

No arrest yet

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Panic has meanwhile gripped the residents of Purindabazar and nearby villages under Satgram union, as several thousand unnamed villagers were made accused in a case filed with Arahazar police.

Many, even those who did not take part in the mob beating, have left their houses in fear of arrest and harassment by the police.

Mob killings continue unabated in the country as offenders seldom face trial in a society that seems to be plagued by a culture of impunity, say rights activists.

According to rights body Ain O Salish Kendra, more than 100 people are killed in mob beating every year. Earlier on Thursday, a mob, brought together by a call over loud-speakers from mosques, beat up eight alleged robbers to death when they were taking away rice sacks from a store at Purindabazar in Arahazar. Of the eight killed, identities of six bodies have so far been confirmed by their families. After conducting autopsies at Narayanganj General Hospital, police have handed over the bodies of Rony, Jewel, Rubel, Sohag, Dulal and Topu Hasan alias Soton to their families.

Two other bodies were kept at the mortuary for identification, the police said.

Soton's elder brother Khokon Mia told reporters that Soton used to help his father in farming in Bhatbarera village of Mymensingh. "He told us on Tuesday that he was going to Gazipur with his friends. He might be involved with the crime being influenced by his friends."

Health of the injured is reported to have been improving. They have been receiving treatment at Arahazar Upazila Health Complex, said the OC quoting the doctors.

Many alleged the villagers were fuming due to repeated robbery incidents, but police were allegedly showing negligence towards the incidents.

At least 10 major robberies have been committed at businesses and houses in Purindabazar and nearby areas this year.

Jahirul Islam, assistant superintendent of police in Narayanganj, said Lokman, one of the injured, told the police that 18 people were involved in the robbery led by Shawkat alias Sohag.

IS finance chief

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According to the Financial Times, he told Chatham House in London the extremists were selling "a great deal of oil to the Assad regime" but the ramped-up bombing campaign on their oil infrastructure over the last month was "markedly degrading" their funds.

Col Warren also said recent airstrikes had killed an estimated 350 IS fighters in the city of Ramadi in western Iraq, which was captured by IS in May.

The announcement suggested the militants have now lost as much as half their defending force.

Col Warren said there had been an estimated 600 to 1,000 IS fighters inside Ramadi, but officials are reluctant to predict how long it may take to reclaim the city.

Defence Secretary Ash Carter admitted the retaking of Ramadi was "disappointingly slow".

"I am certain it will fall, and we will assist in the making of it fall," he said.

He added that the US would be willing to commit US army Apache attack helicopters to the battle for Ramadi, if the Iraqi government requests it and if it would "make a strategically decisive difference".

Asked about that comment later, Col Warren said, "Apache helicopters are ready," if Washington and Baghdad give the go-ahead.

He said the US is prepared to use Apache attack helicopters in Ramadi if requested by Washington and Baghdad, according to CBS News.

BSF men kill

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The victim, Abdur Rahman alias Sentu, 33, was the son of Shish Mohammad of Belpara village of the upazila.

The BSF men of Naru Khanki camp under 20 BSF Battalion in West Bengal beat Sentu to death around 3:00am on Thursday when he along with other cattle traders was returning home from India through Johorpur border, said Lt Col Ahmed Junaid Alam Khan, commanding officer of 9 BGB Battalion in Chapainawabganj, quoting locals.

His companions, however, managed to cross the border with the body and took it to Sentu's village home on Thursday evening.

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) tried to communicate with 20 BSF Battalion for its comment on the killing, but failed to contact its Indian counterpart, said the BGB official.

On information, police recovered the body of Sentu from his Belpara village home yesterday and sent it to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

On December 8, Sentu along with other cattle traders went to India through the border for collecting cattle, said Ataur Rahman, sub-inspector of Sadar Police Station.

The body bore several injury marks, the police official added.

BNP soft, AL not

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Meanwhile, the BNP is likely to finalise its decision over an understanding with Jamaat, the key component of the 20-party alliance, about joint participation in the polls.

In Thursday's standing committee meeting, BNP chief Khaleda Zia directed her grassroots to finalise the issue with local Jamaat. If local leaders fail to do so, she will make the decision, party sources said.

Asked, party Joint Secretary General Shajahan said they were waiting for the decision of the grassroots and hoped that the grassroots would give them a positive answer on the matter.

He also said Jamaat did not give them any list of its independent candidates or proposed an agreement.

Two standing committee members told this correspondent that an agreement on sharing candidates might not be possible in the municipalities where Jamaat men are running as independent candidates, because the BNP came to know that in some areas the ruling party exerted pressure on Jamaat to field candidates to cut into BNP votes.

