

Eminent citizens

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at Jagannath University, urged the government "not to play with the life of admission seekers" and not to destroy the education system by "allowing such leaks".

Terming the leak a "crime against humanity", singer Mahmuduzzaman Babu demanded capital punishment for the perpetrators.

Gonossthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury urged the prime minister to launch a judicial inquiry into the leak.

"The health minister shamelessly rebutted the question leak allegation despite the presence of sufficient evidence," claimed the agitated parent of an admission seeker.

Others present were Gono Samhati Andolon Convener Zonayed Saki, spokesperson of a faction of Gonojagoron Mancha Imran H Sarker, Prof Gititara Nasreen, assistant professors Afroza Bulbul and Samina Lutfa of Dhaka University, and sculptor Bhaskar Rasha.

Climate change

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for fracking gas over large areas of England.

Carney did not comment on this policy rift.

Carney told the BBC, "The point is the risks build with time, and they build more rapidly with inaction, so climate change is a function of cumulative emissions, so the slower the action is today, the bigger the action has to be in the future."

"That would mean more abrupt change, that would mean bigger shocks to the value of financial assets, bigger strains on banks and insurance companies that are exposed to those assets."

ZERO EMISSIONS

He called for the setting up of a Climate Disclosure Task Force so that all companies would have to declare how much carbon they emitted or produced, and how they were going to proceed to zero emissions in the future. Since the G20 countries are responsible for 85 percent of emissions, they will be a good starting point, he said.

"While there is still time to act, the window of opportunity is finite and shrinking."

Jeremy Leggett, founder of Solarcentury, the largest UK solar electricity company, and chairman of the Carbon Tracker think tank, described it as "a momentous announcement when such an eminent banker tells the world that climate change is the biggest issue of the future".

India students

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numbers. We have been working on the idea for some time," said a senior management official from Venkat International Public School in Rajajinagar, which was organising the event.

In addition, children from two branches of St Ann's High School, Venus International School and St Ann's Pre-University College also participated.

For the last six months, Venkat International School was running an online campaign with posters carrying messages of Mahatma. "We also had a countdown of days on these posters to raise awareness among people about the event," a faculty member said.

The record had been previously held by a school in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu.

Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma (Great Soul), was India's greatest leader who fought for the country's independence from British rule and for the rights of the poor.

Dhaka court

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Meanwhile, another war crimes accused, Hormuj Ali, who was arrested in the same case, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital after sustaining injuries in a road accident on Thursday.

Police arrested MA Hannan, a lawmaker from Trishal (Mymensingh-7 constituency) and presidium member of Jatiya Party, his son and three other war crimes accused on Thursday, hours after the tribunal issued arrest warrants for eight people.

Hannan, alleged general secretary of Mymensingh Peace Committee, an anti-liberation organisation in 1971, and his son was arrested by Gulshan police, while Mymensingh police arrested Khandakar Golam Sabbir Ahmed, Mizanur Rahman Mintu and Hormuj Ali in their respective homes in the district on Thursday.

Three others accused -- Mohammad Abdus Sattar, Mohammad Fakruzzaman and Khandakar Golam Rabbani-- are yet to be detained, prosecution and investigation agency sources said.

Turkey says 17 PKK rebels killed in new curfew operation

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish authorities yesterday imposed a curfew in the mainly Kurdish southeastern town of Silvan, saying 17 suspected Kurdish militants had already been killed hours after the military lockdown was enforced.

The measure came into effect at 0400 GMT after security forces launched a major operation against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebels late Thursday, the state-run Anatolia news agency said.

The militants had erected barricades and dug trenches, it said.

A total of 17 PKK militants have so far been "rendered ineffective" in the ongoing operation backed by tanks and helicopters, Anatolia added.

The rebels were still attacking security forces with long-range rifles, it said.

The curfew came after the military said two Turkish soldiers had been shot dead Thursday by Kurdish militants in Silvan as they left for work.

The Turkish government launched a major campaign against the PKK in

GSP cancelled

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At the beginning of the interview, she said the two awards she had won recently belonged to the people of Bangladesh.

Hasina received Champions of the Earth award, the UN's highest environmental accolade, and ICT Sustainable Development Award at the UN headquarters in New York recently.

Asked about the government's efforts to curb terrorism, Hasina said she herself fell victim to terrorism and came under a grenade attack.

Hasina said the present government would carry on its efforts to check terrorism in Bangladesh.

Noting that the opposition is an integral part of a democratic system, she said the current opposition plays a very constructive role in parliament.

Tortured or not?

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health. He died in Rab custody because he was tortured on remand, they alleged.

Ashraf said Siraj didn't have any heart problem.

