

DINAJPUR FAMILY

# Another injured in fresh acid attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Barely a day after a woman came under acid attack in Dinajpur's Hakimpur area, unidentified criminals threw acid at her brother-in-law Tuesday night.

The victim, Zakaria Hossain, 22, is the younger brother of Ilias Ali, husband of Morsheda Begum who is now receiving treatment at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital. Her condition is critical.

On Monday night, criminals hurled acid at Morsheda while she was sleeping in her room. Her face, hands, neck and back were burnt and her left eye was seriously injured, doctors said.

The latest attacks caused panic among villagers.

Zakaria, a rickshaw-van puller, said some unidentified criminals threw acid at him when he went to take a shower at his home in Madhabpara

village around 9:00pm Tuesday night.

Hearing his screams, family members came to his rescue and took him to Hakimpur Upazila Health Complex.

Doctors said Zakaria suffered burns to his right hand.

Contacted, Mokhesur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Hakimpur Police Station, said he heard about the incident.

The OC, however, claimed that family members are throwing acid at each other as they have disputes among themselves.

Following the acid attack on Morsheda, her husband filed a case with the police station accusing eight people. Police on Tuesday arrested one Babul Hossain Mondal, 52, in connection with the attack on Morsheda.

Ilias suspected the second attack was the result of filing of the case.

# Worries remain

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following the murders of two foreign nationals in Bangladesh.

The minister said when the envoys inquired whether the current security arrangement will continue, he replied saying it will.

Kamal said now there are 2,14,700 foreigners in the country and the number of inbound and outbound foreigners remains the same as in the past.

Several western countries including the US issued security alerts for their nationals in Bangladesh after the murders of Italian national Cesare Tavella on September 28 in the capital's diplomatic zone. The killing of Japanese Kunio Hoshi in Rangpur just five days later further raised foreigners' concerns.

Terrorist outfit Islamic State claimed responsibility for both the murders, according to US-based SITE Intelligence Group.

Following the murders, the government has beefed up security measures for foreigners throughout the country and Gulshan has been wrapped in a tight security blanket.

Despite its satisfaction over security measures, the US updated its security alert recently.

Its envoy Marcia Bernicat told reporters that the alert was just an update. **BERNICAT FOR WORKING TOGETHER** She said, "... we must work with you and your government to keep our citizens safe

and keep all Bangladeshis safe from any threats, including terrorist threats."

Bernicat said they are "enormously grateful" for not only the warm welcome they receive from Bangladeshi citizens every day but also for the security assistance the foreigners are getting from the police and the government during this time.

About security advisories, she said they do not advise people against coming to Bangladesh.

"We have a legal obligation to our citizens and our government to keep our citizens safe and we do that through advisories. Those advisories urge them to be vigilant and to be aware of the threats. We intend to remain vigilant."

Both the US ambassador and the home minister described the meeting as "very productive".

**TRAVEL NOTICE BY SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY**  
Meanwhile, the South Korean embassy yesterday issued a travel notice on the occasion of two religious festivals.

It said that on the occasion of the Hindu festival "Durga Puja" and Shia Muslim festival "Ashura", the South Korean embassy strongly encourages its citizens to exercise a high degree of caution by avoiding places and events which are attended by many people.

It urged South Korean citizens staying in Bangladesh to remain alert regarding their personal security at all times.



Several hundred victims of road accidents, who are patients at Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed, held a rally on the Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday. The CRP organised the awareness-raising programme to mark the National Road Safety Day being observed today. PHOTO: RASHAD AHAMAD

## MP Liton's bail hearing on Sunday

UNB, Gaibandha

Awami League lawmaker Manjurul Islam Liton yesterday filed petitions with a local court, seeking bail in two cases for shooting a minor boy and vandalising and looting a house.

Sirajul Islam, lawyer for the Gaibandha-1 MP, submitted the petitions to the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court of Gaibandha.

The magistrate fixed October 25 for hearing the pleas.

Detectives on October 14 arrested Liton from the city's Uttara in connection with the two cases. The following day, he was taken to Gaibandha.

