

# Blood, shock, horror



SITE Intelligence published these photos yesterday, saying they were among the Gulshan attackers. Though The Daily Star could not independently verify the claim, we are publishing the photos to help the cause of the investigation.

FROM PAGE 1  
Dozens of anxious family members waited till morning beyond the police cordon in the diplomatic area -- home to a number of embassies and international schools.

An eerie calm gripped Gulshan as a police blockade in the entire neighbourhood prevented cars from coming in or going out till yesterday noon.

**OPERATION THUNDERBOLT**  
The plan for the operation was finalised at a meeting between the prime minister and chiefs of the three services and top officials of different law enforcement agencies at the Gono Bhaban after 3:00am yesterday, said a source at the Prime Minister's Office.

"We drew a plan at Gono Bhaban about how we would save the hostages from the terrorists," said Hasina at a programme yesterday morning.

The army para commandos were called from Sylhet alongside those from Dhaka and Savar Cantonments, she said.

Around 5:00am, army commandos, navy, police, BGB, Rab and police special force Swat took preparations to begin the operation.

Gunshots and explosions rocked the area as the heavily armed troops backed by armoured vehicles broke into the building at 7:40am.

Nine armoured personnel carriers (APCs) were brought to the scene. Two of those broke through the walls and entered the restaurant premises. An army speedboat was patrolling on the Gulshan Lake adjacent to the restaurant.

Brig Gen Nayeem Ashfaq Chowdhury, director of the Directorate of Military Operations, at a news conference, said, "Led by the para commando of Bangladesh Army, the commando operation began at 7:40am and took 12 or 13 minutes to establish control over the targeted area by eliminating all terrorists."

The operation codenamed "Operation Thunderbolt" was launched after the prime minister ordered the army to intervene to end the hostage crisis, he said.

The operation ended successfully at 8:30pm, he said.

Two Sri Lankans and a Japanese were among the 13 hostages rescued. Six terrorists were killed and a suspected attacker was arrested, Nayeem added.

During a search after the operation, the bodies of 20 people were recovered. They were killed on Friday night, he said, adding, "Most of the victims were killed brutally with sharp weapons."

In his eight-minute press briefing, Nayeem said autopsies of the deceased will be conducted at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) following existing rituals.

For details and to ascertain identity of the deceased, people have been told to contact army provost martial of Bangladesh Army over a hotline +88-0176-9012524.

A pistol used by terrorists, folded butt AK 22 rifle, an improvised explosive device (IED), a walkie-talkie set and a large number of locally made sharp weapons were recovered from the spot, he said.

Brig Gen Nayeem thanked the PM for her timely, firm and bold decision.

Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a press release issued at 3:20pm, said that all the 20 deceased were foreign nationals.

But another ISPR press release issued at 7:45pm said the nationalities of the 20 victims were yet to be ascertained. The process of identifying them was on, it said.

Though Brig Gen Nayeem said 13 hostages were rescued, a top DB official told The Daily Star that "27 rescued" people have been brought to the DB office on Minto Road.

Most of them were allowed to go home after verifying whether any of them had any links with militancy, the official said around 10:30pm yesterday. The rest were being "released" by turns, he added.

Asked if all the 27 were rescued hostages, he said, "Yes."

**VICTIMS**  
Nine Italians, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshis, a Bangladeshi American and one Indian are among the dead. They included 11 males and nine females, said ISPR.

Their bodies have been kept at the CMH morgue, it added.

The Italian foreign ministry website said the Italian citizens killed in the Dhaka attack were Adele Puglisi, Marco Tondat, Claudia Maria D'Antona, Nadia Benedetti, Vincenzo D'Allestro, Maria Rivoli, Cristian Rossi, Claudio Cappelli and Simona Monti.

Nadia Benedetti, managing director of Studiotex, a buying house in Dhaka, went to have dinner with five clients from Italy and remained missing since Friday night, said Monohor Corraya, administrative officer of the company.

Japan has confirmed seven of its citizens were among the dead hostages.

Speaking at a press conference in Tokyo late yesterday night, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga confirmed that seven Japanese -- five men, two women -- were killed in Dhaka siege.

