

## BJP committed to sealing Indo-Bangla border

Reiterates Amit Shah

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

BJP national president Amit Shah has reiterated the BJP's commitment towards sealing the porous India-Bangladesh border while asserting protection of identity and culture of the indigenous people will also be the priority of his party.

"The BJP is committed to seal the India-Bangladesh border. We are going to seal the border as soon as possible. The execution of the land swap deal between the two countries has already eased the process," he said at a press conference in Guwahati yesterday.

On deportation of the illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators living in Assam, he said: "Our priority is to seal the border so that we can stop the infiltration."

"The NDA government at the centre along with the state government will also take up steps for detection of these Bangladeshis," he said adding that after this, the matter would be taken up with the Bangladesh government.

Shah accused the Congress government in Assam with not being bothered about the issue of infiltration as the infiltrators are its "vote banks".

"Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi had once said that there is not a single Bangladeshi in Assam. The statement of the chief minister of a state indicates the government's attitude towards the issue," he said.

He also said that the government will probe into the alleged Saradha Ponzi scam and that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) might also be engaged for this purpose.

The BJP president also said that if this party wins in Assam, there will be probe into the allegations of corruption during the 15 years of Congress rule in the state.

## Indian politician beaten to death in West Bengal

AFP, Kolkata

Armed assailants beat to death an Indian politician whose party is contesting elections in the country's east as he returned home from a campaign rally, police said Saturday.

Joydeb Jana, a mid-ranking leader of West Bengal state's ruling Trinamool Congress party (TMC), was attacked by armed men late Friday after addressing a campaign rally in West Midnapore district.

"(Jana) was found murdered by some unknown assailants," Anuj Sharma, West Bengal additional director general of police, told AFP. The attackers used bamboo sticks and iron rods, he said.

"So far 11 people have been arrested in connection with the murder," Sharma said, adding that police complaints against 22 people had been registered in the case.

Trinamool Congress general secretary Partha Chatterjee told AFP he suspected supporters of rival political parties were behind the killing.



Taramoni Das, 108, making bamboo baskets at Mahishkhocha of Aditmari in Lalmonirhat. She spent most of her life in extreme poverty. Thanks to a philanthropist in Dhaka, Taramoni has been living a happy life for about a year now. She keeps in touch with her patron via mobile phone, inset. PHOTO: STAR



## Life's looking better at 108

Says Lalmonirhat centenarian

S DILIP ROY with ANDREW EAGLE

To find proof that a human life can turn brighter even after the first one hundred years, it might do as well to travel to the Teesta River basin in Lalmonirhat. There, in Mahishkhocha village of Aditmari upazila, 108-year-old Taramoni Das is counting the last twelve months among her best.

"These days I enjoy milk, eggs, fish, any kind of nourishing food regularly," says a satisfied Das. "For most of my life such types of food were only a dream."

The mother of five daughters and one son has spent her life working. From the age of eight she took up her family's ancestral profession of making things from bamboo. Since the death of her husband Taraknath Das 19 years

ago, bamboo work, which left her a pittance of about 45 taka per day to cover living costs, was her only income.

"Even just a year ago, I was so frustrated from life's continuous struggle," says Das.

Then, quite unexpectedly, a favourable breeze of change blew her way. On 8 April 2015, The Daily Star published an article about the hardworking centenarian and it so moved a kindly woman in the national capital that the woman came forward with an offer of support.

"I get Tk 3,000 each month from my donor, the lady in Dhaka," says Das. "I spend Tk 2,500 to live and save Tk 500." The philanthropist from Dhaka has also helped Das build and furnish a tin-shed room in which to live. Finally, at age 107, Das found herself

quite suddenly in a position to retire.

Except that she didn't.

"I don't need to earn money from bamboo work anymore," Das explains, "but I still work because it's my habit and I can't forget my ancestral job. Besides, the energy of work keeps me going and helps my grandchildren." Das believes everybody should work in order to keep good health in mind and body.

