



An assailant who attempted to shoot prominent Turkish journalist Can Dundar, the editor-in-chief of the opposition Cumhuriyet newspaper, is caught by Dilek Dundar, wife of Can Dundar, and an unidentified man outside a courthouse in Istanbul, Turkey, yesterday. The assailant shouted "traitor" before firing at least three shots in quick succession at Dundar, who faces charges of revealing state secrets, the Reuters witness said. Dundar was unharmed in the attack.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SUNDARBANS

'Robber' killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

An alleged robber gang leader was killed in a "gunfight" between his cohorts and Rapid Action Battalion in Chandpai range of the Sundarbans East Zone yesterday.

The dead, Alam Khan, 45, was the chief of a robber gang named after him, according to Rab.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the elite force raided different spots in the Shela river around 6:00am to nab the gang members, said Lt Col Faridul Alam, commander of Rab-8.

When the Rab members reached near Tetulbaria canal, the criminals opened fire on them. The elite force members then returned fire that triggered the "gunfight", said the Rab official.

After the gun battle, the Rab members found Alam's body lying on the spot. The other criminals managed to flee.

His body was sent to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy. Rab also claimed to have recovered 12 firearms, bullets and several sharp weapons from the spot.

Manmohan

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government, criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "pursuing a strategy" to "destroy Congress" and for not doing enough to bring relief to the people who are reeling under severe drought in various parts of the country. "Every poor person is sad today," said Congress president Sonia Gandhi, "Farmers are forced to commit suicides and Modi government has done nothing about it. He is just selling false dreams."

Ms Gandhi said the purpose of marching down to Parliament is to "send a strong message to people sitting in Raisina Hill and Nagpur." "It's to make them hear that do not try to frighten us. Life has taught us to fight," said Ms Gandhi, adding that the BJP's time is up.

Rahul Gandhi punched holes at the BJP's employment policy, saying that when the party came to power in 2014, it promised to employ two crore people per year while "the fact is only 1, 30,000 people were employed last year."

Singh gave a rather philosophical dimension to the party's ongoing struggles with the ruling BJP.

Quoting famous pre-Independence poet, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Singh said the Congress is like a river which will always flow in its natural direction.

PTI ADDS:

Ms Gandhi alleged that the Congress-led governments in Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh were dislodged by the Modi regime with use of money power:

"Do not make the mistake of thinking that the Congress party is weak. We will not allow democratic institutions to be weakened or destroyed," she said.

Horror

FROM PAGE 1

Nasim said his car and the truck were travelling in the same direction. He noticed the youth on the bumper when his car overtook the truck.

"It was like a scene from a movie and the scream of the youth was unforgettable," he told The Daily Star.

As Nasim started to take photographs with his mobile phone camera slowing down the car, the truck driver pulled over and released the youth.

The journalist said he was on a hurry and could not gather details.

From locals, he could only learn that the youth was caught by some people allegedly after a theft. After beating him up, they tied him to the bumper and asked the truck driver to drive on.

The registration plate of the truck read Kushitia-Ta-11-1307.

Govt to double size

FROM PAGE 1

Many residents of these 16 unions hailed the government move, and hoped they would soon be able to avail themselves of civic amenities like other areas under the city corporations.

Abu Jafar, a resident of Manda union, only a few kilometres from Motijheel under the DSCC, said they have to depend on outdoor lamps of roadside houses to walk on streets at night, as there are no streetlights in the area.

"This is one of our biggest problems," said Jafar, also a former joint director of Bangladesh Bank.

Like the residents of Manda, people of the 15 other unions are deprived of civic amenities.

On November 29, 2011, the Awami League-led government split the DCC into two -- Dhaka north with 56 wards and Dhaka south with 36 wards -- in a bid to provide better services to city residents.

The proposal for expansion of the two city corporations was sent to the cabinet division in the third week of last month.

It says the 16 unions have witnessed rapid urbanisation over the years and the residents there have long been demanding the unions' inclusion in the city corporations.

Gigantic residential and commercial buildings, industries, hospitals and educational institutions have been set up in the unions, but the union parishads don't have the capacity to provide people with services such as garbage management, streetlights and better roads, it says.

Contacted, LGRD Secretary Abdul Malek said, "These unions have seen rapid urbanisation but the people there are deprived of civic amenities. The union parishad authorities don't

have the means to address those. That's why we have taken the initiative."

Talking to The Daily Star, Golam Bin Mortuza, a resident of Uttarkhan, said they have to rely on local organisations for disposal of their household waste.

Some residents in the area simply dump garbage wherever they can, causing troubles for others, he said.

Shyampur UP Chairman Shafiqur Rahman Saijul said, "Many industries have been set up in my area. People have electricity, water and gas, but they don't get many other civic amenities due to fund constraints of the union parishad."