He declined to release their names, saying the government has not yet obtained the consent of the survivors' families.

Around 9:40pm yesterday, Yoshihide Suga said Japanese embassy officials finally identified the seven. They worked for a private company involved in a Jica project.

Japan has also decided to dispatch members of the International Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Collection Unit to Dhaka to strengthen its information gathering efforts.

"Terrorism cannot be justified for any reason. The Japanese Government will work in cooperation with the international community to combat terrorism," said Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida at an extraordinary press conference in Tokyo yesterday morning.

"We have decided to dispatch members of the International Counter-Terrorism Intelligence Collection Unit to Dhaka."

The two dead Bangladeshis are Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, 20, an undergraduate student at Emory University in Georgia of the US, and Ishrat Akhond, human resources director at ZXY International FZCO and Arts Provocateur at Institute of Asian Creatives, Dhaka.

The US-Bangladeshi victim was Abinta Kabir, a student of Oxford College of Emory University.

Abinta, from Miami in the state of Florida, was in Bangladesh to visit

family and friends, said university president James Wagner in statement, reports AFP.

The Indian citizen, Tarishi Jain, 18, a student of the University of California, Berkeley, the US, came to Dhaka on vacation, said sources in the Indian foreign ministry.

Meanwhile, three of those injured in assaults by the gunmen were in critical condition till yesterday evening, hospital officials said.

Police officer Sujan Kumar, who was hit with splinters in the head, face and legs, and restaurant waiter Zakuri who suffered bullet wounds below the chest, were being treated at the ICU at the United Hospital.

"They suffered a lot of blood loss," Shagufa Anwar, chief of communications and business development of the United Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The third, a driver named Razzak, was at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Twenty-three injured policemen were admitted to United Hospital and two others to the DMCH.

**ATTACKERS**  
Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque said all the attackers were Bangladeshi citizens.

Of the six, five were certainly militants and they had been trying to arrest them, he told reporters at Rajarbagh Police Lines after attending the namaz-e-janaza of the two dead police officials.

"We had searched for them in different places of the country and now they were killed here," the IGP added.

The police headquarters last night released the names of five gunmen with photographs of their corpses. They are Akash, Bikash, Don, Badhon, and Ripon.

Police, however, did not give details of the attackers or their motive.

Officials only said the gunmen used nicknames during their mission and Ripon was their kingpin.

**NO 'PROPER PREPARATION'**  
The attack came amid a series of targeted killings carried out by suspected militants across the country.

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 minorities, including Shia and Sufi Muslims, Christians and Hindus.

The Islamic State reportedly claimed responsibility for a number of such killings. The government carried out a weeklong anti-militancy clampdown from mid-June, arresting around 13,000 people including 194 suspected militants.

Like previous targeted killing, the murders in Gulshan were brutal in nature as the victims were mostly slaughtered with sharp weapons.

Security analyst Brig Gen (Retd) M Sakhawat Hossain said the intelligence agencies were "over burdened" with different other tasks but they were hardly aware that something big was going to happen.

"...We couldn't take proper preparation. We couldn't direct the forces properly," he told The Daily Star.

# India issues high alert along border

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Border Security Force (BSF) has issued a high alert and enhanced vigilance along the Indian borders with Bangladesh after gunman attacked a restaurant in capital's Gulshan on Friday night.

"As it is, the festival season of Eid and Rath Yatra, there was a strict vigilance on the border. But after yesterday's attack in Bangladesh, we have further increased our vigilance," Sandeep Salunke, IG, BSF told the local media.

"We have issued high alert and special operations are on," he said.

The BSF is in touch with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and keeping a close eye on the situation. "We are constantly in touch with Indian intelligence agencies and also with the BGB," he said.

# Siege hogs

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network RT, The Washington Post, The Guardian and The Los Angeles Times.

BBC's South Asia News Analyst Anbarasan Ethirajan wrote, "The timing, the target and the message of the daring attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka was loud and clear." He also observed that even a highly secured diplomatic zone such as Gulshan is not safe from terror onslaughts.