Rab-4 spokesperson ABM Mujahidul Islam said Siraj was rushed to the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases as he felt chest pain on Thursday afternoon. Admitted to the hospital, he passed away around 7:00pm.

Alert saves

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When the rainfall exceeds the thresholds, the automatic rain gauges immediately send SMS to the mobile phones of government personnel, he said.

"And this worked really well this year. Our warning system sent landslide alerts in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Teknaf."

Yet, a total of 20 people died in Chittagong, Bandarban and Cox's Bazar in five landslides this monsoon.

When his attention was drawn to this, Reshad said they did not get any early warning in these cases as there was no LEWS on those hills.

"Then again, sometimes landslides can be triggered by manmade reasons even though it rains less than the thresholds we've set in the devices. If people cut hills and make them very steep, landslides can take place even after a little rainfall," he said.

Deputy Commissioner Md Ali Hossain of Cox's Bazar told this correspondent how successfully the devices worked in his district.

Death toll of Bangladeshis

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"It is because storing so many bodies in the morgue freezers is very difficult," he said.

Saudi Arabia has put the official death toll from the stampede on September 24 at 769 though some foreign diplomats claim the actual number is more than a thousand.

Meanwhile, Saudi health ministry has urged the victims' relatives to provide blood samples so that these can be used to match those taken from their loved ones, says local newspaper Arab News.

Faisal Al-Zahrani, spokesman for the ministry, said all the DNA profiles of the victims were being kept at Makkah's Al-Noor Specialist Hospital in Hijra district.

He also urged the immediate blood relatives of those missing to visit the hospital for giving their blood samples.

However, it was not clear how the

late July, aimed at forcing it out of strongholds in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq.

The group has hit back hard, killing dozens of police and soldiers in almost daily bomb and shooting attacks.

More than 150 soldiers and police have been killed in attacks since July blamed on the PKK.

The government, for its part, claims to have killed more than a thousand rebels -- figures that have been treated with scepticism in the independent media.

Man kills mother, infant in Sunamganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A man allegedly stabbed his mother and two-and-a-half-month-old son to death at Dhanpur village in Dirai upazila of Sunamganj district on Thursday night.

The dead were Amena Begum, 65, and Anik. Police arrested Ekram Ali, 35, a day labourer.

Quoting neighbours, police said the murders were committed following an altercation between Ekram and Amena when Ekram's wife was outside for work.

Police sent the bodies to Sunamganj Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

No headway

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Tavella, 50, an official of Netherlands-based organisation ICCO Cooperation, was shot to death Monday evening in an attack reportedly claimed by global terror outfit Islamic State (IS).

Contacted, Muntasirul Islam, deputy commissioner (media) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "I have nothing significant to tell you right now."

The official added Siraj was not tortured and the injury marks the family is talking about were old.

Amid public outrage over the death, noted citizens, academicians, intellectuals and students yesterday at a demonstration in Shahbagh termed it a "planned murder" and demanded a fair probe into the incident.

Rights body Ain o Salish Kendra also expressed deep concern in a statement.

On July 25, he received a landslide alert from the LEWS station set up on the Radar Station Hill.

Though it was heavily raining, the district administration immediately started evacuating people living on the hills' slopes and foot. Volunteers lent a hand.

"And within a few hours, landslide occurred. Four shanties were buried in the landslide that night," said DC Ali Hossain.

However, not all could be saved. Five people died in the landslide.

"But we could have saved them if they had listened to us. Nothing happened to those who moved to safer places. But some people did not believe the warning as it is a new system," he said.

A few hundred thousand people live in danger of landslides in the country's hilly regions. Between 2006 and 2013, more than 200 lives perished in mudslides in Chittagong alone, with 127 people killed in a single incident in 2007.

relatives who are outside Saudi Arabia would be able to provide the samples in Makkah.

A medical expert told Arab News that the Saudi authorities may authorise credible medical centers in the respective countries to conduct the DNA testing and send the samples to Saudi Arabia.

"That makes sense because it is logistically not possible to bring in all the relatives to Saudi Arabia," he said.

Meanwhile, Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh President Ibrahim Bahar told The Daily Star that a total of 80 Bangladeshi pilgrims died of natural causes during the Hajj this year.

They mostly died following fever, respiratory diseases and strokes, he said.

Over a lakh people from Bangladesh made the pilgrimage this year.

Highway robbers loot belongings worth Tk 4 lakh, stab five drivers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Some 15 robbers in a span of one and a half hours looted passengers and drivers of five CNG-run autorickshaws and also stabbed five of them in Surma tea garden area on Chunarughat-Madhobpur road of Madhabpur upazila in Habiganj district on Thursday night.

They blocked the road with logs and looted gold ornaments, mobile phone sets and money worth Tk 4 lakh, said police.