Locals said most of the roads in the area are in bad shape, especially the one connecting Shyampur with Dania and Matuail.

Some people doubted whether the two city corporations would be able to provide quality services in the expanded areas, as both are struggling to combat the mosquito menace, free footpaths from grabbers and repair roads.

Town planning expert Nazrul Islam said both the city corporations have failed to provide services properly in many wards.

"Their services are concentrated in high income areas. People in low income areas don't get the services properly," he said.

DNCC Chief Executive Officer Mesbahul Islam told The Daily Star that they would seek allocation from the government for carrying out development work in these unions.

"We are prepared. Once the unions are included in the city corporation, we will start our work," he added.

Asked, DSCC Secretary Khan Md Rezaul Karim said, "We may face problems temporarily. But I believe that we will be able to take all our services to the people in the new areas."

London gets first Muslim

FROM PAGE 16

"Congratulations Sadiq Khan. Can't wait to work with you to create a London that is fair for all!" Corbyn wrote on Twitter ahead of the publication of final results.

Counting was underway at the time of filing this report at Bangladesh time 2:00am today. At the time Khan secured a little over 44 percent of the vote against some 35 percent by his Conservative rival, according to the BBC.

The race to replace the charismatic Conservative Boris Johnson pitched Khan, the son of a bus driver and a seamstress who emigrated from Pakistan in the 1960s, against Goldsmith, whose father was a wealthy tycoon.

Khan's victory offered some cheer for Corbyn after Labour's performance in elections across Britain in the wake of a row over anti-Semitism in the party failed to dispel questions over the veteran socialist's leadership.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio was among the first to tweet his congratulations to "fellow affordable housing advocate, @SadiqKhan. Look forward to working together!"

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo added on Twitter that Khan's "humanity, progressivism will benefit Londoners."

There was no immediate reaction from Goldsmith, although his sister Jemima, the ex-wife of Pakistani cricketer and politician Imran Khan, said Khan's victory was a "great example to young Muslims".

In reference to the negative tone of the race, she said her brother's campaign "did not reflect who I know him to be -- an eco friendly, independent-minded politician with integrity".

The victory was also hailed in Tooting, a multi-ethnic area of south London where Khan lives.

"Sadiq Khan will have a unifying factor because he is Muslim, an immigrant, he is from working class, so he understands the working class people and he can associate with them," said Shahzad Saddiqui, a local businessman.

LABOUR LOSSES ELSEWHERE Khan's party fared less well in other local and regional elections on Britain's "Super Thursday", in which 45 million

Britons were eligible to vote.

For first time in decades, Labour came third in elections for the devolved government in Scotland, behind the Conservatives, in a vote won by the incumbent pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP).

The party retained its grip on power in the Welsh assembly, although it lost one seat.

But it failed to impress in local elections in England. With results in from 115 out of 124 councils, Labour had control of 57, down one, and 1,265 seats, down 19.

Cameron's Conservatives had control of an unchanged 31 councils and 708 seats, down 18.

Corbyn, who has faced opposition from centrists in his party since being elected last year, insisted his party had "hung on" and surpassed expectations. But critics point to the long tradition of opposition parties benefiting from mid-term elections, and noted Labour had bucked that trend.

Matthew Goodwin, politics professor at Kent University, said the party was in "serious trouble".

"The Labour party is now third in Scotland for the first time since 1910 and it has failed to make a serious impression in southern England," he said.

'PERSUADE NOT DIVIDE' SNP leader and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon will lead the separatist party into its third successive government in Edinburgh, although the party lost its outright majority.

She announced she would lead a minority administration, and played down talk of a fresh independence referendum to follow the unsuccessful one in 2014.

"The SNP will always make our case with passion, with patience and with respect but our aim is to persuade not to divide," Sturgeon said.

The other big story in Scotland was the success of the Scottish Conservatives, who came second with 31 seats.

The party has been deeply unpopular in Scotland since the 1980s premiership of Margaret Thatcher but its fortunes have turned around under current Scottish leader Ruth Davidson.

House looted, woman 'raped' after doping family members

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A group of criminals looted gold ornaments and other valuables from an expatriate's house after doping five members of the family in Sunamganj's Doara Bazar upazila on Thursday night.

They also allegedly raped the expatriate's wife before leaving.

There were six people, including the victim, at the house when the incident took place. The victim's husband lives in Saudi Arabia.

Police suspect the incident happened centring a row over the recently concluded third phase of union parishad polls on April 23.

The family members voted for member candidate Minar Uddin Ahmed, also a relative of the victim's husband, who won the election defeating his rival Sabbir Ahmed, police said, quoting the family members.

Infuriated at this, Sabbir sent a man to the house with spiked sweets and juice on Thursday night. He introduced himself as a distant relative of the family. Only the male members took the sweets and juice, police said.

