



United States President Barack Obama performs the 68th annual pardoning of Thanksgiving turkey "Abe" in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington on Wednesday. Obama yesterday urged Americans to open their hearts to refugees in his Thanksgiving message to the nation, likening them to the pilgrims the holiday celebrates. Thanksgiving was first celebrated by the group who fled religious persecution in England. PHOTO: REUTERS

# BSF kills two Bangladeshis

A CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot two Bangladeshi cattle traders dead along Toluigachha border in Satkhira Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The dead are Nazrul Islam, 45, of Pachrakhi village in Sadar upazila, and Abdul Khaleq, 40, of Kakkdanga village in Kolaroa upazila, family members said.

The incident took place at Nityanandakathi under Swarup Nagar Police Station of India's West Bengal around 4:30am. Later, in a flag meeting, the BSF regretted its firing.

Khaleq along with some other cattle traders went to India on Wednesday evening to bring cattle from there, his wife Shahida Khatun told this correspondent.

"I came to know early today [early yesterday] that my husband and one Nazrul were shot dead by the BSF," she said.

Rabeya Khatun, wife of day labourer Nazrul Islam, echoed the same view.

Wishing not to be named, a cattle trader, who was with the deceased, said some traders were returning home with cattle from India. When they reached near Nityanandakathi bridge, the BSF men of Amudia camp asked them to stop.

As they did not respond to the call,

the BSF members opened fire on them, killing the two on the spot.

After talking to Rampada Bhattacharya, a Panchayet member of Swarup Nagar, Bhuttolal Gayeen, chairman of Keragachhi union of Kolaroa, said bodies of the victims were taken to Swarup Nagar Police Station.

Later, the bodies were sent to Bashirhat Badartola Hospital morgue for autopsies, he said, quoting Rampada.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) lodged a strong protest with its Indian counterpart against the incident. The 38 BGB Battalion yesterday morning sent a letter to the BSF camp at Amudia for a flag meeting, said Lt Col Arman Hossain, commander of the battalion.

The Bangladeshis were killed within around 1,000 yards of the Indian territory, he said.

Later, around 2:00pm yesterday, a flag meeting between the BGB and the BSF was held on no-man's land at Toluigachha.

In the meeting, the BSF regretted the incident and said they would be careful to avoid such incidents in future, said sources.

The BSF also informed its Bangladeshi counterpart that the two victims' bodies would soon be sent to Bangladesh through legal process.

## Shakib banned

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breach during his team's match against Sylhet Superstars yesterday in Mirpur.

According to a press release sent from the Bangladesh Cricket Board, Shakib was reported by the on-field umpires, Ranmore Martinez and Tanvir Ahmed, for violating Level 1 Articles 2.1.4 and 2.1.7 of the Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel for using abusive language after dismissing Sylhet batsman Dilshan Munaweera in the fourth over of the Sylhet innings.

Match referee Selim Shahed imposed the fine after the player pleaded guilty to the offence.

Shakib received the suspension for breaching Level 2 Article 2.2.4 of the Code of Conduct for directing offensive and abusive language towards Umpire Tanvir Ahmed in the 13th over of the Sylhet innings following the turning down of an appeal. As such, he will not be to take the field for Rangpur's game against Comilla Victorians today.

As the player admitted the offences and accepted the sanction proposed by the match referee, a formal hearing was not required.

## 18 killed in Boko Haram attack in southeast Niger

AFP, Niamey

Eighteen people were killed and 100 homes torched in an attack in the dead of night by Nigeria's Boko Haram fighters on a southeastern village, local authorities told AFP yesterday.

"The toll is 18 dead, 11 hurt, almost 100 homes burned down" in the village of Wogom late Wednesday, the mayor of the nearby town of Bosso, Bako Mamadou, told AFP.

A humanitarian worker said the Islamists came from Nigeria and crossed the Komadougou Yobe river, the border between Niger and Nigeria.

