

Murder

FROM PAGE 16 Security (Proofs), a project of Netherlands-based organisation ICCO Cooperation.

If the claim is true, it would mark the group's first attack in the secular South Asian nation which has been struggling in recent months with the rapid rise of hardline Islamist groups, banning several that have been blamed in the killing of four bloggers this year, says the US news media. It adds the terror group also issued an ominous warning on Twitter, saying "all citizens of Crusader Coalition will not be safe in the Muslim land."

According to ISIS, which controls swathes of Iraq and Syria and is intent on expanding its influence across the Muslim world, countries like the US, the UK, France and Italy that are trying to destroy the terror organisation belong to the coalition.

The Guardian reports on worrying signs in recent weeks that extremist groups based in Bangladesh are developing a more international perspective through killing of bloggers and publishing a hit-list of international bloggers.

The UK newspaper believes the surge in Islamic militant violence in Bangladesh may in part be driven by bitter competition between al-Qaeda and ISIS. Both aspire to lead Islamic extremism worldwide, but differ widely over strategy, although both seek maximum publicity for their actions.

The Guardian also mentions that the authorities in Bangladesh have been criticised for their failure to protect bloggers and for not taking the problem of rising extremism sufficiently seriously.

According to Reuters, the Government in Bangladesh has been tackling Islamist groups who aim to make the South Asian nation of 160 million people a sharia-based Islamic state. The Australian cricket team have delayed its planned departure to Bangladesh after being warned by its government that there was a potential security risk from militants.

The Aljazeera also could not confirm the ISIS claim, but the statement comes up in its news.

Mentioning ISIS claim and restrictions on the movement of US and UK nationals, BBC Online reports that Bangladesh has been struggling to respond to a recent rise in radical Islamist groups.

It says extremists have carried out a series of high-profile attacks on secular bloggers, hacking to death four bloggers -- one a US citizen -- so far this year. One group, Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), has reportedly threatened to kill secular bloggers and activists outside Bangladesh.

Melbourne-based Herald Sun says chilling warnings from Britain and the US about militant attacks on westerners in Bangladesh have added to the likelihood Cricket Australia will cancel next month's tour.

Fox News reports that ISIS claims responsibility for the killing of the Italian national. It says despite the government's banning of several radical Islamist groups, intelligence sources have confirmed that several hardline groups are still active in Bangladesh.

The local group ABT, which has apparent links with al-Qaeda in the Indian subcontinent, has claimed responsibility for killing four bloggers and radical Islam, it adds.

Several Indian media, including The Hindu, also reported the murder and mentioned the ISIS claim.

Protests on

FROM PAGE 16 "We urged them [students] to submit a memorandum to the authorities concerned," said ADC Ibrahim, but they defied the police request.

Wafi Islam who passed HSC examinations from Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifles College, Dhaka, and seeks to get enrolled into a government medical college, alleged that the admission process at the DMC was supposed to start on October 4 but it began yesterday.

DMC Principal Prof Md Ismail Khan said over the phone that the college received a circular on September 20 from the Department of Medical Education and Health Care Human Resource Development, which clearly set the admission time from September 29 to October 17.

The circular is also available on the website of the Directorate General of Health Services.

The protesters went back to the Shaheed Minar around 2:00pm and held a press briefing, where they announced a protest rally and a procession for today.

On behalf of the demonstrators, Ishrat Jahan Simi who passed HSC exams from Motijheel Ideal School and College urged admission seekers across the country to come to the capital to intensify the movement.

"If a fresh admission test is held without any question paper leak and my daughter does not get selected, I would accept the results," said Papon Paul, father of Priyanti Paul from Comilla Victoria College.

Other guardians present there echoed his view.

However, a press release issued by the Department of Medical Education and Health Care Human Resource Development yesterday stated that 98.79 % students selected for the 2015-2016 academic session of MBBS and BDS had achieved GPA 9.5 and above in their secondary and higher secondary certificate examinations.

No question papers were found with those arrested by the Rapid Action Battalion over allegations of leaking question papers of the MBBS/BDS admission tests held on September 18, it said.