His arrest came hours after the Supreme Court stayed a High Court order that directed the AL legislator to surrender before a lower court by October 18.

On October 2, eight-year-old Sourav, son of Sazu Miah of Gopalcharan village in Sundarganj upazila, suffered wounds to his both legs when Liton allegedly opened fire at the village.

Sazu filed an attempted murder case against Liton the following day.

On October 8, another case was filed against him on charge of vandalising and looting a house.

## Kumari puja

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or the sea tomorrow.

Goddess Durga is worshipped in various forms during the five-day Sharodiya Durgotsab and one of those is Kumari, the virgin form of the deity.

Maha Navami began just after Kumari Puja yesterday and will continue until 7:33am today. Dashami Puja will begin later on to run until 9:57am, according to the lunar schedule.

Nirmal Chatterjee, joint secretary of Bangladesh Puja Udayan Parishad, said around 4:00pm tomorrow they would bring out a Bijoy Dashami procession from Palashi in the capital and head towards the Buriganga for immersing the idols.

To celebrate Kumari Puja, people started to throng Ramkrishna Mission in Dhaka from yesterday morning.

The puja is organised only at the temples of the mission in Bangladesh, added Nirmal.

Devotees of all ages offered flowers at the feet of the Durga. Arati was performed. It is customary to offer the girl gold, silver and clothes, which is considered a pious act.

The young girl fasts the entire day till the puja ends.

She is made to sit on a throne before the goddess, as the priest chants religious hymns amid the sound of dhak (traditional drum). After the puja, the divinity of the goddess is said to descend into the Kumari.

## Our parties' culture

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parliamentary politics.

Of the MPs elected in the 1954 election, only four percent were businessmen by profession. The percentage rose to 63 in the 2008 election, thanks to our major political parties' "generosity" towards businessmen.

Once the local government bodies' laws are amended, the political parties could nominate candidates and allow them to use their parliamentary electoral symbols in the local elections to City Corporations, municipalities, zila, upazila and union parishads.

It is not yet clear how the political parties will nominate their candidates to contest the local polls. Will the parties allow their grassroots level units to nominate the candidates or will the central high commands meddle in there? Will money play a role in getting party nominations?

None of the political parties' constitutions contain any provision allowing its grassroots level units to do the task as it was not a requirement before.

Neither will the parties have the time to change their constitutions to introduce any such mechanism. The government seems to be in a hurry to hold local elections on partisan lines from the municipality polls coming December.

Until now, the political parties could not nominate any candidates and allow them to use their parliamentary electoral symbols in the local polls. They could only extend their support to a particular candidate.

Grassroots level leaders who were not blessed by the parties could however contest the polls. Their parties could not prevent them from contesting the elections and take any actions on charge of violation of party disciplines.

But once the elections are on partisan lines, the parties will have authorities to rein in their grassroots level leaders. This new law may create an unhealthy situation in the local politics, instead of supporting democratic practices at grassroots levels.

The fear of negative developments in local levels is justified. Our political parties could not show the citizens that they were against "nomination business" and wanted to ensure democratic practices within the parties.

It seems that our political parties perhaps like to destroy any good initiative if it goes against their set way of working. The reversal of the electoral reforms done by the past caretaker government meant to pick parliamentary candidates in a meaningful democratic way and end the culture of "nomination business" is a glaring example.

Before the 2008 parliamentary election, a provision was included in the Representation of People Order, making it mandatory for a registered political party to finalise nomination of candidate by its central parliamentary board from the panels prepared by members of the ward, union, thana, upazila or district committees of the

party.

This provision had empowered the grassroots level leaders to contest the parliamentary polls. It also curbed the powers of the parties' parliamentary boards consisting of central leaders to pick any parliamentary candidates.

The other reason behind the provision was to ensure democratic practices within the parties by empowering their grassroots level units.

But later, the Awami League-led government weakened the spirit and effectiveness of this provision. It brought back the power to the parties' parliamentary boards again to pick candidates to contest the parliamentary elections.