Most analysts were critical of the government's failure to stop targeted killings of secular bloggers, free-thinkers and members of religious minorities and its denial on the issue of the local militants' ties with international terror organisations, especially with ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

One of the stories under "Editor's Pick" on The Mainichi carried the heading "Extremism triggered by local political unrest may be behind Dhaka hostage-taking."

The Guardian carried an analysis headlined "The Bangladesh attack is the predictable result of unchecked violence" by Jason Burke, the Africa correspondent of the The Guardian, who writes extensively on Islamic extremism.

Burke wrote, "Western intelligence have been nervous about a major operation [by terrorists] in Bangladesh for at least 18 months." Despite the prevailing situation, the ruling party, instead of cracking down on the headline groups, "looked to extract political advantage from the situation" by blaming the opposition or by denying the link of the militants with ISIS or Al-Qaeda.

Qatari daily The Peninsula in its editorial wrote "It's certain that the perpetrators have a bigger agenda than eliminating atheists and secularists from the country. The motive could be political -- an attempt to destabilise the government."

"The attack at the diplomatic quarter in Dhaka sends a powerful message which the government can ignore only at its own peril," it added.

# Moments

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O Kitchen feels like walking into a parallel universe for Dhakaites.

With outdoor seating arrangement, delectable Mediterranean fare that are not available elsewhere in the country, attentive staff and an unhurried atmosphere, it a delightful place to spend a Friday evening. As is wont to happen, the establishment is extremely popular with expatriates and the city's well-heeled, who can afford the upmarket prices.

On weekends, the place is typically buzzing. In the morning, expatriates and locals alike come for a leisurely breakfast. Many bring their pet dogs along, who can be seen frolicking about in the expansive lawn, or rugs to make a little picnic out of the jaunt. As the sun sets, the tealights and lanterns are lit, transforming the venue into an enchanted garden.

This correspondent too chose to have dinner with friends at the restaurant on Friday after breaking fast less than an hour earlier. The place, which looked more charming than ever before basking in the dim lighting, was not packed for a weekend evening when the correspondent arrived at about 7:45pm. Looking back, it seems like the perfect lull before the storm.

Still, there were a handful of Westerners -- including a boisterous group -- Asians, interspersed with locals. Altogether, there were, maybe, 40 diners. Due to the searing temperatures, the majority were seated indoors, with very few outside. Conversations were flowing, with the clink of the cutlery providing the perfect background music.

Due to the low turnout, the service was very fast: the table ordered pizzas, which were served in less than 15 minutes. The thin-crust, rustic-looking beef pizzas were devoured in next to no time, and the correspondent was out of the venue by 8:30pm, taking the party elsewhere. And about 8:45pm, the gunmen stormed into the venue, getting to the kitchen staff manning the wood-fired pizza oven first. He was let go after he established himself to be a Muslim.

# Mudslinging, blame game

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Questioning the preparedness to prevent such attacks, he said intelligence agencies were "over burdened" with other work.

"How did they [attackers] bring huge weapons in such a tight security area. It's a big question ... We couldn't take proper preparation. We couldn't direct the forces properly," he said, adding, "We could have prevented such an attack if we were prepared enough."

The Gulshan attack was just two weeks after a week-long drive against militants when over 15,000 people were arrested and many of them were BNP-Jamaat men with no priors.

When his attention was drawn to the drive, Sakhawat said: "We couldn't complete our objective. It [the drive] rather raised questions about the credibility of law enforcers."

The militant operation carried out at the Dhaka restaurant is akin to Paris and Brussels attacks and it hardly matters whether it was carried out by ISIS or Al-Qaeda, he said.

Instead of finger pointing or making rhetoric, meticulous strategies have to be drawn up to deal with the challenge.

Time was a crucial factor, the decision for calling in the commandos should have been quicker, he said.

He emphasised the need for increasing capacity of the intelligence agencies to prevent such attacks.

Instead of keeping the intelligence agencies busy with surveillance over political opponents or other petty work, intelligence agencies need to be made more active in preventing militant attacks, he added.

The reasons for a group of people getting radicalised need to be found and people need to be united in fighting militancy, he added.