"Taramoni Das is very happy lately," says neighbour Sudhir Chandra Das, 65. "Her life used to be full of sorrow but now she's always smiling. The generosity of the woman from Dhaka has made a big difference." Attesting to the centenarian's good health, Sudhir believes the elderly citizen has set an example for all the villagers of how to reach longevity despite a life of hard-

ship.

Moreover, according to the example set by Das, the first decade beyond the century is not a time to neglect learning. She's discovered how to use a mobile phone so that she can chat regularly with her newfound Dhaka philanthropist friend.

"I only wish to help an elderly widow who has really struggled," the anonymous donor told this newspaper by telephone. "I am thankful to The Daily Star since if it had not covered the story of Taramoni Das I never would've heard of her, I wouldn't have been able to assist."

Asked for her advice on how to live a long life, Das returns to the subject of work. "People should respect their profession and try to work every day, as they can," she says.

## Politics over Baishakh bonus

FROM PAGE 1

be provided to Muslims on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

It, however, thanked the government decision to slap a ban on wearing masks during "Mongol Shovajatra" on Dhaka University on Pahela Baishakh, the first day of the Bangla calendar.

The organisation also demanded resignation of the chief justice saying that "a Hindu chief justice in a country where 98 percent people are Muslim is hurting the sentiment of religious Muslims."

Castigating Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu for his recent comments on Pahela Baishakh, it asked him to apologise.

Split into three factions, the Olama League uses a floor of the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue and often has AL leaders as speakers at its programmes.

However, several AL leaders talking

to The Daily Star earlier had claimed that the party had no organisational ties with the Olama League.

According to the AL charter, the party is committed to ensure religious freedom and fundamental human rights irrespective of religion, caste, sex, community and ethnic identity, and to eradicate all shades of communalism.

Yesterday, a faction of Olama League, led by Abdul Hasan Sheikh Shariatpuri, and 12 like-minded organisations formed the human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club to press home their 10-point demand.

Later, it issued a press release using the official letterhead of the Olama League.

According to the press release, speakers at the programme said Pahela Baishakh celebration is "haram" and "non-Islamic" and "it is an ill attempt to de-Islamise Muslim people".

"In the name of Pahela Baishakh, stoners of Fine Arts [Faculty], corporate media outlets and capitalist businessmen are doing business. People have to be saved from their exploitations. The national fish hilsa must be saved, stopping Panta-hilsa [culture]," it said.

Pahela Baishakh celebration does not go with the Muslims' sentiment, it said, adding that when the constitution gives Islam the status of state religion, Muslims should be given bonuses on Eid-e-Miladunnabi, stopping the bonus given for the Pahela Baishakh.

In the eighth national pay scale, the Awami League-led government, for the first time, introduced a festival bonus for the Bangla new year, which Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had announced earlier.

Asked why Olama League was opposing the government decision,

Abdul Hasan Sheikh Shariatpuri told The Daily Star yesterday that Pahela Baishakh celebration does not go with the Muslims' culture.

The organisation also demanded cancellation of Vested Property Return (amended) Act, saying that Muslim cannot be deprived in the name of Vested Property and Debottar Property.

It also said Education Policy-2010 was "anti-Islamic" and "controversial" and "pro-Hinduism" and no education act could be formulated based on this policy.

The Awami League government enacted both Vested Property Return (amended) Act and National Education Policy-2010.

The education ministry formulated a draft in line with the recommendations of the National Education Policy-2010 and has put the draft on its website for public opinion.

## Cops checking dead's fb posts

FROM PAGE 1

Nazim did not have any blog and used to write only on Facebook, he said.

Police found a diary of the victim from the rented room in Gendaria where Nazim used to live, added Samir, who is the investigation officer of the case.

"We are yet to find any clue to the murder."

A senior official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, however, said Nazim was killed most likely for his Facebook posts.

"The nature of the murder and the contents of the victim's Facebook posts strongly suggest that it was the work of the same militant outfit that was behind the previous murders of secular writers," Mahub Alam, deputy commissioner (east) of the Detective Branch (DB) of the DMP, told The Daily Star.

On Nazim's Facebook page, investigators have found "objectionable comments about Islam and religions" that

could have made him a target of the militant group, he added.

