one of three search vessels scanning the Indian Ocean seabed.

The Australian-led operation had said previously that Malaysia would not renew its contract with the high-tech ship GO Phoenix once the search goes into hiatus in coming weeks due to the onset of the southern hemisphere winter, and it would exit the search.

That has spurred speculation online that Malaysia's commitment to the frustrating effort was flagging.

But Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said on Thursday his government remained committed to finish scouring an additional 60,000 square kilo-

metres (23,000 square miles) added to the search parameters in April.

"To reiterate, Malaysia remains committed to continuing the search for the additional 60,000 square kilometres," he said in a statement emailed to media.

The statement, however, did not say why the GO Phoenix contract was not being renewed.

But it said Malaysia had committed more than \$46 million to search and recovery efforts, "which clearly demonstrates our commitment to finding MH370."

In April, more than a year after the plane vanished en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board, Malaysia, Australia and China announced that the search zone would double in size to 120,000 square kilometres.

High drama at Yemen talks as slipper hurled at rebel leader

AFP, Geneva

Fisticuffs broke out Thursday at a Geneva press conference by Yemeni rebels when their leader was attacked by a slipper-wielding woman and others accusing them of mass killings in the country's south.

The incident underscored the deep divisions between the various sides involved in trying to get Iran-backed rebels and the exiled government to agree to a badly-needed humanitarian truce.

Hamza al-Huthi, the head of the rebel delegation and from the Ansarullah group, was addressing reporters when a woman in a headscarf barged in and threw a slipper at him -- a huge insult in the Arab world.

Al-Huthi promptly threw it back. She was quickly joined by six men who shouted slogans against the rebels and started raining blows at them, screaming "Killers, you are spreading death and disease in South Yemen."

The melee lasted several minutes with bottles hurled before the intruders were hauled out.

The woman's gesture was immediately hailed on social media in Aden, the main port city in South Yemen, with congratulatory tweets.

Once order was restored, al-Huthi said the rebels wanted "a humanitarian truce but it is not wanted by Saudi Arabia and its allies" who have staged aerial bombings on the rebels since March 26.

He said the stalled UN talks in Geneva would continue until at least Friday, adding: "We hope these preliminary talks will end up in some kind of accord ... a transition that will hopefully lead to free, fair and transparent elections."

French govt faces no-confidence vote over reforms

AFP, Paris

France's Socialist government faces a parliamentary vote of no confidence Thursday over a key package of reforms designed to energise the country's sluggish economy.

The conservative opposition proposed the motion after Prime Minister Manuel Valls used a rare constitutional device earlier this week to push through the reforms without MPs being given the chance to vote.

The no-confidence motion could in theory bring down the government but analysts say there is little to no chance of that happening.

Valls resorted to forcing through the reforms because he feared that a sizeable group of left-wing rebels would block them in parliament.

UK House

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Christians and indigenous minorities living in Bangladesh.

On Supreme Court's upholding the death sentence on Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed for war crimes, Hugo Swire said while he understood the strong desire to try the war criminals in Bangladesh, the UK remained strongly opposed to use of the death penalty.

On the devastating collapse of Rana Plaza, he said the UK was providing £7.4 million to fund factory inspections, train new inspectors, strengthen factory health and safety, help garment workers to understand their rights and help survivors.

He concluded by welcoming Indian Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to Bangladesh. "It is important... to ensure the region's long-term stability and prosperity," he said.

Two more

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a drunken state, leading to the death of two innocent persons at New Eskaton in the capital, the sources added.

Mahmood in his statement had said the shooting took place when he along with Bakhtiar, Jahangir and Kamal were going to Dhanmondi from Moghbazar by a black Prado jeep of Bakhtiar's mother.

Lowering the window of the vehicle stuck in a traffic jam, Bakhtiar had shot five times from his firearms that night, sources had quoted the witness as saying.

Rickshaw-puller Abdul Hakim and auto-rickshaw driver Yakub Ali were shot. They died later.

Bakhtiar is the son of Pinu Khan, a female lawmaker of the ruling Awami League.

S KOREA MERS OUTBREAK

WHO chief voices optimism

AFP, Seoul

WHO chief Margaret Chan yesterday expressed guarded optimism over South Korea's ability to contain a MERS outbreak, saying it was now "on a very good footing" after an initially slow response to the virus which has killed 23 people.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome has spread at an alarmingly rapid pace in Asia's fourth-largest economy since the first case was diagnosed on May 20, infecting 165 in what is the largest outbreak outside Saudi Arabia.

Following a strongly worded warning Wednesday by the World Health Organization in Geneva -- which described the spread of the disease as a "wake-up call" -- Chan offered a more positive assessment.

"Our current assessment of the MERS situation in South Korea... is the government is now on a very good footing," she told reporters, adding that the situation does not constitute an international public health emergency.

"The MERS outbreak will be brought under control... although it may take a little longer than everyone would like to see," said Chan, who is in South Korea for a previously scheduled conference.

She said that the government had admitted it got off to a "slow start" but that its efforts strengthened "very quickly and systemically and very significantly", resulting in a decline in new cases.

The good news is that scientists have not detected any genetic change in the virus, she said.

Chan's comments come as the health ministry reported three more deaths and three more cases, despite authorities saying earlier in the week that South Korea had weathered the worst of the crisis.