"No one brought allegations of question paper leak until the admission tests were over," the

press release said, adding no such allegation had been brought even to any of the inspectors of the 23 test centres at the time of the exam.

On the exam day, a University Grants Commission official was arrested and suspended on allegations of question leak. Besides, Rab detained seven people, including three doctors, in Rangpur city on suspicion of involvement in "question leak".

Around 83,000 students participated in the tests against 11,049 seats in 39 public and 98 private medical and dental colleges.

A section of the students who seek to secure a place in any of the government medical colleges began to demonstrate on September 19, demanding a fresh test.

Two left-leaning student bodies, Chhatra Union and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, yesterday condemned police attack on the demonstrators. They also urged the government to accept the demand of the agitating students.

Nepal blocks

FROM PAGE 16 cities in Nepal.

However there has been growing anger at what is being seen as Indian attempts to wilfully obstruct the supply of essential goods into Nepal and interference with the internal affairs of a sovereign nation.

India expressed concern over the new constitution after its adoption spurred protests by minority ethnic groups in the south of Nepal. At least 40 people have been killed in the violence.

Demonstrators in the region have since blocked two of the main border crossings from India, shutting off vital supply lines.

With several hundred trucks stuck at the frontier, supplies including sugar, salt and cooking gas cylinders are being affected.

Nepal is heavily dependent on supplies from neighbouring India.

Indian envoy Ranjit Rae was called in by the Acting Nepalese Foreign Minister Khaga Raj last week and the issue of "obstruction" in the supply of essential goods coming in from the Indian side was raised with him, the PTI news agency reported.

However it said Mr Rae had clarified that there was no obstruction from the Indian side on the movement of goods and the problem was due to unrest, protests and demonstrations on the Nepalese side.

AL to accord

FROM PAGE 16 General Assembly is scheduled to land here around 1:30pm.

AL secretariat made the decision at a meeting at party President Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi office yesterday. Party presidium member Mohammad Nasim announced the decision following the meeting.

The meeting decided to gather 2 lakh people who would begin to line up by the road from 12:00noon.

To ensure the highest gathering, AL would hold meetings with its associate bodies, like-minded organisations and party lawmakers of the capital. Dhaka city AL will hold extended meeting today, while the city AL leaders will meet leaders of adjacent districts tomorrow.

Ousted Abbott snipes at new Aussie govt

AFP, Sydney

Toppled Australian leader Tony Abbott took potshots at the new government yesterday, saying it offered no new policies and that the nation should stop swapping prime ministers "like changing clothes".

Abbott was ousted by conservative colleague Malcolm Turnbull in a vote among ruling Liberal party lawmakers earlier this month, as opinion polls plunged two years into office and with an election about a year away.

At the time, he vowed there would be "no undermining and no sniping" as he moved to the backbenches, but the former leader could not hold back from defending his legacy in a radio interview.

"The interesting thing is no policy has changed since the change of the prime minister," Abbott said.

"Climate change, the same. Border protection policy, the same. National security policy, the same," he said, referring to hot-button issues.

Abbott's demise is the latest in a brutal political tradition of dumping unpopular prime ministers in party coups -- Labor leaders Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard were similarly ousted mid-term.

"We've had five prime ministers in five years. That's bad. That puts us in the league of Italy and Greece," said Abbott, the only Australian prime minister to come to power through a general election in the past half-decade.

Schoolboy

FROM PAGE 16 Shalikh upazila around 11:30pm on Monday.

They showed him arrested in a case filed yesterday afternoon under section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act.

Local community police chief Shankar Biswas, also plaintiff in the case, and Dipu's neighbours said the boy is aged around 15.

Interestingly, Abu Zihad Fakrul, officer-in-charge of Shalikh Police Station, said the case statement read that he is 18.

Dipu was produced before a court yesterday where "he admitted his crime" Fakrul said, adding that police would submit the charge sheet in the case within a week.

Fearing reprisal from locals over the Facebook post, Dipu's parents and brother left their house yesterday morning, said their neighbours.