The BNP may leave 10 to 15 mayor posts for Jamaat, they said.

The Daily Star spoke with several BNP and Jamaat leaders in six municipalities. All of them said they did not

hold talks about the negotiation.

Kazi Abdur Rashid, president of BNP's Kahalu upazila in Bogra, said they had no interest in sitting with Jamaat, and that Jamaat did not come to meet them.

Jahurul Islam Badsha, organising secretary of Jamaat there, said they would participate in the polls without BNP support.

Meanwhile, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia will hold a meeting tonight with the party vice-chairman, chairperson's advisers, joint secretaries and organising secretaries to discuss different issues, including the upcoming municipality polls.

EC REJECTS AL'S PLEA
The Election Commission rejected the AL's plea to allot the party symbol to an independent candidate in Shariatpur municipality.

In a directive on Thursday night, the EC made it clear to the returning officer of Shariatpur that as per laws and rules of municipal elections there is no scope of allotting party symbols to independent candidates.

According to the Local Government Act 2015, no political party is allowed to nominate more than one person as its mayoral candidate in the municipal elections. If multiple candidates are nominated, then nominations of all party candidates will be rejected.

Final phase starts today

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The winners of this match will go directly to the final of the competition, whereas the team that lose will have another shot to reach the final. They will have to play the winners of the eliminator in the second qualifier. The winners of the second qualifier will make it through to the final.

The eliminator will take place immediately after the qualifier and will be contested between Kumar Sangakkara's Dhaka Dynamites and Mahmudullah Riyads' Barisal Bulls.

The Comilla Victorians finished on top after the group stages, whereas Rangpur finished second and there's no doubt that this fixture is going to be an exciting one.

The unique aspect about both these teams is that their local players have fired alongside their overseas cricketers.

One of the key players for the Victorians will be young pacer Abu Hider, who has scalped 17 wickets in the competition and is the joint-highest wicket-taker alongside Shakib. Another player Comilla will be depending on is Ahmed Shehzad, who has an average of above 40 in the competition and has been scoring consistently.

For the Riders, Shakib and Jahurul Islam should play big roles. While Shakib is yet to find form with the bat, he has done well with his turners. Jahurul has been a surprise performer for Rangpur and is their highest run-getter. For Rangpur to do well tomorrow, Jahurul needs to continue his form.

The battle between Dhaka and Barisal is likely to be a contest between bat and ball. Barisal, courtesy of the West Indians in their side -- Chris Gayle, Evin Lewis and Rayad Emrit -- have decimated teams. In Mahmudullah, Al-Amin Hossain and Kevon Cooper, they have a number of other match-winners.

Dhaka, on the other hand, have depended a lot upon their bowlers in the competition. With the likes of Mustafizur Rahman, Yasir Shah and Mosharrif Hossain in the side, they have a pretty solid bowling line-up.

However, the key for them will be their local batsmen, who haven't managed to live up to the expectations yet. Sangakkara has been the highest run-getter of the competition, but he will need support from the local batters if his side are to post a big total.

Bangladesh needs to tackle

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"This is a worrying development," he said in an interview with The Daily Star just a few days ahead of his departure. He leaves Dhaka this month completing his over four years of diplomatic assignment since September 2011.

The British envoy said there has been a "great change" in Bangladesh in terms of security issues though Bangladesh has a history of political violence. "...but this is the first time violence has been directed against foreign interests and we are aware that ISIL has taken responsibility for all the attacks taking place in Bangladesh."

He thinks ISIL is probably the most well-known and certainly notorious and effective international terrorists group in the world. "We have to accept that the world we hold becomes more dangerous and more complex as the ISIL has more global ambitions and wants to create chaos and disruptions so that they can implement their extremist views."

The diplomat having experience of working for 15 years in various capacities in Bangladesh said there is evidence that they (ISIL) want to be active in Bangladesh. "We need to address it very quickly and stop them in this country."

On sharing credible information with Bangladesh, the British High Commissioner said they shared such info with Bangladesh but it was hard to make definite alerts. "We can just pick up indications."

Commenting on effects of terror acts on investments in Bangladesh he, however, said they -- investors -- want to work in any country. "We have to manage risk. As long as security threats are managed, the investors will feel comfortable."

Commenting on civil society and media freedom, Gibson who also served as Dean of Diplomatic Corps, said they were very "supportive" of free press and free media. "Certainly it is an essential part of democracy."

Gibson said civil society in Bangladesh is "quite vibrant" and civil society along with the NGOs is very active at all levels.

