



A snow-covered car at a parking lot in front of the US Capitol in Washington, DC, on Friday. A winter storm dumped nearly 2 feet (58cm) of snow on the suburbs of the US capital yesterday before moving on to Philadelphia and New York, paralyzing road, rail and airline travel along the US East Coast. Story on page 16.

Massive blizzard

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The record high of 28 inches (71 cm) of snow in the nation's capital was set in 1922 and the deepest recent snowfall was 17.8 inches in 2010.
Many stores were left with bare shelves as residents stocked up on food, water and wine, preparing to spend the weekend indoors.
The governors of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Delaware, West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and the mayor of Washington, declared states of emergency.
Officials warned people not to drive.
The storm developed along the Gulf Coast, dropping snow over Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky on Friday. On the East Coast, warm, moist air from the Atlantic Ocean collided with cold air to form the massive winter system, meteorologists said.
The storm was forecast to move offshore in southern New England early next week. Philadelphia and New York were expected to get up to 18 inches of snow before the storm abated.
Low-lying areas of New York and New Jersey might see flooding during high tides on Saturday and Sunday, officials said.

More than 4,200 US flights were cancelled on Saturday, most of them at airports in New York, Philadelphia and Washington, according to tracking website FlightAware.com.
Amtrak modified service on train routes along its busy Northeast Corridor and New Jersey Transit shut all bus, rail and light rail service early on Saturday and said it would restore service as "conditions permit."
The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which includes the country's second-busiest subway system, took the rare step of suspending operations from late Friday through Sunday.

BSF kills 1

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Bangladeshi cattle traders around 5:30am, leaving Joyal dead on the spot.

Lt Col Rafiqul Hasan, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh Battalion-14, confirmed the incident.

The BGB authorities sent a letter to the BSF for holding a "flag meeting" for returning the victim's body, said Rafiqul.

Jihadists

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Itself 'Janood-ul-Khalifa-e-Hind'. It was planning to procure weapons and explosives for its strikes, according to a home ministry spokesperson.
Janood's alleged head, computer programmer Mudabbir Mushtaq Shaikh from Mumbai near Mumbai, is among those arrested.

The terror plot, uncovered just days after Delhi Police busted another IS-inspired module in Uttarakhand, marked another step in the transformation of IS from just a potential threat to a serious security challenge for India.

While IS, with its adept use of technology, has been successful in getting a few radicalised youth from India to fight for it in Syria and Iraq, this is the first evidence that its influence is being linked to plans to carry out terror strikes within India.

Although the IED material recovered during the raids suggested that the alleged terrorists lacked the wherewithal to carry out big strikes and would have, at this stage, been limited to small attacks in chosen areas of their cities, sources said a perusal of jihadi literature seized from them showed that they were ambitious and had plans to graduate to spectacular terror attacks.

Other seizures include mobiles, laptops, jihadi literature, videos and material for preparation of bombs.
"Our information is that the 14 members may not be really planning to get together for a big strike but could have undertaken attacks in and around their areas of residence," said a home ministry officer.

Though there is no clarity on specific targets of the 14-member module, sources claimed the NIA found that Mushtaq was leading the effort to scout sources for procuring arms, as well as sites in forested terrain where the recruits could be trained to handle arms and explosives.

Don't impose

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Observing that textbook-based education is not enough for the proper development of children as they have many dreams, Abdul Hamid said some of them want to be cricketers, some to be artists, writers, poets, and athletes. "It's the responsibility of the society to extend their cooperation in building their [children's] carrier as per their choices," he added.

President Hamid lauded the role of Bangladesh Shishu Academy for flourishing the talents of children.
He also distributed prizes and certificates among the winners of the competition and enjoyed a cultural programme performed by the winners.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki, secretary of the ministry Nasima Begum and Chairman of the Shishu Academy Selina Hossain spoke on the occasion.

'Russian air raids' kill 33 civilians in Syria

AFP, Beirut
Suspected Russian raids killed 33 civilians in war-ravaged eastern Syria yesterday, amid reports US forces are building up an air base to bolster their fight against jihadists further north.

Meanwhile, senior diplomats scrambled to resolve the key question of who will represent Syria's opposition at crucial talks next week aimed at ending the nearly-five year war.

In eastern Syria, the 33 civilians were killed in air strikes suspected to have been carried out by Russian warplanes on a jihadist-held village.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said nine children and two women were among the dead in Khasham, which is controlled by the Islamic State group.

The village is in Syria's oil-rich Deir Ezzor province, where IS has sought to advance in recent days despite a barrage of Russian and Syrian government air strikes.

