



# TERROR STRIKES DHAKA

## Militants storm popular Gulshan hangout for foreigners; about 20 foreign nationals, children among dozens held hostage; 2 police officers killed; around 40 injured; 'IS claims responsibility'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an unprecedented turn of events last night, gunmen held hostage dozens of people inside a popular hangout for foreigners in the capital's diplomatic zone of Gulshan, and fired shots and hurled bombs at law enforcers, killing at least two cops and injuring around 40.

According to some accounts, 20 foreigners and a few children were among the hostages.

The hostage crisis, the first-ever such incident in the country, began around 8:30pm after seven to eight men carrying firearms, bombs and swords stormed the building in the posh neighbourhood.

As the law enforcers in groups tried to close in on, the gunmen opened fire and blasted bombs, sending a wave of panic in the high-security area.

The strike left Rabiul Islam, assistant commissioner of the Detective Branch of Police, and Salauddin Khan, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, wounded. Both the officials died at the United Hospital.

Dozens of the injured, mostly law enforcers, were taken to different hospitals, including Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Global terror outfit Islamic State has claimed credit for the attack, said the Site Intelligence Group, citing pro-IS Amaq News Agency. The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the statement.

The US State Department said it appears to be a hostage situation, and the White House said US President Barack

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An injured police officer near the building gunmen stormed late last night. He later died.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



### KEY FACTS

Around 8:30pm 7-8 youths storm the building.

Attackers were wearing trousers and shirts.

The building houses "O Kitchen" and "Holey Artisan Bakery".

The eateries are popular among foreigners.

They take dozens of customers of different nationalities hostage, including children.

Law enforcers attempt to go in around 10:40pm.

They are attacked with explosives.

DMP AC Rabiul Islam and OC Banani Salauddin Khan are killed in action.

Around 40 people get injured.

No known communication between attackers and cops.

SITE reports IS claims responsibility for the attack at 1:35am today.

The militant organisation also claimed responsibility for two murders yesterday.

## Dream highway stirs new hope

### PM opens today 4-lane Dhaka-Ctg highway; businesses upbeat about faster goods delivery

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong highway formally opens today amid high hopes that it would boost trade and make smoother road communications between the capital and the port city.

Considered as the country's economic lifeline, the highway would significantly boost export and import, and contribute to the country's GDP, say government officials and businesspeople.

It is the country's busiest road with daily traffic of around 30,000. But the highway having only two lanes was struggling to accommodate the rising volume of traffic, and saw nagging tailbacks regularly.

All these troubles are now a thing of the past as the highway has been expanded to four lanes from two. The travel time between the two cities has now come down to five hours from 10-15 hours.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the highway at 11:00am through video conference from Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in

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## Faster travel to Mymensingh

### Expanded highway benefits commuters; road safety measures still absent

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Once you take the newly-constructed Dhaka-Mymensingh highway after the agonising 12-km journey from Abdullapur to Joydebpur intersection, you will heave a sigh of relief.

The four-lane expanded road will give you a different picture from the ones across the country. People travelling for the first time on this road will be amazed.

The spacious central reservation and a few miles of greenery on both sides of the highway, especially when you cross Masterbari and enter the forest area of

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### BENEFITS

Faster communication

Time, money to be saved

Boost for trade, export-import

Uncertainty over shipment to go

Traffic volume, revenue to rise

### DIFFICULTIES

Lack of road safety measures

Plying of slow-moving vehicles

Reckless, haphazard driving

Roadside parking, bazars

Inadequate road markings, signs



Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Sitakunda of Chittagong and Joydebpur-Mymensingh highway, inset, at Salna in Gazipur. Both now expanded to four lanes, the roads will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through a ceremony in the capital today.

PHOTO: STAR



## Another Hindu priest murdered

### Bike-riding assailants hack him to death in Jhenidah; SITE Intelligence claims IS took responsibility

AZIBOR RAHMAN in Jhenidah with SHARIFUL ISLAM

Sixty-two-year-old Shyamananda Das was plucking flowers for religious services yesterday morning. This was when assailants riding on a motorbike came and hacked the Hindu priest to death.

Global terror outfit Islamic State claimed credit for the murder, according to SITE Intelligence group that monitors terror activities.

Son of Kiron Sarkar of Chaulia village under Narail district, Shyamananda was serving at Sree Sree Radha-Madan Gopal Temple of Uttar-Kastanagra village under Jhenidah Sadar upazila.

Hours before the murder, two Shibir activists were shot dead in a "gunfight" with police just a few kilometres from the Hindu temple.



Shyamananda Das

Local leaders of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, both were suspects in last month's murder of 70-year-old Hindu priest Ananda Gopal Ganguly, said Additional Superintendent of Police of Jhenidah Sheikh Bahar Ali.

Shyamananda, also known as Babaji, is the latest among six Hindu men killed by suspected Islamist militants in Panchagarh, Gopalganj, Tangail, Pabna and Jhenidah. Besides, a Hindu college teacher narrowly survived a murder attempt in Madaripur on June 15.

Over the last two years or so, suspected militants have attacked and killed university professors, writers, publishers, secular bloggers, gay rights activists, foreigners, policemen and members of religious

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## Lailatul Qadr tonight

BSS, Dhaka

Muslims across the country are set to observe the holy Shab-e-Qadr or Lailatul Qadr tonight with due religious solemnity and reverence.

On this night, the first verses of the holy Quran were revealed to Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH).

The night is better than 1,000 nights as the angels and the spirit descend therein, by the permission of Almighty Allah with all decrees, according to the holy Quran.

It is likely to occur on one of the odd nights in the last 10 days of Ramadan and most likely to be on the 27th of the holy month.

The devout Muslims traditionally observe the

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## Buddhist AL leader killed in Bandarban

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Bandarban

A Buddhist farmer was hacked to death in Bandarban on Thursday night, less than two months after a Buddhist monk was killed in the district in a similar fashion.

Victim Mong Shwe Lung Marma, 55, was also vice president of ward 7 Awami league under Baishari union.

Islamic State fighters claimed responsibility for the murder, according to a tweet last night by Rita Katz, director of US-based SITE Intelligence Group, which tracks online activities of terror groups.

"#ISIS' #AmaqAgency reported: Yesterday 'Islamic State fighters assassinated the leader of a Buddhist party in #Bandarban area' in #Bangladesh," the tweet read.

There was no official version about the suspects and their motives, and The Daily Star could not independently verify the IS claim.

Mong died on the spot after unknown assailants attacked him with a machete around 9:45pm when he was returning

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