The comment from the senior official of the DB, which is conducting a shadow investigation into the incident, came a day after US-based SITE Intelligence Group said Ansar al-Islam -- the Bangladesh wing of al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) -- had claimed responsibility for Nazim's murder.

"Had the victim asked for security from police when he moved to Dhaka from Sylhet, the tragedy could have been averted," commented Mahub Alam.

Nazim, a law student at Jagannath University, was hacked and shot to death by unidentified assailants on the capital's Hrishikesh Das Lane on Wednesday night.

Meanwhile, the CNN yesterday quoted an al Qaeda statement and said, "Al Qaeda accuses Samad of being 'an enemy of Allah'. It lists three of Samad's

posts on Facebook going back to 2013 as examples of his insults against Islam."

Law Minister Anisul Huq was quoted by the CNN as saying that the authorities were "seriously looking into" al Qaeda's connections to this murder. "Unless we are totally sure that this claim ... is authentic, I don't think we will be commenting on it."

In the report headlined "Bangladeshi al Qaeda wing declares war on atheists" on its website, the CNN also said free-thinker atheists in Bangladesh do not feel safe in their own country.

"Members of the besieged 'free-thinker' atheist, intellectual community in Bangladesh say they do not trust the police because in recent years authorities prosecuted several writers for 'insulting religion' in their published work," it reported.

"I have not gone to the police because police actually tried to arrest me in 2013,"

one atheist blogger in Bangladesh was quoted by the CNN as saying.

In a Facebook post following Nazim's murder, Rafida Ahmed Banya, widow of Bangladeshi-American secular writer Avijit Roy, criticised the government for its "reluctance" to arrest the killers of freethinkers.

"We have already seen that our so called 'secular' government will not side with us; they will either stay quiet or support the Islamic fundamentalists," she said in the post.

"They have been reluctant to find and try the killers of the previous bloggers and publishers. Starting from the killings of the secular writers, bloggers, activists, publishers, mass rape in our tribal areas, rape in protected army cantonment areas, to arrests of writers under ICT Act 57, the banning of bookstores and putting the writer/publisher in jail by the government - the government's actions are a

far cry from its 'secular' constitution."

**MORE CONDEMNATION**

The UK has joined the international community, including the US, the United Nations and the European Union, in condemning the murder.

In an official statement yesterday, British Foreign Office Minister Tobias Ellwood said, "I am shocked and appalled by the murder of Nazimuddin Samad and strongly condemn this attack on free speech claimed by Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent."

"Violence is never the answer. The right to life of all citizens of Bangladesh must be upheld, as must the right to freedom of expression and open debate."

"I send my condolences to Nazimuddin Samad's family and hope the killers are swiftly brought to justice. The UK continues to support the Government of Bangladesh in tackling terrorism and countering violent extremism in all its forms."

Under such a situation, those who are supposed to do extensive homework before drafting any proposal for enactment of the education law seem to have failed to do so in the last four years since they began the work in 2012.

If such a faulty proposal is placed in the parliament, what will our lawmakers do? Will they find out the loopholes in the proposed legislation during the debate on it, or will they just pass it in voice vote as they usually do?

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## Walking along train lines costs 2 lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people, including a visually impaired man, were killed when a train ran them over in the capital's Banani yesterday.

One of the victims was identified as Mizanur Rahman, 50, a tea vendor of Badda area. The identity of the visually impaired, aged around 45, could not be known.

Quoting witnesses, Ali Akbar, sub-inspector of Dhaka Railway Police Station, said the two were walking on the rail lines in the morning.

The accident happened near Banani Railway Station around 8:30am when the Chittagong-bound Mahanagar Probhati train was passing, he said.

Both the men died on the spot, said witnesses.

A man who saw the incident from a distance said Mizanur went under the train while trying to save the other man, the SI added.

The body of the unidentified man, who was wearing a lungi, was sent Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Locals found a mobile phone in Mizanur's pocket and made a call to his younger brother Babul Islam who identified the body at Dhaka Railway Police Station in Kamalapur.

Babul's wife Rehana Begum said Mizanur lived at Mirpur-11 although his tea stall was in Badda.