On the upcoming local elections, the British envoy said it was important that people had power at the right level.

"I think the local elections on December 30 will be very important as the people will have the opportunity to give feedback and to make a choice," he added.

He said the Election Commission has to make the right conditions for people to feel confident. "That's the key. Confidence has to be there."

On the last mayoral elections in Dhaka and Chittagong, Gibson said it was frustrating on many different levels and the EC did not produce the right conditions for people to feel confident.

On alleged killings and disappearances of opposition leaders, the British

High Commissioner said killings and disappearances are not acceptable in a free society. "We raise our concern as appropriate in regular basis with the government authorities."

Responding to a question on UK's position over fresh election in Bangladesh, Gibson said UK never called for fresh election. "What we called for was parties working together to ensure future elections are more credible and participatory."

On Bangladesh's economic growth, Gibson thought the 6.5 percent growth was good but different factors "held up the development more than it should have."

On barriers to FDI in Bangladesh, Gibson said there are two major issues and inadequate infrastructure development is one of them. "I think we all recognize that it has been slower than the ideal and government is now trying to address that."

He said adequate electricity generation, development of roads, railways, ports are "absolutely important" if Bangladesh wanted to attract more investment.

Gibson thought that removal of bottlenecks was important "...because investors will go away if they find many bottlenecks and barriers."

Sharing his experience in Bangladesh, Gibson said he is impressed to see the development in the rural areas. "This is a big achievement."

Reminiscing, Gibson smiled and said, it (Dhaka) was low rise city and now Dhaka is a high rise city.

"It was fabulous experience," is how he described his 15 years engagement in Bangladesh.

On COP21, he said it is not a case whether it will be successful but it will have to be successful.

"We must also understand that COP21 is not the end of the process. It is start of the process," he added.

At least seven civilians killed in suicide attack in north Cameroon

AFP, Yaounde

At least seven civilians were killed yesterday in a suicide attack in Kolofata, northern Cameroon, a region where Nigeria's Boko Haram Islamists are highly active, local officials said.

"We've registered eight deaths at the site, including the suicide bomber," a regional security source said without saying if the attack on a food stall was carried out by a man or a woman.

Machine

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Joshua Tenenbaum, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT), said he wanted to build a machine that could mimic the mental abilities of young children.

"Before they get to kindergarten, children learn to recognise new concepts from just a single example, and can even imagine new examples they haven't seen," said Tenenbaum.

"We are still far from building machines as smart as a human child, but this is the first time we have had a machine able to learn and use a large class of real-world concepts -- even simple visual concepts such as hand-written characters -- in ways that are hard to tell apart from humans."

The system is called a "Bayesian Program Learning" (BPL) framework, where concepts are represented as simple computer programs.

Researchers showed that the model could use "knowledge from previous concepts to speed learning on new concepts," such as building on knowledge of the Latin alphabet to learn letters in the Greek alphabet.

"The authors applied their model to over 1,600 types of handwritten characters in 50 of the world's writing systems, including Sanskrit, Tibetan, Gujarati, Glagolitic -- and even invented characters such as those from the television series Futurama," said the study.

Since humans require very little data to learn a new concept, the research could lead to new advances in artificial intelligence, the study authors said.

'Moja Loss'

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The court, however, granted a two-day remand for him, the OC said.

In a press release issued yesterday, Rab claimed Refayet had tarnished the image of the country by launching campaign against the government as well as different personalities.

He also used abusive language in his campaign, it claimed.

With a fan base of over 5,00,000, Moja Loss? (Are You Making Fun?) is a popular Facebook-based entertainment page known for its satirical stance on different aspects of society from corruption to politics to sexual harassment.

Some Facebook users, on conditions of anonymity, told this correspondent that Moja Loss? "is basically an entertainment page that seeks to amuse people."

"Jalaler Golpo"

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Fourteen films representing 11 countries, including four from India, were in the race for the top honours in different categories, including the best debut director.

With yesterday's award, "Jalaler Golpo" achieved a hat-trick, having earlier won the award for best debut director's film at the Jaipur International Film Festival in India in February this year and the best feature film at the Avanca International Film Festival in Portugal in July this year.

"It's an incredible feeling. Today's [yesterday's] award will give immense inspiration to do even better film in future. This is a great boost for meaningful cinema in Bangladesh where Bangladesh directors would like to tell stories of Bangladesh," Emon told The Daily Star over the phone soon after receiving the award.