Sabbir, his associate Gulzar, also the nephew of the victim's husband, and four to five of his aides were waiting outside the house.

After the family members fell unconscious, they entered the house, took turns to rape her, looted jewellery, mobile phones, clothes and other valuables and vandalised furniture and wardrobes before leaving, police said.

The woman also fell unconscious, police said.

As the neighbours did not see anyone yesterday morning, they entered the house and found them unconscious. Later, they sent them to Sunamganj Sadar Hospital. Except the woman, all others regained consciousness, police said.

Delowar Hossain, a physician of the hospital, said there were symptoms of rape on the woman's body. She was undergoing treatment.

Law enforcers arrested Gulzar in connection with the incident. They, however, could not arrest the man who doped the family members.

Firoz AL Mamun, sub-inspector of Doara Bazar Police Station, told The Daily Star that they were investigating the matter.

Fire for fish

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He claimed the forest department was able to control the fire quickly and that they were taking action against the culprits.

Already, the forest department has filed three cases against 10 locals.

The mastermind is Shajahan, a local Awami League leader from Rayanda. He is notorious for hunting wild animals in the Sundarbans, locals said.

About the motive of setting fire, forest officials said their investigation found it was meant to catch fish easily.

Locals said the bank of the Bhola river in Dhansagor area is a little higher than the forest land. So once the high-tide water enters the forest, it does not recede easily. Some fish species like catfish and snake fish come in that water for spawning. Fishermen set fire to the forest so they can pull nets and catch those fish easily.

Slowly, the fishermen are clearing some areas of the forest this way, locals added.

Mohammed Atul Mandal, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Shorankhola, gave a similar version.

He added things were getting worse in the area every year.

"But this year, they have been setting fire intentionally to avenge the filing of cases by forest officials over some fire incidents," he said.

Fishing inside the forest is prohibited under the Forest Act of 1927, but it continues unabated.

On top of that, the forest fires are affecting the biodiversity of the Sundarbans, an investigation by the UNO office found.

Species like mammals, amphibians and birds have reduced significantly due to the razing of the forest. Locals even razed the nypa along the bank of the river in such a way that no new plant is growing there.

The probe report also mentions some locals are poaching endangered animal species, including deer, tigers and crocodiles.

US court scraps

FROM PAGE 16

In Canada, the Notice of Action for nearly US\$ 2 billion was filed at the Ontario Superior Court on behalf of the victims on April 22, 2015 against Loblaws Inc. and its Joe fresh brand, which used to source from New Wave Style Ltd, a garment factory located within Rana Plaza.

RCBC CEO quits

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"With a heavy heart, I feel that the time has come for me to move on and provide my services elsewhere," he added.

Until his replacement is announced, Helen Yuchengco-Dee will oversee the bank operations, as president and CEO, supported by a management team composed of RCBC Vice-chair Cesar EA Virata, Director Armando Medina and the current group of senior managers.

Tan was implicated in the issue after the bank's former Jupiter Street Branch Manager Maia Deguito said he asked her to "take care" of valued client Kim Wong.

Wong was a casino junket operator whose Chinese client was said to have brought in funds that were later found to have been stolen from the Bangladeshi central bank.

Tan rejected the allegation, and filed civil and criminal cases against Deguito and her lawyer for libel and perjury.

Tan joined RCBC in 2007, overseeing the expansion of RCBC's network from 294 branches in 2006 to 475 as of March 2016; ATMs, from 257 to 1,405; and customer base from 800 thousand to 7.32 million.

Last year, RCBC posted a net income of 5.1 billion peso, 16.3 percent up from 2014.

In his statement, Tan expressed his gratitude to the shareholders, officers and customers of RCBC.

"As I move on to new things, I am confident that the bank will continue on the path of growth, with the strong and capable hands of senior management led by Mrs Dee," he said.

RCBC's investigation headed by its external lawyers and SCV & Co cleared Tan of any knowledge, involvement or participation in the unauthorised transfer to RCBC of the funds stolen from Bangladesh Bank.

UP polls: 4th phase

FROM PAGE 1

feared there would be violence and irregularities in today's elections as no significant administrative and security measures have been taken either by the commission or the political parties to check those.

"Nowadays violence and irregularities have become a culture in our electoral process. So we might see a continuation of the culture tomorrow [today]," eminent local government expert Tofail Ahmed told this newspaper.

As the UP polls are being held on partisan lines, the political parties should rein in their grassroots to curb violence, he added.

Former election commissioner M Sakhawat Hussain said the country's electoral process has been jeopardised due to lax enforcement of law and poor monitoring of the polls by the EC.

Although the incidents of violence in the third phase of the UP polls on April 23 were fewer than the first two phases, massive irregularities took place on that day, reported newspapers.

However, EC Secretary Sirazul Islam yesterday said the commission took all necessary measures to hold today's polls in a free and fair manner. He warned that actions would be taken against lawbreakers whoever they might be.