Rehana could not say why Mizanur went to Banani early in the morning.

Mizanur was from Pirojpur and had been living in the city for quite a long time, she added.

## More cops

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Earlier, the home ministry issued GOs for recruitment of 13,558 policemen and the hiring process is underway.

Crime control activities of police stations in remote areas have been greatly hampered due to a shortage of manpower, and the additional force would help improve the situation, said a number of field-level police officials.

The recruitment process must be transparent and fair so that the newly recruited policemen could provide better services, said one official wishing anonymity.

Manpower crisis often compels the authorities to keep some crime-prone areas in his police station without constant police patrolling, he added.

"Although there are rules to engage 10 policemen for a patrol, our manpower situation is so poor that we send only two policemen on a rented CNG-run auto-rickshaw to patrol different remote areas under our police stations. This is very risky," said an additional SP of a district in Chittagong Range.

"Patrolling is an effective means to curb crime," he said, preferring not to be named.

However, officials at the police headquarters said once the additional force joined the service, the authorities would increase the number of police circles to ensure supervision and close monitoring of cases.

There are eight to 10 police stations in some circles. An assistant superintendent of police (ASP) heads the circle and it is quite difficult for him or her to closely monitor activities of the police stations and case investigations.

Moreover, an earlier plan to appoint ASPs as officers-in-charge in some model police stations might also be implemented, the officials added.

This could be done in some metropolitan police stations to assess how it works.

Asking not to be named, an OC said only 60 percent of the total police force were engaged in maintaining law and order, while the rest remained busy with administrative activities, sentry duties, duty at storerooms, and as security guards and messengers. They also remain engaged in guarding residences of superintendents of police, judges and deputy commissioners (DC).

For example, he said, 20 people were usually deployed in a police station (not the Sadar ones). Of them, only seven to eight remain engaged in maintaining law and order and the rest perform administrative works.

Talking about the shortage of manpower, DIG of Chittagong Range Shafiqul Islam said in some stations, there was no policeman even in the sanctioned positions. "Sometimes we do not have reserve force although it is necessary to have such a force ready for any emergency situation."

About appointment of ASPs as officers-in-charge at police stations, some OCs wishing anonymity said people might not get required service from a cadre officer who just joined the service. With years of experience, the OCs acquire sufficient knowledge about legal matters and make managerial decisions.

Moreover, the OCs have to tackle huge work pressure and make critical decisions, he added.

Deputy Inspector General (Human Resource) Atiqur Rahman of the Police Headquarters, however, said, "I do not think that police's operational activities are being hampered due to a shortage of manpower."

The new recruitments would be made as part of the prime minister's announcement that 50,000 policemen would be added to the force.

## Too eager to get new laws

FROM PAGE 1

ago criminalised printing, publication, import, distribution and sale of note-books on text-books for primary and secondary schools up to class VII.

The charge of violating the law carries jail term of up to seven years and a fine of up to Tk 25,000 or both. In addition, the court may order the forfeiture to the government of every copy of the notes or guidebooks and the printing press found printing such notes-books, according to the law of 1980.

In exercise of the power of the law of 1980, mobile courts in past had launched anti-guidebooks drive in Dhaka and various districts and seized huge number of notes and guidebooks and imposed fines on the sellers of those banned books.

Yet, the market remains flooded with notes and guidebooks with different names for different classes.

In such a situation, the proposed education law has slapped the ban on notes-guidebooks with a provision for

lesser punishment.

The proposed law also sought to make the pre-primary and primary education compulsory for all children. Again, those who drafted the provision have ignored a law enacted in 1990 making the primary education compulsory.

The government has enacted the law detailing the procedure for introduction of compulsory primary education for children.

However, the law has a provision asking the government to specify, in official

gazette, the areas where the primary education will be made compulsory.

It has also made it mandatory for every guardian of the areas specified in the official gazette to send their children to schools and on failure a guardian may face punitive action, according to the law making primary education compulsory.

Since their enactment, no amendment was brought to these two laws on note-books prohibition and making primary education compulsory. This also shows a lack of proper enforcement of