Armed jihadists and suicide bombers from Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamist group have staged repeated attacks since February in Niger's southeast Diffa region near Nigeria, leaving hundreds of people dead.

## US using sex, money to infiltrate Iran: Khamenei

REUTERS, Dubai

The United States is using sex, money and Western lifestyles to infiltrate Iran's decision-making elite, the Islamic republic's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday.

The remarks by Khamenei, who has the last word on matters of state, followed a wave of arrests of journalists and intellectuals by Tehran authorities over fears of Western infiltration after Iran reached an agreement with world powers over its nuclear programme.

"Two main things are used for this infiltration: money and sexual attractions. They are used to change beliefs, viewpoints and lifestyles, so that the affected person will think in the same way as an American," Khamenei said in remarks broadcast on state television.

## The blue-eared

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thoughts have not stopped yet.

My village in the Southern part of Bangladesh made me familiar with many fresh water wetlands, plenty of fresh water fish and many bird species. Among the birds, the species with bluish feather specially attracted me. They are commonly known as *maucha-ranga pokkhi* in the dialect of greater Barisal region, but in modern Bangla, we call them *machhranga*, which in English is called kingfisher.

I have always found kingfishers where small fish species like *puti*, *chela*, *bokthurina*, *kholsha* etc are available. I have been very familiar with two subspecies of kingfisher, which are called common kingfisher (*pati machhranga*) and white-throated kingfisher (*dhola-gola machhranga*). Their amazing poise before catching a fish, diving underwater, always made me more inquisitive about them. But I don't know why I missed another small but pretty subspecies known as *nilkan machhranga* in Bangla and blue-eared kingfisher in English.

Bird researcher Sayam U Chowdhury told me once that the bird was frequently seen in Kashipur area of Barisal. I visited the area but could not locate the tiny kingfisher. But the dream came true in 2014 when another local birdwatcher Abdul Mazid Shah Shakil found a pair of

blue-eared kingfisher in Ruya of Barisal city. He invited me to visit the area.

Ruya is an area with dense foliage and some canals, marshes and ponds. We first found the male bird early in the morning and the female some time later. Perching on tree branches near a canal, they both waited for diving into the water. Its usual chirp is a repetitive shrill note: *cheek ... chichi ... chee ... chit ...* before flying off and settling on another tree branch.

It is distinguished from the common kingfisher by darker cobalt-blue upperparts. The average length of this kingfisher is 16 cm. It inhabits hill streams, pools and ponds in dense vegetation area, tidal creeks and mangrove areas. It is a solitary bird and usually seen alone or in pairs. It is usually seen perching motionlessly on a low branch overhanging from a big tree, regularly bobbing its head up and down, occasionally flicking its tail up and down. It usually breeds in March-June. It feeds on fish and aquatic insects.

It is a rare resident bird of Bangladesh. It is found in the Sundarbans and the evergreen forests of Chittagong, Barisal and Khulna Divisions. Deforestation in southern Bangladesh has reduced its population.

The writer is a biologist.

## Khaleda asks leaders

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committee member tried to raise the issue several times at a high-level party meeting on Wednesday night. He even said the party should have reacted strongly to the execution of Salauddin, who was a standing committee member, said sources.

But the BNP chief presiding over the meeting did not allow her party colleague to speak much on the issue. She told the leaders they should rather focus on the meeting agenda, the sources added.

Senior BNP leaders at the meeting at Khaleda's Gulshan office discussed the party's strategy for participation in the upcoming municipality election.

"The issue of Salauddin's execution was raised at the meeting. Madam [Khaleda Zia] offered her condolence at his death. There was no more discussion on it as it was not on the agenda," Jamiruddin Sircar, a standing committee member of the party, told The Daily Star yesterday.

A senior leader, however, said the BNP might have faced criticism from outside had the meeting discussed and condemned the execution of Salauddin.

"We now want to make it clear that we are not in favour of war criminals. By not discussing Salauddin, she has saved her party from the accusation of patronising war criminals," the leader said, seeking anonymity.