"Jalaler Golpo" has in its cast Mosharrif Karim, who had won the best actor's award in Portugal, Moushumi Hamid, Arafat Rahman, Mohammad Emon and Fazlul Haque.

Suspect arrested

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The bomb did not explode. Minutes later, the gunmen opened fire at the entrance of the temple, injuring Mithun Chandra Roy, 27, and Ronojit Chandra Roy, 45.

Locals caught one of the alleged attackers, Sariful Islam of Gaibandha, after they exploded two crude bombs to make way for their escape. He was handed over to police after a beating.

Quoting witnesses, ASP Sujon said arrested Sariful was driving one of the bikes. He said both the arrested attackers were yet to be quizzed as they were undergoing treatment at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

Rafiqul Islam, who was shot in his left thigh while trying to catch the gunman yesterday, was being treated at the same hospital. There, he said Mossaberul had fired six times on them.

Zillur Rahman, physician at the surgical department of the hospital, said the condition of Ronojit, who was shot on his back Thursday night, was critical. He has been referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

No case was filed till 9:00pm last night.

Earlier in the morning, members of Iskon temples in the district formed a human chain in front of Dinajpur Press Club, protesting the attack on the temple and demanding the immediate arrest of the attackers.

The gun attack has triggered panic among the Hindus in the area as it was just five days after the bomb attack at Kantaji temple in the same upazila.

On November 30, Birendranath Roy, a priest of Iskon, was shot at Ranibandar village of Chirirbandar upazila in Dinajpur, and criminals shot Piero Parolari, 67, an Italian doctor and priest, in Mirzapur area of Dinajpur town on November 18.

The night of horror

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after the Pakistan army had launched its genocidal crackdown on Bangalees in the wee hours of March 26.

"Major Atrocity Recounted To Him [the unnamed American] Took Place At Kokeya [Rokeya] Girls' Hall, Where Building Set Ablaze And Girls Machine-Gunned As They Flew Building," read the telegram.

"Girls Had No Weapons. Forty Killed," it continued.

The American man's tour of the university was hosted by some of his contacts at the university who were not named, explained the cable, adding he recalled to have seen "Tightly Packed Pile Of Approximately Twenty Five Corpses (Male)" which constituted the "Last Batch Of Bodies Remaining, Others Having Been Disposed Of By Army" at Iqbal Hall.

An empty army truck "Arrived To Remove Bodies", mentioned the cable.

"Students Either Shot Down In Rooms Or Mowed Down When They Came Out Of Building In Groups," Blood said, quoting the American man who was briefed by witnesses during his visit.

He was told that "Weapons Students Had" at the male dormitory and "Girl Student Activists" residing at the female dormitory "Infuriated" the army.

"Estimated 1000 Persons, Mostly Students, But Including Faculty Members Resident In Dorms, Killed," read the cable that also mentioned one faculty member was shot inside his residence.

Citing closure of the university an obstruction to get a concrete estimate, the telegram stated, "... Many If Not Most Students Gone Undoubtedly Reduced Casualties."

And "... All University Files Burned By Army In What Appeared To Be Purposeful Move."

With the subject line "Extent of Casualties in Dhaka" on March 31, 1971, Blood, in another telegram, informed the State Department, "... We Would Estimate That Perhaps As Many As 4,000 to 6,000 People Thus Far Have Lost Their Lives As A Result Of Military Action."

There were students, university faculties and East Pakistan Police men killed "During The Really Hard Fighting On Night Of The 25th."

Another telegram written on the same day started, "Disturbing Aspect Of Current Situation Is That Wanton Acts Of Violence By Military Are Continuing In Dacca."

Referring to the account of a "Bengali Businessman Not AL [Awami League] Supporter", the cable wrote the man had seen "Six Naked Female Bodies At Rokeya Hall, Dacca U. Feet Tight Together. Bits Of Rope Hanging From Ceiling Fans. Apparently Raped, Shot, And Hung By Heels From Fans."

The men forced to dig out one of the mass graves reported having buried 140 bodies, while "Other Grave Equally Large."

The Japanese had reports of 400 people being killed in that military offensive, mentioned the cable.

"Servants And University

Maintenance Staff Shot Down," it continued.

Reporting on "EPR (East Pakistan Rifles) Camp At Peelkhana", the telegram reported, "Truckloads of Prisoners Seen going into EPR Camp ... Steady Firing Heard In Area Yesterday And Today."

"ConGen Officer Heard Steady Firing Of Approximately 1 Shot Per Ten Seconds For 30 Minutes," it said.

In addition to the three cables discussed, Blood earlier had sent two more telegrams. The first one sent on March 26 reported "A Reign Of Terror By The Pak Military", confirming deaths of five Dhaka University teachers.

