

Where are they?

FROM PAGE 1
home ministry, formed human chains and arranged press briefings several times, seeking the authorities' help in finding out whether their loved ones were detained, deceased or alive.

But all their efforts went in vain. Rayta's father Suman, along with seven others, went missing from the capital in December 2013. Their families alleged that all of them were victims of forced disappearances by Rapid Action Battalion.

Rab-1 picked up six of them, including Suman, from the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area and two others from Shaheenbagh between 8:00pm on December 4 and 2:00am on December 5, according to the families.

The seven others were: Zahidul Karim Tanvir, Mazharul Islam Russel, Abdul Quader Bhuiyan Masum, Asaduzzaman Rana, Al Amin, Adnan Chowdhury and Kawsar Ahmed.

At Suman's Shaheenbagh house, pictures of him hang on the walls of the living room where Rayta and her five-year-old sister would often come and sit quietly. "Our hopes have begun to fade. But we don't know what to tell the girls," Ferdousy told this correspondent yesterday.

At the human chain, five-year-old Abida was seen holding a picture of her father Parvez Hossain. "I want him to come back before Eid," she said.

Her mother Farzana Akhter alleged that Parvez was picked up by law enforcers from Shahbagh on December 2, 2013.

Nur Khan, acting executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra, who was present at the human chain, said the people have reasons to suspect that the state was responsible for the incidents of forced disappearances.

"The suspicion only deepened after what we see in Narayanganj seven-murder case," he said.

Nur also noted that law enforcers were often reluctant to record complaints that involve members of law enforcement agencies.

PM to seek

FROM PAGE 20
projects during her meeting with Japanese PM Shinzo Abe tomorrow.

The projects include construction of Bangabandhu International Airport near the Padma Bridge aimed at establishing 21st century's connectivity in the Asia region, Dhaka-Mass Rapid Transit Development Project to remove traffic congestion in the capital, a dedicated railway bridge over the Jamuna river in parallel with Bangabandhu Bridge and ecological restoration of four rivers around Dhaka. Moreover, the Bangladeshi premier will apprise her Japanese counterpart of dedicating a special economic zone (SEZ) and necessary measures to facilitate accelerated realisation of the Japanese investments in Bangladesh.

She will express her expectation for the enhancement of Japanese companies' greater presence in Bangladesh at the SEZ.

Foreign ministry officials said Hasina would hold bilateral talks with Abe at Nagoya Marriott Associa Hotel at 10:00am tomorrow.

This is Hasina's fourth visit to Japan as the prime minister and the second during her current term as the premier.

Diplomatic sources said Hasina would also ask her counterpart to extend the Matarbari power project with additional capacity for generation of electricity from the present 1320MW.

She will apprise Abe of the progress of trial in the killing of Japanese national Kunio Hoshi, who was shot dead by assailants in Rangpur on October 3, 2015.

Hasina will also reiterate her government's zero tolerance policy towards terrorism and extremism and the government's strong stance on bringing the perpetrators to justice.

One killed

FROM PAGE 1
sub-inspector of Sadar Police Station, told this correspondent.

The clash ensued when police went to the village around 8:00pm and arrested Mizanur Rahman, president of Janatabazar union unit Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, in a case over polls violence.

Following the arrest and a rumour that police tortured him, the villagers attacked the law enforcers and besieged a makeshift police outpost there, the police official said.

At one stage, the law enforcers were forced to fire blank shots to bring the situation under control, he added.

"Noman died on the spot during the clash," he said, adding that police were not sure whether Noman was killed in police firing.

A woman with bullet injuries was admitted to Bhola Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

Police could not recover the body of Noman from the villagers and reach their outpost set up inside a home in the village till 11:30pm, sources said, adding that locals put a barricade on the street.



Children of two BNP and Chhatra Dal leaders join a demonstration of the families of forced disappearance victims at a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday, demanding the prime minister's intervention in getting the missing people back ahead of this Ramadan. PHOTO: STAR

15 more infected with anthrax in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Fifteen more people have been reported infected with anthrax in Sirajganj's Shazadpur and Kamarkhand upazilas bringing the total number of human infections to an alarming 106 within a month in the district.