The changes give the parliamentary board of a party the discretion to consider the grassroots panels in finalising the candidates but it is not mandatory any more for the boards to pick candidates from the grassroots panels.

The government has also scrapped another provision which had made it mandatory for an individual to be a member of a registered political party for at least three years to contest the national elections from that party. This provision was made against those individuals, especially businessmen, who did not do active politics or were not involved in any political party, but joined major political parties just before the polls and bought tickets from them with a huge amount of money. It was aimed at stopping alleged widespread "nomination business" by major political parties in the parliamentary polls.

Former Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda, who led the sweeping electoral reforms in 2008, thinks the same electoral reforms should be introduced in picking candidates to the local polls.

The former CEC says, these reforms will bring qualitative changes in democratic practices in grassroots levels and also be effective in fighting "nomination business."

He thinks "nomination business" may not matter in the union parishad elections, lowest tier of the local government system, because it is closer to the people.

But there is a risk of "nomination business" at the higher levels of the local government bodies like city corporations.

The Election Commission can play a crucial role in bringing some important reforms in electoral laws after the local government bodies' laws are amended.

The EC has the power to make electoral rules to conduct the polls. So, the EC, if it wants, may move to bring some changes in the electoral rules ahead of the upcoming municipality elections to be held in December. If the EC makes any such move, the political parties must come forward to implement the reforms.

The upcoming municipal polls may determine if partisan elections would

## AL aspirants

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But Matiuur Rahman, acting president of Sunamganj district AL, sees difficulties in nominating candidates for the local body polls. "It will be very difficult to select a single candidate as many would want to contest the polls," he told this newspaper.

"When the party will nominate one, other aspirants will be demoralised and some of them will refrain from party activities."

Matiur said they were yet to get any guidelines from the central committee though aspirants already started communicating with them about nominations.

Mahabubul Alam Hanif, acting general secretary of the AL, said the next working committee meeting would decide the party's strategy about municipality election.

"Organisation becomes stronger through election and it is also an opportunity to go to people," he said adding that party men would be more united through the upcoming polls.

AL leaders say they are taking the upcoming municipality election more seriously as the ruling party lost to its archrival BNP in the last polls held in 2010-11. In that race, AL-backed candidates bagged 88 mayoral posts, while BNP blessed candidates won in 92 out of 236 municipalities.

**JAMAAT'S PARTICIPATION**  
The BNP may lend its electoral symbol, "sheaf of paddy", to Jamaat-e-Islami for contesting the municipal polls if the Islamist party cannot join the race for legal reasons, according to sources in both the parties.

In August 2013, the High Court scrapped Jamaat's registration on the grounds that parts of the party's charter contradict the country's constitution.

The issue is now pending with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, and legal experts are divided as to whether Jamaat can run in the election before the apex court delivers its verdict.

Contacted, a senior BNP leader said, "All the candidates nominated by the BNP-led 20-party alliance may use BNP's electoral symbol."

He added, "We will contest the municipal polls together."

The leader wished anonymity as, he said, the matter was yet to be decided in party forum. Besides, the final nod would come from Khaleda Zia.

Jamaat-e-Islami, which opposed Bangladesh's independence in 1971 and collaborated with the Pakistan occupation forces, tied knot with the BNP ahead of the 2001 parliamentary elections. Under the alliance, Jamaat contested two national polls with its electoral symbol, "scale".

Contacted, Jamaat leader Mosiul Alam said the party would contest the local polls either on its own or with the BNP.

According to Mosiul, also an SC lawyer, Jamaat can contest the polls despite the HC verdict because the issue is now pending with the SC.

But Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star that the Jamaat leader's explanation is not correct as the

# 24 new economic zones

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Contacted, BEZA Executive Chairman Paban Chowdhury said investors from home and abroad could invest in these economic zones, except for the ones designated for specific countries.

Paban hoped the country would get foreign investment of \$5 billion in the next five years.

In the new five-year plan, the government has set a target of fetching \$9.56 billion foreign investment in 2020. The amount was \$1.6 billion in the last fiscal year.

Paban said land development of seven economic zones had already started, and it would be completed by the end of this year. Work on eight more zones would also begin by this year.