Dipu's father is a betel leaf trader and his mother is a domestic help.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Tarikul Islam said there was tension in the area after Dipu posted offensive remarks about Islam on Facebook.

Hurt by the remarks, locals staged demonstrations at Singra Bazaar on Monday evening. Things became normal after he was detained by police, he said.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra Union in a statement condemned Dipu's detention, saying the arrest of a schoolboy without any warrant was a violation of human rights.

Call for resilience

FROM PAGE 16 Islamic State, which has conquered swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq.

The summit is organised as governments from the US to Australia are struggling to understand why young Muslims integrated into Western life embark on a journey to wage jihad.

Organised by the Counter Extremism Project, the summit has the backing of the US State Department as well as Facebook Inc. and Microsoft Inc.

Participants will present key recommendations in the form of a Youth Action Agenda at the Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism that US President Barack Obama is scheduled to convene at the UN on September 29 [US date].

Talking to this correspondent on the sideline of the summit, Assidiq, once a die-hard fan of yet to be banned outfit Prophet's Ummah, said he travelled to different cities in Norway and talked to youths having possibility to join extremist group ISIL.

"I was born in a Christian family. As a teenager I used to study a lot. In 2009, I embraced Islam, but my family did not take it well," said the 27-year-old youth.

"I was, however, firm on Islam. My family members, relatives and friends' behaviour towards me changed. I found myself alone," said the sociology graduate from Oslo University.

At this stage, he met Pakistani national Arfan Bathi at a mosque.

"That man kept meeting me on several occasions and asked me to join his group, Prophet's Ummah. I was attracted to it since they would always talk about Islam and Muslims and wanted to help them socially and economically. I would roam around with them to find new members for the outfit," he added.

He went on to say the Dag Bladet, a Norwegian daily newspaper, in 2010 carried the caricature of Prophet in its edition. This sparked outrage among the Muslim community across Norway and elsewhere around the globe.

"We walked the roads and a mob of 3,500 Muslims gathered to protest against

the printing of caricatures. While I was delivering a speech, I noticed my mother had also gone there to see if I was safe. My recruiter Arfan Bathi had become very emotional during his speech. He threatened that if such acts did not stop, there would be multiple 9/11 like attacks in Norway."

He also said he was upset about this since he never preferred violence.

"I joined Islam since I love the religion. During this time I went home to meet my parents and they offered me an option. Either them or the outfit. This was the turning point since I did not want to hurt my mother. Moreover, this was not the kind of Islam I love."

"I decided to quit the outfit and finally came home in 2014. Nobody stopped me, but threats to my life began," said Assidiq softly.

He was invited by the Department of State to tell his story as to how he had returned to a normal life after change of heart.

Official estimate says 80 youths, all trained by Ummah in Norway, joined the ISIS in Syria, but Assidiq believes the figure will be more than 150.

"Now I find out potential youths in Norway through social media who could join terrorist outfits. I meet them and listen to them as to why they want to join ISIS," said Assidiq, who along with a female colleague started a firm, Just Unity, in 2014.

Just Unity works to identify the youths who may have radicalised thoughts. "We search on the internet and if we find anyone, meet them and offer them help like job and other things. It's bringing a positive change. I have so far been able to save 30 youths from joining ISIS."

"The major reason for the youths to join these groups is an uncertain future, identity crisis, poor economic and educational structure, social insecurity, loneliness, and unemployment," added Assidiq who remains a long beard.

He recalls an incident of "discrimination" since he converted to Islam. "A woman had shouted at me taunting I should leave her country. These things hurt a lot and Muslims often go through this. We need to change public mentality," he observed.

The secret rooms

FROM PAGE 16 chambers," Mamdouh Eldamaty, Egypt's antiquities minister, told Ahram Online.

Eldamaty visited the tomb with Nicholas Reeves of the University of Arizona, who made headlines around the world this summer when he said an examination of high-resolution scans of the tomb's walls showed evidence of a covered-up doorway.

Reeves believes Queen Nefertiti's tomb lies beyond the wall, and that it may be completely undisturbed.

After inspecting the tomb in person, Reeves said there's even more evidence of hidden chambers.