This is the highest ever anthrax infection across the country, sources said.

The infection has been spread by reckless slaughtering of diseased animals according to the district health department.

Sirajganj Civil Surgeon Dr Shahid Md Sadikul Islam said 11 anthrax infected patients have been identified in Shahzadpur upazila and four other infected patients were found in Kamarkhand upazila on Wednesday. All patients are being treated.

A total of 11 anthrax infected patients have been identified in Nandalalpur village of Shahzadpur upazila on Wednesday and they are being treated at the upazila health complex the civil surgeon said adding that the four have been identified in Kamarkhand upazila yesterday. Earlier 47 anthrax infected patients were found in these two upazilas on May 15, he said.

"A total of 106 anthrax infected patients have been identified in a month in Shahzadpur, Kamarkhand and Ullapara upazilas of the district in a month. Of them 44 were found in the single village of Ullapara's Koira Soratola village, 32 in Kamarkhand and 30 in Shahzadpur upazila," the civil surgeon said.

Although at a joint coordination meeting of the district administration, the health department and livestock department issued orders to stop slaughter of infected animals, the slaughtering did not stop causing the

eventual spread of infection to humans.

Talking to The Daily Star, district livestock officer (DLO) Akteruzzaman Bhuiyan said cattle farmer Moyeen Uddin of Nandalalpur village slaughtered a diseased cow on May 15 without informing livestock officials. All those who took part in the meat processing ended up being infected in Shahzadpur.

"Livestock officials caught the accused cattle farmer Moyeen and fined him Tk five thousand. The livestock mobile court also levied fines of Tk four thousand each to four meat traders in Bagbaria village of Shahzadpur upazila on Wednesday for similar actions," the DLO said.

We are trying to make all the people aware of the risk in slaughtering diseased animals but most people are not obeying our directives, he said. The livestock department took to running mobile courts to prevent further slaughtering of infected animals.

Butchers have also been ordered to get their animals certified by livestock officers before slaughtering or risk fines, he added.

Meanwhile the district health department has opened 35 medical teams in three Anthrax affected upazilas of the district to tackle the ongoing outbreak of infection. Of them five teams are working in Kamarkhand upazila and the other 15 teams are working in Ullapara and Shahzadpur upazilas for the last couple of weeks.

"The medical teams comprise of doctors and health assistants under the guidance of the district civil surgeon's office. The spread of the infection will be hard to contain if locals do not cooperate," the civil surgeon said recommending strong monitoring of livestock & people in the affected areas.

Drive against unsafe

FROM PAGE 20

"dissimilarities" in test standards during such drives by city corporations, Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

He asserted that the BFSa would standardise various food safety tests within a month.

The food secretary also said the BFSa was committed to coordinating all efforts and work of various agencies in ensuring production and marketing of safe food, but that does not limit its authority to launch anti-adulteration drives. "It [BFSa] can conduct mobile court drives of its own or through other agencies."

The meeting decided that the food ministry would send letters in a month to all relevant ministries, public offices, asking to set up respective "Safe Food Focal Desk" for the sake of "better coordination".

Officials from city corporations, BSTI, Wasa, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and

National Food Health Laboratory and representatives of consumers' and business forums took part in the meeting.

Many of them expressed deep dissatisfaction at the way food items were being marketed using harmful preservatives.

A BSTI official gave statistics of sending 33 food safety violators to jail and filing of over a thousand cases in the last nine months. A food health laboratory chief spoke about finding harmful pesticides residue in 27 food items they tested in their labs this year.

The food secretary also said it seemed that food adulteration became all pervasive. That's why, he said, drives against unsafe food must go on.

Secretary General of Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association M Rezaul Karim Sarker Robin informed the meeting that his association had already sent letters to all of its district units, asking them to refrain from selling Iftar items in the open during the Ramadan.

China, G7

FROM PAGE 20

stoking tensions in the contested waters.