Brig Gen (retd) Shahedul Anam Khan said the heavily armed assailants were able to precisely strike their target in a "high security diplomatic enclave" and this demonstrates inherent lapses in the security measures and lack of intelligence.

Periodic drives for busting militant elements physically or resorting to wholesale arrests were not the way to contain the actual threat, he said, adding that the purpose of the security

forces' periodic drives was not to combat militancy, but to go after political opponents.

"Militancy has to be tackled with specific intelligence and ideological strategies," said Brig Anam, also editor, Op-Ed and Strategic Affairs, The Daily Star.

Air Cdre (retd) Ishfaq Ilaahi Choudhury while talking to a TV station said, "We have to ensure such terrorist attacks do not recur and we have to take steps to that end immediately."

He said the steps were not merely to strengthen the law enforcement forces but to have a comprehensive plan to delve out the roots of militancy, patrons of militants, their training centres and their sources of arms.

The militants were carrying out terrorist operations like trained troops, he said.

It shows that they went through rigorous training and had ideological motivation, he said, adding that it was an ideological battle, not merely physical.

Every time there is an attack, ground-level members of militant outfits get killed but the ideological masterminds are not identified. Unless the masterminds are captured, such militant threats would not be eliminated, he said.

A serving police official, having expertise in militancy, suggested reshuffle the field-level command of police to stop the recurrence of targeted killings.

"Most of the filed-level police commands are in their positions due to political backing, in some cases even after recurrence of targeted killings although many of them lack professionalism and skills," he said, wishing not to be named.

The government should appoint new blood and professional officers to thwart such attacks.

He said in the recent special drive around 16,000 people, mostly petty criminals and political opponents, were arrested and as many as 16,000 police personnel had to be engaged for several hours to prepare documents to press charges against them.

"Had those forces not been engaged in such activities for hours, the Gulshan attackers might have been arrested before the execution of their plan," he added.

# Farewell dinner

FROM PAGE 1  
director after her father died. She was involved in garment business for about 15 years here, until her life was cut short.

StudioteX sources more than \$50 million of products a year from Bangladesh, said KI Hossain, president of Bangladesh Garments Buying House Association.

"She had lived in Italy, Kenya and Bangladesh and had never stopped, not even in the most difficult moments," Ilgiorale.it, an Italian news website quoted her niece Giulia Benedetti as saying on Facebook.

"Now we have lost the last hope. We will not see each other again; we will not talk and will not comment on the colours of the shirts to be produced," she said.

Benedetti was in a farewell dinner at the restaurant with other Italian businessperson in Dhaka on business.

According to the Italian foreign ministry, the others were: Adele Puglisi, Marco Tondat, Claudia Maria D'antona, Vincenzo D'allestro, Maria Rivoli, Cristian Rossi, Claudio Cappelli and Simona Monti.

Some of the victims were employees of ZXY International FZCO and StudioteX, two Italian garment buying

houses based in Dhaka, said KI Hossain.

Cristian Rossi, 47, a father of two three-year-old twins, ran a clothing consultancy, with offices in Bangladesh and China. He was on a business trip to Bangladesh and was scheduled to fly back to Italy on Thursday, but postponed the return.

Claudia Maria D'Antona, 56, who came from Turin in northern Italy, was the managing director of Fedo Trading Ltd, an Italian garment buying house operating in Bangladesh for more than 14 years. Her husband, Gian Galeazzo Boschetti, is the only Italian attack survivor, according to BBC News.

The majority of the victims arrived in Bangladesh two weeks ago to place work orders in different garment factories, according to KI Hossain.

"They have been sourcing garment items from Bangladesh for many years. They went to the restaurant to have a farewell dinner, as they were supposed to depart Bangladesh on July 4 [tomorrow]."

ZXY sources more than \$100 million worth of garment items a year from Bangladesh for top-rated Italian retailers, said KI Hossain, who had a longstanding relationship with the buyers.

# A 12-hour ordeal

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of the restaurant and reunited with Rezaul and Hosne Ara, who had been anxiously waiting outside it.