The separate economic zone for India, approved yesterday, will be set up in Mongla covering 250 acres of land.

Earlier, another economic zone was designated for India, spanning 400 acres of land in Bheramara of Kushtia. During Indian PM Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh in June, Dhaka signed an agreement with Delhi for giving India two special economic zones.

India had agreed to provide \$88 million for setting up the two zones, said Paban.

The separate economic zone for Japan, which the BEZA approved yesterday, will cover 1,011 acres of land in Araihasar of Narayanganj, said a finance ministry official.

Japan wanted land near Dhaka for its economic zone, and the Bangladesh government made the decision accordingly, said the official seeking anonymity.

In June, the BEZA also approved the proposal for establishing a separate economic zone for China in Anwara of Chittagong.

On September 15, the Executive Committee of National Economic Council gave its nod to the Tk 420-crore project.

Under the project, the government will provide land to Chinese investors on long-term lease. And a firm nominated by the Chinese government will set up the economic zone.

The zone will cover 774 acres of land and is expected to be completed by June next year.

UNB reports: The PM told yesterday's meeting that the locations for some economic zones were already selected. She asked the authorities concerned to look for places for setting up more

### LIST OF ZONES

ECONOMIC ZONE	LAND (IN ACRES)
Gopalganj	202
Dohar (Dhaka)	316
Chunarughat (Habiganj)	512
Jazira (Shariatpur)	525
Goshairghat (Shariatpur)	750
Jalir Dwip (Teknaf)	271
Maheshkhali-1	1,438
Cox's Bazar (special)	8,785
Maheshkhali-2	827
Maheshkhali-3	677
Natore	3,220
Meghna Industrial Economic Zone (Sonargaon)	80
Meghna Economic Zone (Sonargaon)	245
Comilla	272
Rampal (Bagerhat)	300
Maheshkhali (special)	1,000
Mongla (India EPZ)	265
Poba (Rajshahi)	204
Sherpur	361
Feni	2,256
Fomcom Zone (Bagerhat)	300
Japanese Economic Zone (Araihasar)	1,011
Bay Economic Zone (Gazipur)	65
Aman Economic Zone (Sonargaon)	150

economic zones.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim later briefed the media.

He said the PM stressed the need for tapping the potentials of various regions.

Hasina said industries, especially medium and small ones, have to be established based on availability of resources in particular areas.

Good communication system should be taken into consideration in selecting locations for economic zones, she said.

The PM also underlined the importance of establishing domestic industries based on demands for products on the global market.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of BEZA activities.

# Undeterred, they will keep working for the street kids

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plans to start a permanent shelter for children in Manikganj.

They said a lot has changed for the better since their arrest.

"Those are the darkest days of our lives. But we would probably never be able to realise the strength of our camaraderie if it wasn't put to test in such a way," he said.

On September 12, police arrested the four -- Arif, Hasibul Hasan Khan, Zakia Sultana and Firoz Alam Khan -- at a flat in the capital's Banasree. Law enforcers

also claimed to have rescued 10 children from the house.

The arrests were made after the uncle of one of the children named Mubarak, who lived in the Rampura shelter home, filed a case under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012 with Rampura Police Station, accusing the four.

The rescued children, aged between nine and 14, then told journalists that they were given food and security and that they were happy at the shelter

home.

On September 13, Mubarak was handed over to his family while the rest were sent to the Juvenile Development Centre in Gazipur.

Their arrests sparked widespread protests in the social media.

A police probe found the charges brought against the Adanya Bangladesh members to be false.

Of the four, only Arif completed his studies while the others are students.

Zakia said apart from the shelter at Rampura, they also have three schools

named Mojar School at the city's Agargaon, Sadarghat and Kamalapur for homeless children. Of the schools, the one in Agargaon is in a rented flat, while the other two are in open spaces.

Asked about their parents, Sabuj said, "I think most of our parents are just as determined as we are."

While they were in prison, their parents frequently sent homemade food to about 200 students at the schools, Sabuj added.

Adanya Bangladesh was registered with the government in January 2014.