The sputtering global economy took centre stage in formal talks, although divisions seem likely to remain over whether the world should spend or save its way out of the malaise, with Japan and Germany at odds on the issue.

There were some "heated exchanges" among G7 leaders on the issue of refugees, a senior Japanese government official said on condition of anonymity.

That came after European Council's Tusk said the world needs to act together and not leave everything at Europe's door.

"We are aware that it is because of geography that the most responsibility is, and will continue to be, placed on Europe," Tusk told reporters.

"However we would also like the global community to show solidarity and recognise that this is a global crisis."

Merkel said fresh funds to tackle the problem were unlikely, but added that "we all agree that we have to do everything to fight the causes that make people flee".

Last year, some 1.3 million refugees, mostly from conflict-ridden Syria and Iraq, asked for asylum in the European Union -- more than a third of them in Germany.

There were several bilateral meetings, including Canada's Justin Trudeau chatting with Germany's Angela Merkel, who said G7 sanctions imposed on Russia over its involvement in the conflict in eastern Ukraine would not be lifted anytime soon.

Thanchi people

FROM PAGE 20

survive as we have no food at home? The physical condition of her grandchildren deteriorated alarmingly, she said.

Adui Mro, of Yon Nong Karbari Para, said he could not cultivate enough crops for his family due to heavy rain last year.

"Besides most of my jhum fields were affected by insects and rats." Nobody has been paying heed to their misery, said Biren Tripura of Japarang Tripura Para.

Mong Pru Aung, chairman of Tindu union, said around 800 families of the union were suffering from a scarcity of food.

"Most of the people of my union will starve to death if not provided with food urgently," he said.

People of these remote areas are not covered by the government's development programmes, and non-government organisations find it difficult to reach there due to lack of communication networks, sources said.

The inhabitants of these places depend on jhum crops for food. Talking to The Daily Star, Kwe Shwe Hla, chairman of Bandarban Hill District Council, spoke of a similar situation in those areas.

Bandarban Deputy Commissioner Dilip Kumar Banik said the authorities had already allocated 16 tonnes of food for the affected people.

"We will provide more food for the families. I already told the UNO [upazila nirbahi officer], UP [union parishad] chairman and others of the local administration to reach the affected areas as soon as possible with food."

Altat Hossen, deputy director of the agricultural extension department, said people of Chittagong Hill Tracts face food crisis every year as rats destroy their fields, but this year the situation became grave since indigenous people could not cultivate sufficient food because of rough weather.

Aslam sued for sedition

FROM PAGE 1

programme at Rajarbagh Police Lines.

"We've quizzed him on remand. The information given by him clearly suggests that he was involved in anti-state activities."

"While conspiring, they [conspirators] contacted Likud Party and Mossad to oust the government through creating anarchy in the country and making the government unpopular," the police chief added.

Shahidul said police prayed for permission from the government to file a case. Accordingly, the government granted the prayer.

Known to be a trusted lieutenant of BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, Chittagong-based businessman Aslam came under severe criticism from in and outside the party after several photographs went viral in social media showing him with Safadi, also chief of Safadi Center for International Diplomacy and Public Relations.

Aslam, also BNP joint secretary general, was picked up by detectives from the capital's Khilkhet on May 15, hours after a travel ban was imposed on him.

He was taken on remand after being shown arrested under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Following his arrest, some Awami League leaders alleged that the BNP was conspiring to topple the government with the help of Mossad.

The BNP, however, termed the allegation "a cooked-up story".

Asked whether any other person

Beef, mutton

FROM PAGE 20

the use of pesticides on fruits, the mayor warned. The shopkeepers would have to keep a price chart fixed by the DSCC authorities.

"The DSCC authorities are working to build two slaughterhouses where at least 4,000 cows, goats and other animals can be slaughtered safely a day," Sayeed said this when the meat traders demanded more slaughterhouses.

Khokon also asked the bakery traders to mention the manufacturing and expiry dates on their products.

Rabiul Alam, general secretary of Bangladesh Meat Traders Association, said there are four slaughterhouses in the city, but their condition is very bad.