The WHO said Wednesday that a lack of awareness about the virus among health workers and the public was a major contributing factor to its rapid spread.

MERS patients had been kept in crowded emergency rooms for long periods, it said, and the practice of

"doctor shopping" -- visiting multiple hospitals for second and third opinions -- also helped the spread of the disease.

The custom of many visitors and family members staying with infected patients in their hospital rooms also facilitated the spread of the virus, the UN health agency's emergency committee meeting found.

Experts within South Korea have also criticised President Park Geun Hye's government for its response to the outbreak.

"There are doubts whether the quarantine and monitoring are being carried out thoroughly for the thousands of people who have been placed in isolation", Kang Cheong-Hee, Vice President of the Korean Medical Association told AFP.

Kang called for tougher measures to ensure confirmed patients and suspected virus carriers do not mingle with other people.

The number of new infections had fallen steadily until Tuesday, when the government said it was cautiously optimistic the worst was over, but eight new cases reported Wednesday dashed those hopes.

Officials said that 35 percent of the total cases involved families and friends who had visited patients or given them nursing care, while another 18 percent were medics.

More than 6,700 people are currently being held in quarantine in a bid to halt the spread of the virus, up three percent from Wednesday. Around 4,500 others have already been released from isolation.

But alarming reports of infected people slipping through quarantine measures have undermined government efforts to assuage public fear over a virus that has already begun hurting the country's sagging economy.

A 41-year-old man belatedly told authorities that he developed symptoms several days earlier than he had initially reported, prompting health workers to urgently quarantine dozens of people he had come into contact with on the resort island of Jeju.

Nine killed at US church

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enforcement authorities said.

He was taken into custody without incident about 11:15 am during a traffic stop, Charleston police Chief Greg Mullen said. Local police were acting on a BOLO (be-on-the-lookout) notice that included a vehicle description, the licence tag and the suspect's name.

Roof was armed with a gun when he was arrested, according to a law enforcement official briefed on the investigation. It's not clear if it's the same firearm used in the shooting.

A senior law enforcement source told CNN the suspect's father had recently bought him a .45-caliber gun for his 21st birthday in April.

President Barack Obama mourned the violence and the victims, saying, "Any death of this sort is a tragedy. Any shooting involving multiple victims is a tragedy. There is something particularly heartbreaking about death happening in a place in which we seek solace, we seek peace."

Sylvia Johnson, a cousin of Pinckney, said she heard about what happened inside the church from survivors.

Johnson said survivors recounted the man coming into the church, asking for Pinckney and sitting next to him during a prayer meeting for an hour. He started shooting and reloaded five times, she said.

When a man pleaded with him to stop, the shooter replied, "You rape our women and you're taking over our country. And you have to go," she said.

A law enforcement official says witnesses told authorities the gunman stood up and said he was there "to shoot black people."

Police were searching for more information about Roof (whose last name rhymes with "cough"), and trying to determine if he had any links to hate groups.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
The Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church has been a presence in Charleston since 1816, when African-American members of Charleston's Methodist Episcopal Church formed their own congregation after a dispute over burial grounds.

It was burned to the ground at one point, but rebuilt. Throughout its history, it overcame obstacle after obstacle -- destroyed by an earthquake, banned by the state. But its church members persevered, making it the largest African-American church in terms of seating space in Charleston today.

Every Wednesday evening, the church holds a Bible study in its base-

ment. The shooting was "obviously the most intolerable and unbelievable act possible," the mayor said.

"People in prayer Wednesday evening. A ritual, a coming together, praying, worshipping God. An awful person comes in and shoots them is inexplicable," Riley said.

Police received the first call around 9:05pm. Officers arrived to find several victims inside.

"It's really bad. It's a very bad scene," local pastor Thomas Dixon said.

'SICK TO OUR STOMACHS'

The church sits in an area of Charleston densely packed with houses of worship and well-preserved old buildings.

The city, as several church leaders pointed out, is known as the "Holy City" for its tolerant attitude toward different denominations.

It was led by Pinckney, who was also a state senator. His death was reported by affiliate WCSC, who confirmed it through Elder James Johnson, the president of the Tri-County chapter of the civil rights organization the National Action Network.

Recently, Pinckney backed a bill to make body cameras mandatory for all police officers in South Carolina. The legislation was in response to the death of Walter Scott, an unarmed black man killed by a police officer earlier this year.

"Body cameras help to record what happens. It may not be the golden ticket, the golden egg, the end-all-fix-all, but it helps to paint a picture of what happens during a police stop," Pinckney said in April.

Early Thursday morning, residents stood in circles, hands clasped and heads bowed, as they prayed.

"Like everybody out here, we're sick to our stomachs that this could happen in a church," Rep. Dave Mack, a friend of the church's pastor, said.

They called for justice, but also for calm. Theirs is a strong community, they said, and this incident wouldn't tear them apart.

The head of the NAACP expressed his outrage over the shooting.

"There is no greater coward than a criminal who enters a house of God and slaughters innocent people engaged in the study of scripture," Cornell William Brooks said.

Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush cancelled a scheduled town hall in Charleston on Thursday because of the shooting.

"As the #Charleston police deem this horrific act a hate crime," the King Center tweeted, "we pray vigorously that this person's hate does not cultivate more hate."