For decades, the BNP has been facing accusation of patronising war criminals. Its electoral tie with anti-liberation force Jamaat-e-Islami has also drawn flak. The party has been facing pressure from both friends and foes at home and abroad to cut ties with Jamaat.

Salauddin was hanged in the early hours of Sunday along with Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed.

Jamaat enforced a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on Monday,

protesting Mojaheed's execution.

It also enforced a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on November 19, protesting the rejection of Mojaheed's plea by the Supreme Court to review its verdict that upheld the death sentence delivered by an international war crimes tribunal.

But the BNP has remained silent about the execution of Salauddin for the last few days.

BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon, who regularly holds press conferences and speaks on different issues, has not said a single word about Salauddin's execution.

Ripon spoke about Khaleda's return from London at a press conference on November 19. Replying to a question there, he said that Salauddin was denied justice. He also claimed that Salauddin was a clean politician.

The government and people sharply reacted to his remarks.

## 10 Rangpur

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the post, was received around 5:30pm.

Contacted, Reverend Barnabas told The Daily Star, "I received the letter on Wednesday evening. The letter contains a list of nine more priests of other Baptist churches in the district."

"The letter said, 'You will be killed any day or any moment. Eat whatever you want,'" the Reverend said, quoting the letter.

Later, he informed police of the matter and filed a general diary with Rangpur Kotwali Police Station on Thursday.

Abdullah Al Faroque, additional superintendent of Rangpur Police told The Daily Star that police had already beefed up security around the churches.

"We have already begun to investigate the source of this letter," the ASP added.

## Pakistan may summon envoy of Bangladesh

Pak lawmaker tells National Assembly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan has decided to summon Bangladesh's envoy in Pakistan to lodge a protest and convey Islamabad's concerns over the recent execution of two war criminals -- Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

MNA Sheikh Aftab Ahmad, ruling party lawmaker of Pakistan, made this comment at the National Assembly on Wednesday. The Express Tribune, a news portal of the country, reported yesterday.

The announcement came a day after Pakistani lawmakers unanimously decried "the flawed war crimes trials" of the opposition leaders in Bangladesh and urged the Pakistani government to take up the matter in the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the Pakistani news portal added.

The Daily Star was unable to find any other source claiming this information.

Earlier, Dhaka reacted sharply to a statement from Islamabad on the execution of the two war criminals and summoned the Pakistan high commissioner in Bangladesh for lodging a formal protest.

## Obama urges generosity to Syrian refugees

REUTERS, Washington

President Barack Obama urged Americans to show generosity to Syrian refugees in his Thanksgiving message on Thursday, reminding them that the Pilgrims who came to America in 1620 were themselves fleeing persecution.

"Nearly four centuries after the Mayflower set sail, the world is still full of pilgrims - men and women who want nothing more than the chance for a safer, better future for themselves and their families," Obama said in his address.

Obama's plan to accept 10,000 refugees from Syria became a lightning rod for political criticism after attacks, claimed by Islamic State militants, killed 130 people in Paris two weeks ago. The United States is leading an international coalition fighting the group in Syria and Iraq.

Since the Paris attacks, Americans now identify terrorism as the most important problem facing the country, Reuters-Ipsos polling shows.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to suspend the refugee plan and intensify refugee screening measures before lawmakers left Washington for the Thanksgiving break. Several Republican candidates for the November 2016 presidential election have also said the refugees pose a risk.

"People should remember that no refugee can enter our borders until they undergo the highest security checks of anyone traveling to the United States," Obama said in his address.

## It's 'disturbing'

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International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) because of what it said was the fairness of the trials conducted by the court had been questioned.

While the international community has acknowledged the trial of atrocities committed more than four decades ago as an effort to end the culture of impunity in the country, some quarters are making sweeping, biased and unfounded comments, said the foreign affairs ministry in a press release.