He also requested Khokon to increase the facility of the slaughterhouses and the number of veterinary surgeons to monitor the animals' slaughtering properly.

Deaths, irregularities

FROM PAGE 3

and lax enforcement of laws by the Election Commission (EC) were the main reasons for the loss of the lives.

Major irregularities include "nomination trading", unopposed election of many AL men, large-scale stuffing of ballot boxes, intimidation of voters and rival candidates, involvement of polling officials in ballot stuffing, and forcing of voters to cast votes openly.

According to SHUJAN, at least 211 Awami League chairmen have been elected unopposed, while BNP has no candidates in around 554 UPs till the sixth phase.

"The culture of many aspirants being elected unopposed is alarming. It may render the overall electoral system ineffective," the statement said. The EC has failed to play a bold and impartial role, while the government did not cooperate properly to hold the polls in a free and fair manner, it said.

Of around 2,600 UPs that went to polls in the four phases, AL chairman

DEBESH MURDER

Police clueless about motive
Locals say the trader had no enemy; cops assure family of justice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Police were yet to find out the motive behind the murder of trader Debesh Chandra Pramanik in Gaibandha on Wednesday.

No one was arrested yesterday either.

Gaibandha Police Superintendent (SP) Ashrafal Islam visited the murder scene. Speaking to reporters there, he said solving the case was their top priority.

He also assured the victim family of justice and security.

Locals said Debesh, 66, had no enemies.

They demanded that the killers be arrested immediately.

Shoe trader Debesh was murdered inside his shop in Gaibandha's Gobindagan upazila. One Dipen Chandra was arrested later. Police say the man had a financial dispute with Debesh.

The Islamic States reportedly claimed responsibility for the murder.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the claim.

was involved in the conspiracy, IGP Shahidul said they were in the middle of investigation.

Police would seek his fresh remand. The BNP leader was shown arrested in two other cases, he told newsmen.

He said there were some associates of Aslam and if any of them is arrested, police would have "complete information" about the conspiracy.

"Then it would be clear who would be the beneficiaries and who were involved directly or indirectly."

Aslam "admitted to detectives" that he had a contract with Safadi under which the Israeli politician would try to oust the Bangladesh government in exchange for money, claimed the IGP.

Unemployed

FROM PAGE 3

assured conveying the demands, she said.

She said they met the minister several times and he assured them of looking into the matter. At one point he said he did not have the authority to cancel the circular and told them he would take them to the prime minister on May 24, said Nahida.

This never happened and the exam's seat plan has already been finalised. "We are therefore feeling cheated," she said.

Elevated bus!

FROM PAGE 20

It means the vehicle is more like a cross between a tram and a bus.

Engineers hope the design will increase the availability of the road space, and cause fewer traffic jams than regular buses.

It is also expected to save costs compared to other public transport options, like the subway.

"With a carrying capacity of 1,200 people at a time, the TEB has the same functions as the subway while its cost of construction is less than one fifth that of the subway," said Bai Zhiming, engineer in charge of the TEB project said in a YouTube video showing an interview with CCTV News.

"Its construction can be finished in one year," he added.

The first tests of the bus are scheduled to start trail operation in Qinhuangdao City, in north China's Hebei Province, in the second half of this year. This means the buses could be in place by the end of the year.

candidates won in 1,799 UPs, BNP in 238 UPs, Jatiya Party in 32 UPs, and independent candidates in 521 UPs. The rest come from other parties.

Of the newly elected chairmen, only 17 are women, it said.

Addressing the conference, SHUJAN Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said fair elections were not possible under the incumbent EC, and new faces were needed in the commission.

Columnist Syed Abul Moksud termed the polls "an election of deaths" as many people were killed. Meanwhile, Ekattorer Ghatok Dal Nirmul Committee yesterday demanded EC's effective steps to prevent attacks on minorities during polls, deployment of army in vulnerable zones, if necessary, and arresting listed criminals ahead of the polls.

A four-member delegation of the committee visited the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) at the EC secretariat and conveyed their demands.