All the injured drivers, including Moynul Hossain, Malek Miah, and Bachchu Miah, were admitted to different hospitals. A case was lodged.

Jamaat leader arrested in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Police arrested a former upazila chairman and Jamaat district unit's working committee member in his residence at Chokjora village in Shajahanpur upazila of Bogra yesterday.

Yeasin Ali, 56, of Chokjora village, is a charge sheeted accused in eight sabotage, arson and vandalism cases filed in 2013, and yesterday was shown arrested in six cases for conducting subversive activities this year during different hartals.

The Detective Branch of police is interrogating him about the cases and also about his son Shibir leader Rubel, who is accused in many such cases.

He will be sent to the court on Saturday.

AL's 'grand

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are expected to begin lining up by the street from 12:00noon.

The premier went to the USA to attend the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) last month.

She received the "Champions of the Earth" award at a programme in New York in recognition of Bangladesh's far-reaching initiatives on climate change and "ICT Sustainable Development Award" for her contribution to Information Communication and Technologies.

The two Dhaka city corporations will also accord a reception to her on Monday for receiving the environmental accolade, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Anisul Huq said.

The programme will be held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

2 killed

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The gunman -- whose identity has also been withheld -- remained on the street and later discharged more shots at an officer guarding the headquarters before being killed in an exchange of gunfire with other policemen.

"An employee of the NSW (New South Wales state) police force has been callously murdered here today," Scipione told reporters near the crime scene.

"This is a very sobering time for us and I have viewed a number of pieces of footage, I can tell you that this was a brutal... terrible crime."

Scipione said the employee was "deliberately targeted" by the gunman -- who was wearing a "long pair of long trousers and a flowing top" and appeared to be operating alone -- although he did not give further details.

He said it was also possible the gunman remained on the street after shooting the employee as he wanted to "commit suicide by cop".

The shooting came as Australians started to mark the so-called grand final long weekend, with thousands expected to pack public venues as top teams from the National Rugby League and Australian Football League square off in the season's last matches.

"I can assure you that we shouldn't be letting an event like this disturb what we do as a nation," Scipione said, but added that police were assessing whether heightened security was needed in some Sydney spots over the long weekend.

The commissioner said although there was as yet no link to terrorism, homicide investigators assisted by the counter-terrorism unit were "keeping an open mind" about why the attack took place.

"At this stage we've got nothing to link this event to any terrorist-related activity but we could not say that that wasn't the case."

"I want to ensure that we don't jump to conclusions."

Australia has stepped up its efforts in countering terrorism, lifting its terror threat alert to high in September last year, conducting several raids and enacting numerous national security laws.

In December 2014, Iranian-born self-styled cleric Man Haron Monis and two hostages were killed following a 17-hour siege at a central Sydney cafe.

Sri Lanka promises 'no questions' if Swiss bank cash brought back

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka yesterday asked citizens holding Swiss bank accounts to re-deposit the cash in their home country and promised there would be "no questions asked" if they do.

Following a slump in official reserves, the Sri Lankan government is keen to get foreign cash, shoring up its reserves and stabilising the local currency.

Finance Minister Ravi Karunanayake said Sri Lankans could deposit their savings in local banks which offer rates several times more than those offered in international money markets.

"Sri Lankans could be holding about six to eight billion dollars in Swiss accounts," Karunanayake told reporters in Colombo. "We are telling them to bring that money and deposit in any banks here. There will be no questions asked."

The plea comes after a number of Swiss banks told Sri Lankan depositors to take out their money and close their accounts, as part of restructuring moves.

The Sri Lankan rupee has depreciated by over 6.0 percent against the dollar so far this year and official reserves fell to \$6.88 billion by the end

of July, from a peak of \$9.18 billion in August 2014.

Despite this, the minister said confidence in the country had been restored following the change of government this year and Colombo's improved international relations, particularly with the West and neighbouring India.

Two schoolboys go missing in Padma

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Two schoolboys went missing in the Padma River in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia yesterday.

Ten-year-old Minar Ali, son of Montu Hossain, jumped into the river after the ball they were playing with fell into it, said locals and family members.

When he did not surface, Sabaz Hossain, 14, son of Rahman Ali, jumped in to rescue him, but he, too, was carried away by the river's heavy current, they added.

On information, fire fighters rushed to the spot and began a rescue operation, but could not find the boys.

Russia 'bombed' IS

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hit moderate groups fighting Assad's regime.

Russia's defence ministry said its latest airstrikes had put an "IS command point out of action. The infrastructure used to train terrorists was completely destroyed," the ministry said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group, said at least 12 IS jihadists from the Islamic State group were killed in the Raqa attack.