The week-long IS offensive on the provincial capital has left nearly 500 people dead and sparked fears of mass killings among the 200,000 people still living there.

IS declared a self-styled "caliphate" in 2014 across swathes of Syria and Iraq, imposing its ultra-conservative interpretation of Islamic law there.

In Syria, it is under fire by the government and Damascus's long-time ally Russia, as well as a US-led coalition also battling the jihadists in Iraq.

To bolster their fight against the group, US special forces deployed in

Syria are building up an airbase in the northeast, sources told AFP yesterday.
A Syrian military source said nearly 100 "American experts" and Syrian Kurdish militia were nearly done outfitting Rmeilan airfield in Hasakeh province.

"The airbase will be used for helicopters and cargo planes. Its strip is now 2,700 metres (yards) long and is ready to be used by planes that will transport equipment and ammunition," the source added.

A security source in northeast Syria said "American special forces and advisers are using the Rmeilan airport as a base, from where helicopters are taking off towards the fronts".

The Pentagon said the US had "not taken control" of any airfield in Syria.

10 Savar Bede students get SUS scholarship

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar
Social Upliftment Society (SUS), an NGO, gave scholarship to 10 college students of the Bede community in Savar, on the outskirts of the capital.
Superintendent of Police (SP) in Dhaka Md Habibur Rahman handed over the scholarship money at a programme at SUS office on Savar Nama Bazar road.
Hamida Begum, executive director of SUS, presided over the programme.

BNP to bring

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meeting sources said.
Before the council, elections to the posts of BNP chairman and senior vice-chairman would be held and a committee had already been formed to conduct the election, said a BNP standing committee member who was present at the meeting.
A council preparation committee, led by BNP standing committee member Tariqul Islam, was also formed. Besides, over seven sub-committees were formed to assist the council preparation committee.

In the briefing, Fakhrul said the meeting demanded reducing the fuel oil price following its drastic fall in the international market.

He said the BNP standing committee members strongly condemned the home ministry for its approval of filing a case against Khaleda Zia for her "political comments" over the number of Liberation War martyrs. "The move was made out of political vengeance."

The meeting also expressed deep shock at the death of standing committee member RA Gani.

BNP standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, Tariqul Islam, Jamiruddin Sircar, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Abdul Moyeen Khan and Nazrul Islam were present.

Ershad's decisions

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Jatiya Party acting chairman was not discussed in party's joint meeting held in her residence Monday night.

She claimed that their party has been playing an important role as the opposition in parliament.

It was first reaction of Raushan, also a senior presidium member of the party, since last week's disputes over Jatiya Party leadership.

She said Ershad's decisions over the two important posts were "not in not in accordance with the party principle and undemocratic" as they were taken without discussions with the party's parliamentary party and presidium.

At the same time, she said the confusion over making the party's acting chairman was not correct, as there was no discussion about it at the joint meeting.

On Sunday last, Ershad at a press conference at the party's Rangpur office announced his younger brother GM Quader as the party's co-chairman.

Opposing Ershad's decision, JP presidium member and then secretary general Ziauddin Bablu named Raushan the acting chairman of the party the following day.

Bablu claimed that the decision was taken at a joint meeting of the party's presidium and parliamentary party members at Raushan's residence.

Aggrieved at Bablu's move, Ershad at an emergency press conference at his Banani office on Tuesday removed

Bablu as the party secretary general and replaced him with Ruhul Amin Howlader.

ERSHAD TO TALK TO PM BEFORE QUITTING

Ershad yesterday said he would talk to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina before giving up as her special envoy.

"I cannot quit the post without talking with the prime minister as she has honoured me with the post. It would be tantamount to showing disrespect to her if I quit without discussing the issue with her," the JP chief told a programme at his Banani office in the city.

The former military ruler said it would be beneficial for the ruling Awami League if it helped strengthening the JP because if the main opposition party gets stronger, the Jatiya Sangsad would be more effective.

Calling upon the JP lawmakers to clarify the party's stance as the main opposition party, Ershad said: "I feel so sad when party lawmakers conclude their speeches in parliament saying Joy Bangla. Our slogan is Bangladesh Zindabad, not Joy Bangla."

"Our MPs should not deliver any speech in parliament so that people get confused about our role as the main opposition," he added.

Pointing to the recent changes in the JP leadership, Ershad said the party found new life through the move.

JP advisory council members, presidium members, and several vice-chairmen were present, among others.