The UN's statement had come in response to the execution of war criminals Salauddin Quader Chowdhury and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed.

The ministry said the two had been handed down death penalty after the charges brought against them were proven beyond doubt.

"Chowdhury and Mojaheed's cases have nothing to do with their political identity or affiliation."

The fact that Salauddin belonged to the opposition party, BNP, and Mojaheed to its ally Jamaat-e-Islami is nothing but a coincidence, reads the press release.

It also points out that some accused, who are involved with the politics of the ruling party and its electoral allies, are being tried at the ICT.

The trial of war criminals has opened up an opportunity to end

the culture of impunity, ensuring justice to the victims and paving the way for truth and reconciliation that was duly recognised by the European Parliament in its resolution of January 16 last year, the foreign ministry said.

The European Parliament earlier also acknowledged the need for reconciliation, justice and accountability for the crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence and stressed the important role of the ICT.

The government reiterated that being a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Bangladesh is obliged to maintain international standards in the judicial process.

The position taken by the UN raises a question -- whether it is siding with the perpetrators of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, it said.

"It is also a question if the OHCHR is choosing to undermine the cry for justice of the families of innumerable victims."

The government and the people of Bangladesh are confident that plausible legal arguments can be provided to discredit all the allegations against the trials, the foreign ministry said.

The fact that due process and standards were maintained throughout the trial would ultimately prevail, it added.

## AL vs 20-party

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seven-member committee in each municipality to pick a single mayor candidate. The presidents and general secretaries of the AL's district, upazila and municipality units concerned, and the local lawmaker would be in the committees, meeting sources said.

The committees would send the names to Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi office by November 30 for the central committee's approval. The final list of nominated mayor contenders would be finalised by December 3, the deadline for filing nominations.

If any municipality-level committee fails to pick a single candidate, they will have to send several names from which the AL Parliamentary Board would pick one.

The meeting also decided to take tough organisational action against rebel candidates.

The AL would send the directives to its grassroots units today, sources confirmed.

The ruling party also decided to write to the Election Commission on Sunday, requesting it to allow lawmakers to electioneer for their party-backed candidates in the municipal polls.

The electoral code of conduct bars anyone enjoying government facilities -- including ministers, MPs and government officials -- from joining election campaigns in the local government polls.

At the meeting, AL Presidium Member Mohammad Nasim said that since the elections were being held on party lines, it would help the BNP to revive.

In response, Hasina said multiple strong political parties were a must for strengthening democracy, according to meeting sources.

BNP MEETING

Though the BNP has decided to contest the polls under the 20-party coalition banner, it did not make any formal announcement about it.

"But all the alliance members have

agreed on this," National People's Party Chairman Fariduzzaman Farhad told The Daily Star after the meeting last night.

The coalition will field a single candidate for each mayoral post, said Farid whose party is member of the BNP-led combine.

General Secretary Saifuddin Moni of National Democratic Party, another component of the alliance, said all the combine members were asked to submit the list of their party-backed candidates to BNP chief Khaleda Zia by today.

After getting all the lists, she will pick 236 names as the final mayor contenders.

The 20-party's decision on joining the polls is likely to be announced on tomorrow, Moni added.

Briefing the press after the one-and-a-half-hour meeting, BNP Spokesman Asaduzzaman Ripon said, "The meeting elaborately discussed the municipality elections. Like the BNP senior leaders, the leaders of other alliance members entrusted our chairperson with taking the final decision on joining the elections."

BNP insiders said the party, which along with its allies boycotted the last parliamentary election, has almost finalised the list of its mayoral candidates for the upcoming municipality polls.

The party yesterday also formed a six-member election coordination committee comprising BNP Standing Committee Member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, Vice Chairman Abdullah Al Noman, Khaleda's adviser Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, BNP Spokesman Asaduzzaman Ripon and central leader Imran Saleh Prince.

It also constituted 19 committees, headed by senior party leaders, to conduct electioneering in favour of their candidates and monitor the elections.