Putin held talks in Paris yesterday with the leaders of France and Germany, the first time he has met Western leaders since Russia began its dramatic intervention in the Syrian conflict.

Western nations including France say they are prepared to discuss a political solution with elements of the Syrian regime, but insist Assad must leave power.

Putin, on the other hand, says Assad -- Russia's long term ally -- should stay.

As many as 250,000 people have been killed in the multi-sided conflict, with four million more forced to flee the country.

A French diplomatic source said Putin and French President Francois Hollande had "tried to find common ground on their opinions on the political transition".

'FOUR-MONTH RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN'

Ahead of the talks, a Putin ally and senior lawmaker said the campaign of Russian air strikes will last for three to four months and will increase in intensity.

"There is always a risk of getting bogged down but in Moscow they're talking about three to four months of operations," Alexei Pushkov, the head of the foreign affairs committee of Russia's lower house of parliament, told France's Europe 1 radio.

Pushkov said more than 2,500 air strikes by the US-led coalition in Syria had failed to inflict significant damage on IS, but Russia's campaign would be

more intensive.

"I think it's the intensity that is important. The US-led coalition has pretended to bomb Daesh (an Arabic acronym for Islamic State) for a year, without results."

"If you do it in a more efficient way, I think you'll see results," he said.

Pushkov refuted suggestions from Western nations that Russian planes were mainly bombing rebel groups opposed to Assad.

"The main target are the Daesh groups situated closest to Damascus," Pushkov insisted.

Russia's defence ministry said its second day of bombing had hit five IS targets, including a command post in northwest Idlib province.

But a Syrian security source said Thursday the strikes had targeted Islamist rebels that fiercely oppose IS, and US-backed rebel group Suqur al-Jabal said Russian warplanes attacked its training camp in Idlib.

'IT'S A TERRORIST, RIGHT?'

Lavrov insisted Moscow was targeting the same terror groups as the US-led coalition, including IS and Al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate the Al-Nusra Front.

"If it acts like a terrorist, if it walks like a terrorist, if it fights like a terrorist, it's a terrorist, right?" he said at the UN on Thursday.

With the danger growing that Russian and US planes could collide or even engage militarily in the skies above Syria, the Pentagon and Russian officials held what the Americans said were "cordial and professional" discussions on Thursday in a bid to avoid mishaps.

The US-led coalition has been targeting IS for about a year and is carrying out near-daily air strikes in Syria.

IS has taken advantage of the chaos to seize territory across Syria and Iraq, which it rules under its own brutal interpretation of Islamic law, and has recruited thousands of foreign jihadists to its cause.

BNP moves

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Anwar in an arson attack case. Salauddin was sentenced to death by the International Crime Tribunal-1 in October 2013.

Besides, committee members Rafiqul Islam Mia and Mirza Abbas remain inactive while RA Ghani, M Shamsul Islam and Tariqul Islam have been absent from committee meetings for poor health for the last couple of years.

Another committee member Tarique Rahman has been staying in London since 2008.

Talking to this correspondent, some central and grassroots BNP leaders said they were doubtful about any positive outcome of the meetings between the two top party leaders.

They said Tarique had played a controversial role in the party's recent anti-government movement that began on January 6.

Wishing anonymity, one of them said it was Tarique who misled the party, and advocated carrying out violent demonstrations during the movement.

Echoing the view, several other BNP leaders said the party earned a bad name at home and abroad due to the violent protests that ultimately weakened the movement.

A number of BNP men told this correspondent that Tarique was still surrounded by his peer groups, who exerted influence at Hawa Bhaban, known as the alternative powerhouse of then BNP-led four-party govern-

ment from 2001 to 2006.

They said the latest move to restructure the party would have no positive impact if Tarique remained biased as in the past in picking candidates for crucial posts in the party.

"It will be another setback for the party if madam [Khaleda] fails to fulfil party men's expectations," said the president of a BNP district unit, seeking anonymity.

Khaleda left the country for the UK on September 15, and has been staying at Tarique's East London residence.

The party said she went to the UK to have treatment for her eyes and knees, and celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with her family members there.

The BNP chairperson was supposed to return home on October 2. But her return will be delayed by several days, as her treatment is yet to be completed, said Sayrul Kabir Khan, a staff at the BNP chief's media wing.

Last month, the Zia family reunited in London for the first time in seven years since 2008 when Tarique and his younger brother Arafat Rahman Koko, along with their family members, left the country.

Since then, Tarique has been living in London. Koko initially stayed in Thailand and then moved to Malaysia in 2010.

On January 24, Koko died of heart failure at his rented house in Kuala Lumpur. Last month, his wife and two daughters moved to the UK from Malaysia and decided to settle there.