"What my Egyptian colleagues discovered is that there is a distinct difference in the surface of the surrounding wall and the central part that would be covering the door," Reeves told National Geographic. "The surrounding wall is a softer plastering. At the point where I suspect there's a doorway, it's quite gritty."

NatGeo reports that gritty material is of the same type archaeologist Howard Carter discovered around another blocked entrance when he uncovered Tut's tomb in

1922. In addition, Reeves told Ahram that the ceiling extends past the tomb on both the northern and western walls.

"I am pretty sure that a very important discovery is to be made soon inside Tutankhamun's tomb," he told the news agency.

The next step is to visit the tomb with ground-penetrating radar, which may reveal any hollow space beyond the walls without damaging the paintings.

Eldamaty said they will announce the results on Nov. 4, the anniversary of the discovery of King Tut's tomb.

He said that while there is evidence of two hidden chambers, he doesn't think Queen Nefertiti will be found on the other side of those walls.

"Maybe a room or a tomb... something there which will be a new addition to Egyptology but I don't agree that much with him that it is Nefertiti's tomb there," he told LuxorTimes last month.

He said he hopes it is Nefertiti, but added that whatever is hiding will be "an important discovery."

Advertisement for Bangladesh Lok-Prashasan Prashiksha Kendra. Includes details about training courses, fees, and contact information. Features a table with course details and a signature at the bottom.

Advertisement for Ganga Jyoti Bangla Desh Sarkar. Includes details about legal services, contact information, and a signature at the bottom.

Hajis tell of stampede

FROM PAGE 1 ground floor trying to approach the parapet of the bridge. All the entrances to the four-storey bridge were choked with pilgrims, leaving them stuck around.

"All of a sudden, I heard people screaming on the ground floor. The security personnel were forcing pilgrims out of the bridge at two points," Ferdous told The Daily Star at Shahjalal International Airport last night after returning from Jeddah on a Biman flight.

Around 10 minutes later, he learnt that at least 200 pilgrims died on the ground floor. Later, he heard that a royal guest of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had been there to perform Hajj rituals. To ensure his security, the law enforcers closed some entrances to the bridge, putting the pilgrims in deep trouble.

The stampede occurred as the pilgrims tried to enter the ground floor of the bridge at a time after all the gates were opened, Ferdous added.

Tofazzel Hossain and his wife were also waiting in a queue near the Jamarat Bridge around 9:00am on the fateful day.

"At one stage, the security personnel asked the pilgrims to make space for the arrival of the Saudi prince and his companions. Consequently, there was a huge crowd and things turned bad," said Tofazzel.

Soon they heard people and law enforcers screaming for help. They could feel that something bad happened there.

But it was not before around 11:00am when they came to know that several hundred pilgrims died there in a stampede.

at the airport on Monday night after returning home from Jeddah on a Biman flight.

"People were worried and panicked. We had no scope to move forward to have an idea of what was happening around as nobody would leave the queue for fear that they would not be able to perform the stoning ritual," he added.

His wife Jesmin Ara, 45, said the tragedy could have been avoided if the high level Saudi delegation didn't arrive there at that time.

The couple saw many ambulances and police vans arriving the area.

Some Bangladeshi pilgrims observed that the tragedy unfolded in Mina mainly due to poor security management. They claimed the roads leading to Jamarat Bridge were choked with thousands of pilgrims after the security officials had closed two key roads.

Some other pilgrims said the incident took place mainly due to pilgrims' anxieties over the severe hot weather in Mina. The temperature was around 45 degrees Celsius.

Matiur Rahman, 60, from Barisal blamed the pilgrims' casualties on the "negligence" of Saudi authorities.

"They [Saudi authorities] just can't blame the stampede on anybody. The incident occurred due to poor security arrangement," he observed.

Fifty-five-year-old Abul Kalam Azad from Jessore, however, said he thought the huge rush of pilgrims, lack of proper guidelines from the Saudi authorities and the anxieties among pilgrims led to the disaster.

The pilgrims urged the Saudi authorities to ensure proper management during the future Hajj seasons.