In the second one dated March 29 he reported "Selective Genocide" by Pakistan Military, calling on his government to take action "Prior To Inevitable And Imminent Emergence Of Horrible Truths ..."

As his government did not respond and the "massacre" stirred the conscience of US employees at the Consulate, AID [USAID] and United States Information Service, 20 of them signed a "Dissent From U.S. Policy Toward East Pakistan" on April 4, 1971.

"Most Likely Eventual Outcome Of The Struggle Underway In East Pakistan Is A Bengali Victory And The Consequent Establishment Of An Independent BanglaDesh," Blood wrote.

This year US Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Bernicat gave The Liberation War Museum the historic telegrams, stamped with the seal of the US as official acknowledgement of the US diplomat's correspondences.

And the book "The Blood Telegram" written by Gary J Bass on the telegrams has won the world's two most prestigious non-fiction and history awards last year.

2 senior

FROM PAGE 2
He will also attend a seminar on "The US-Bangladesh Relationship: Working Together on Global Issues" tomorrow in the city.

US Secretary of State John Kerry on September 18 announced the nomination of Thomas A Shannon as the State Department's next under secretary for political affairs.

During the two US diplomats' visit, they are expected to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, high government officials and political leaders.

They are also expected to hold a bilateral meeting with Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque.

According to diplomatic sources, Bangladesh's current political and security situation, governance and bilateral relations will dominate talks between the US diplomats and high government officials in Dhaka.

Dhaka's relations with Washington were strained recently after several ministers blamed the USA for "conspiring to establish that the global terror outfit is active in Bangladesh".

Shannon will leave Dhaka on Monday for Sri Lanka.

Climate-saving deal

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Xi said the world powers "must strengthen coordination with all parties" and "make joint efforts to ensure the Paris climate summit reaches an accord", according to a statement on the ministry's website.

The planned accord would seek to revolutionise the world's energy system by cutting back or potentially eliminating the burning of coal, oil and gas, whose carbon dioxide is the big warming culprit.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called yesterday on envoys from around the world to take a "final decision for humanity" as they battled to seal the climate-saving pact.

"This negotiation is most complicated, most difficult, but most important for humanity. We have just very limited hours remaining," Ban told reporters as ministers grappled with stubborn differences over pivotal issues.

BATTLE LINES

UN efforts from the 1990s have been hamstrung by rows between developed and developing nations over sharing the emissions-curbing burden, aiding climate-vulnerable poor countries and funding the shift to cleaner renewables.

Developing nations have insisted established economic powerhouses must shoulder the lion's share of responsibility as they have emitted most of the greenhouse gases since the Industrial Revolution.

But the United States and other rich nations say emerging giants must also do more.

The financing issues remained the biggest potential deal-breakers in Paris, highlighted in a draft text presented by Fabius on Thursday that was debated through the night.

Rich countries promised six years ago in Copenhagen to muster \$100 billion (92 billion euros) a year from 2020 to help developing nations make the energy shift and cope with the impact of global warming.

But how the pledged funds will be raised remains unclear -- and develop-

ing countries are determined to secure a commitment for increasing amounts of money after 2020.

CALL FOR COMPROMISE

As he released the draft of the pact, Fabius said a deal was "extremely close" but appealed for compromise from all sides.

Most nations submitted to the UN before the conference their voluntary plans to curb greenhouse gas emissions from 2020, a process that was widely hailed as an important platform for success.

But scientists say that, even if the cuts were fulfilled, they would still put Earth on track for warming of at least 2.7C.

The latest draft offers a compromise that states the purpose of the agreement is to hold temperatures to well below 2C, but aim for 1.5C.

"With this, I would be able to go home and tell my people that our chance for survival is not lost," said Tony de Brum, foreign minister of the Marshall Islands, one of the archipelagic nations that could be wiped out by rising sea levels.

3 members

FROM PAGE 2
Kowsar told The Daily Star that Azad and Firoz sent him to Indonesia on October 18 after he had initially given them Tk 1 lakh. He was supposed to give them more after he safely travelled to New Zealand.

"Their agents in Indonesia made me captive along with fellow Bangladeshi Abdul Momin and demanded Tk 13 lakh from my family. They sent me back to the country after receiving the sum," he said, adding, Krishna took the money from his family.

According to CID officials, Krishna used to send money to one of his brothers in India. The money was later sent to John by one of his friends.

The CID officials said the gang had agents in Australia, India, Indonesia and Romania, adding, they would take necessary action through the Interpol.