Elections to 725 UPs were held on March 22 in the first phase, 639 UPs on March 31 in the second phase, and 615 UPs in the third phase.

Besides, a total of 733 unions will go to polls on May 28 in the fifth phase and 724 unions on June 4 in the sixth and final phase.

Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad has repeatedly complained that attacks on religious minorities across the country have increased significantly since the beginning of the UP polls. It called upon the political parties not to nominate chairman hopefuls who were involved in torturing the religious minorities.

33 ELECTED UNCONTESTED

Thirty-three AL chairman candidates

Fighting kills 73

FROM PAGE 16

Mamun al-Khatib, director of the Aleppo-based pro-rebel Shahba Press news agency, accused "regime aircraft" of firing missiles at the camp in Al-Kammouna village -- an accusation denied by Damascus.

"There is no truth in the information in some media that the Syrian air force targeted the displaced camp in Idlib province" on Thursday, the official SANA news agency quoted the military as saying.

It accused rebels of targeting civilians. But the United States described the raids as "totally in keeping" with the regime's past operations.

CHARRED BODIES

A video posted online by the civil defence showed emergency workers dragging a fire hose amid plumes of smoke rising from destroyed tents, as their colleagues covered the charred remains of victims with blankets and carried them away.

The video also showed dismem-

"As shown by RCBC's own investigation, the allegations of my involvement in the current money-laundering issue are unfounded and baseless." Tan said.

"Despite my resignation, however, I am committed to help uncover the truth, not only to clear my name but also to bring justice to the Bangladeshi people."

Family meets

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verdict that upheld his death penalty awarded by the International Crimes Tribunal-1 in 2014.

On March 29, Nizami filed the petition seeking acquittal.

The ICT on March 15 issued a death warrant for Nizami hours after the SC released its full verdict upholding his death penalty.

In October 2014, the war criminal was convicted by the tribunal of the atrocities he had committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

Nizami was the president of Jamaat's student wing Islami Chhatra Sangha from 1966 to September 1971 and ex-officio chief of Al-Badr.

He masterminded the formation of the militia that unleashed terror on peace-loving Bangladeshis, killed unarmed civilians, raped women and destroyed properties during the 1971 war.

Towards the end of the war, the Al-Badr Bahini committed "crimes of serious gravity intending to demean the human civilisation", said the Tribunal-1 in its 2014 verdict.

The review petition was the last legal battle for the war criminal. Now, Nizami will have the chance to seek presidential clemency.

Former minister Nizami was also sentenced to death in the sensational 10-truck arms haul case.

have been elected uncontested in the fourth phase of the UP polls alone, raising the total number of uncontested AL winners to 143 in all four phases.

The first ever partisan UP polls has created much tension among the voters and political parties with the AL and the BNP stepping into the battle of ballots.

The two major parties have picked their grassroots leaders to contest the polls for chairman of UPs, with the parties' electoral symbols "boat" and "sheaf of paddy".

Fifteen out of 40 registered political parties are contesting today's polls. The BNP, however, could not field any candidate in around 100 unions, according to EC statistics.

Elections have already been held in around 1,962 unions. The AL chairman candidates have won in 1,379 unions while the nominees of the BNP have won in 168. Candidates of other political parties and independent aspirants have won in rest of the unions, according to EC and media reports.

Meanwhile, BNP candidate Md Fakhru Islam in Bashgari union under Raipura upazila of Narsingdi yesterday said he boycotted today's polls as he could not conduct electioneering due to a "conspiracy by the local AL men", reports our Narsingdi correspondent.

PRESIDING OFFICER WITHDRAWN In Kushtia, law enforcers last night recovered around 1,300 sealed ballot papers for a chairman candidate and a member aspirant from West Abdalpur Govt Primary School centre under Abdalpur union in Sadar upazila. The union is scheduled to go to the polls today.

Following the incident, presiding officer of the polling station has been withdrawn, reports our correspondent there.

POLLS POSTPONED

The EC on Thursday postponed polls to 16 UPs of Bagmara upazila in Rajshahi after receiving complaints that AL lawmaker Enamul Haque from Rajshahi-4 had been influencing the elections there.

bered bodies covered in blood and dirt, at least one of them a child.

The European Union has called the bombardment "unacceptable". UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said the camp's tents could clearly be seen from the air so it was "extremely unlikely" to have been an accident.

"It is far more likely they were deliberate and amount to a war crime," he added.

Regime aircraft have previously targeted rebels as well as Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State jihadist group.

Russia also launched air raids in support of Damascus in September, while a US-led coalition has conducted air strikes against IS in Syria since 2014.

Thousands of civilians have fled fighting in the northern province of Aleppo to camps along the border with Turkey, which refuses to let them cross the frontier.