Together, after long time

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the national flag. Later, the national anthem was sung collectively and balloons were released.

DU Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique and Afia Dil, who had completed MA in 1944 from the university as the first Muslim woman, along with several distinguished people were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Addressing the function, the dignitaries urged the alumni to spread the glorious history and spirit of Dhaka University among the young generation so that they concentrate on building the nation in the light of truth, honesty and knowledge.

The inaugural session was followed by a cultural function. Many were seen dancing and singing the songs while the function was going on.

"During our university lives, we used to join different cultural programmes and sing and dance with the performers. We are enjoying the same way today," said Narayan Saha Moni, a former student of political science department.

Nostalgic, many started revisiting memories of the cheerful days they left behind.

"I got admitted to the university in 1974. But I still feel this is my campus whenever I come here," said Dilara Mesbah, a former student of Bangla department.

"I can still have a different smell in the air on this campus. It takes me back to my student life," said Mujahidul Islam Selim, president of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), who got admitted in 1967.

Talking to reporters, veteran educa-

tionist Prof Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said, "There may be disagreements and divisions among the students over different issues. But everybody comes under a single platform when it comes to identifying themselves as students of the university."

Shah Alam, a visually impaired man, who studied at sociology department, came all the way from Rajshahi braving severe difficulties in his movement.

"I have met my friends after many years. Although I faced difficulties in coming to this place, I have had a lot of fun here with them," he told The Daily Star.

The university's former VC Prof Emazuddin Ahmed, Attorney General Mahbubur Alam, former industries minister Dilip Barua, among other, attended the programme.

Hearts of stone

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sobbed: "I was lying there and seeking help for quite some time, but no one stopped. No one cared at all!"

I sped up to take him to a hospital as fast as I could. I heard the man muttering something about how he was ignored by the passing vehicles.

While dropping the man - who lives in Dhanmondi - at Metropolitan Hospital in Mohakhali, I was relieved to see the medical staff rushing towards us with a stretcher.

As the faces that peeped through the windows of the passing cars came to my mind, I wondered how these people could act so stone-heartedly even after seeing a man lying in such a bad shape. How could we lose sympathy?

As I was writing this, I happened to notice someone's Facebook post about how a man bled to death in his car as three famous hospitals in Gulshan declined to treat the injured person.

As Saif Kamal came out of Banani Road No 23 at 8:26pm Thursday, he saw a man trying to get on a bus that had just started moving at a green signal. The man, who happened to be the helper of the bus, slipped and was run over by the running bus.

Saif, founder of Toru - an innovation hub that works with youths to transform innovations to social enterprises - stopped his car ignoring the stream of traffic behind him and ran to

the injured man.
"A bus was approaching us from the left. I pull his hands to save it from being run over. People on the walkway were looking on. As I began screaming for help, they stopped traffic. I rushed to get water from my car."

The lower part of the man's body was squashed. "There was no blood, just a white mass. I had never seen human flesh this close."

A pedestrian helped Saif to take the victim to his car. They rushed to a reputed private hospital at Gulshan-2 intersection, which declined to treat the man. He then drove to another hospital in the area. The security men drove them away saying they could not treat him either.

Worried at the worsening condition of the man, Saif then drove to another hospital. "The doctor was standing casually at the emergency door waiting for hospital staff to pull the person out of the car. I lost my head and screamed at him. He then came and checked the patient, who was still alive and gasping. But the doctor refused to treat him."

As the doctor advised him to take the man to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Saif asked why they won't treat him.

"I will give you the money but please help. He will die by the time I get him there. There is heavy traffic on

the road," Saif told him. But the doctor remained unmoved.

When he requested the hospital authorities for an ambulance, they refused that too and asked him to get his car off their parking lot.

Frustrated, Saif later headed to the Gulshan Police Station, from where a sub-inspector accompanied him to Kurmitola Hospital.

The first question the SI asked Saif after boarding his car was where he hit the guy. "I explained to him the whole situation. The ride to the hospital was an interrogation session. But the policeman was finally convinced."

They reached the hospital at 9:45pm. But the doctor declared the man dead.

"I had to wait for the next two hours while they traced down his kin. His name was Arafat."

Saif later had to go to Banani Police Station to file a case.

The SI who accompanied him to Kurmitola Hospital advised him not to pick up such victims in his own car. "Police, in many cases, will take it for granted that you ran over the victim," the SI said.

"It seemed to me that people in the cars do not have empathy for people. While they screamed at me, the pedestrians and poorer ones came to help. What will we do with this so-called education and social status?" Saif wrote.