Minutes later, Hasnat, his wife and their two children were taken to the city's Detective Branch office for giving their accounts of the incident, said Rezaul.

Quoting her son, Hosne Ara said, militants equipped with automatic rifles and pistols stormed into the restaurant soon after the four took seats inside it.

"The birthday celebration turned into a nightmare when gunmen burst into the restaurant and took the diners hostage," she quoted her son as saying.

Hosne Ara continued, "Around half an hour later, the armed men asked people in the room whether they are Muslims. But they didn't ask this question to my son and daughter-in-law who was wearing a scarf around her head."

"The gunmen then asked some of the hostages to recite from the Holy Quran to ascertain whether they are Muslims. They killed those who couldn't," she added quoting her son.

Hasnat told his parents that an Indian national survived as the militants took him to be a Muslim.

Quoting his son, Rezaul said, "They [the gunmen] didn't behave harshly with the Bangladesh nationals. "Rather they provided meals to the Bangladeshis," he said, adding, "The women who were wearing scarf around their head were treated very well by the militants."

# Six-year-old's wait

FROM PAGE 1  
His lifeless body wrapped in a shroud was awaiting burial.

The detective was killed at Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka's diplomatic zone of Gulshan on Friday night while fighting to rescue his country from the grips of terror.

He bled excessively during the attack, said Sohel Mahmud, assistant professor of the forensic and medicine department of Dhaka Medical College, who conducted the autopsy of Rabiul.

Splinters hit him in the right chest, the doctor said.

He joined the police through 30th BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service) after his master's in Bangla from Jahangirnagar University.

During his probationary period, he served as assistant superintendent of police (ASP) in Netrakona in 2014. Before joining the DB, he worked in the Rapid Action Battalion.

The news of his death cast a shadow of grief over his village home in Manikganj sadar upazila.

Relatives, well-wishers and villagers gathered there yesterday morning to console his elderly mother Karimun Nesa and eight-month pregnant wife Umme Salma.

Both of them were put on a saline drip as they were losing consciousness frequently.

Sami still did not know about what happened to his father and believed that his father would come back with an Eid-dress.

Rabiul was the elder son of late Abdul Khalek, a retired official of Care Bangladesh, of Katigram village in Manikganj.

His younger brother Shamsuzzaman Shams said their father passed away nine years back. Rabiul, who set an example of patri-

# KILLED IN ACTION



**RABIUL ISLAM**  
Assistant Commissioner, DB



**SALAUDDIN KHAN**  
OC, Banani Police Station

otism on Friday, established a kindergarten named "Kabi Nazrul Bidyayiri" at his village in 2007 to fulfill his father's dream.

He also set up a school named "Blooms" for physically-challenged children at the village. He used to bear all the cost of the school where 36 students study.

"My brother went to our village home on Thursday and distributed clothes among relatives and villagers. He was supposed to go home today [Saturday]. Unfortunately, we are now carrying his body there," Shams said.

Rabiul will be buried at his village Katigram after his namaz-e-janaza, he added.

Local people shocked at the tragic death said Rabiul was very polite and was liked and praised by the people of the area for his excellent performances in sports and participation in festivals.

His friend Shamima Sumi said Rabiul was the role model for his friends. He was very much committed to his village's welfare.

People there are now proud of Rabiul who sacrificed his life in the greater interest of the country, said Selim Hossain Biplob, chairman of Krishnapur union parishad of Manikganj upazila.

Meanwhile, doctors said Banani Police Station Officer-in-Charge Salauddin Khan, who was also killed in Friday's attack in Gulshan, had suffered splinter wounds in his throat.

He had bled excessively, said Dhaka Medical College Forensic and Medicine Department's Assistant Professor Sohel Mahmud, who performed the autopsy on the body.

The 49-year-old police officer left behind his wife Remkim, and two children and a host of well-wishers.

Born in Bankpara village of Gopalganj Sadar in 1967, Salauddin joined police as a sub-inspector in August, 1991. He was posted to Banani Police Station last year.

His elder brother Raziuddin Ahmed said Salauddin's body would be buried at Banani graveyard in the capital.