

WITH TODAY'S ISSUE
STAR WEEKEND

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 Ace golfer Siddikur Rahman has been chosen to carry the Bangladesh flag in Rio 2016
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IT'S MIKE PENCE!
 Report says Donald Trump has picked Indiana Governor Mike Pence as his running mate
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FOREIGN EXPATS Worried yet rallying for Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreigner community in Bangladesh is diverse not only in country of origin but life situation. Some arrive to fill short-term contracts; for others Bangladesh is home. Regardless of circumstances, the Gulshan and Sholakia attacks give reason to reconsider their future address.

Chinese national Ying, employed in the education sector, has lived in Bangladesh for over a decade. She has a Bangladeshi family. "Bangladesh has problems," she says, "poverty, poor infrastructure, corruption and a violent political culture; but there's steady progress and I'm happy to work for its development. The main attraction is its big-hearted people."

She sees the recent attacks as indicative of a worldwide problem. "The security situation has worsened globally due to growing religious fanaticism," she says.

Tim is an Australian who has also been here for over a decade and has a Bangladeshi family. "Rural Bangladeshis are the most wonderful people I've met," he says. Tim likewise pinpoints worldwide security deterioration. "Governments everywhere are under huge pressure."

British and American couple James and Lisa have called Dhaka home for just a few years. She works helping Bangladeshi

businesses expand. They hoped to raise their children here.

"I don't think what makes Bangladesh captivating has changed," says James. "Dhaka's organised chaos still enthral. The vibrancy of the people and stunning rural beauty still leave me speechless."

European-origin long-term resident John has a Bangladeshi family. "I've lived in this beautiful country since before some of those terrorists were born," he says.

According to John, the Bangladeshis he employs are talented; which has helped him export services abroad, bringing foreign revenue to the country and working towards the faster integration of Bangladesh in the digital world.

"Until last year I've never been afraid," says John. "Now it's hard to feel safe. It feels like danger can be around the corner, though locals don't always appreciate the change. It feels as if there are black skies only I can see."

James says deteriorating security has changed his experience. "The markets where I once roamed are less inviting. On the street I find myself regularly glancing behind. I vary my routing and flinch at passing motorbikes. I want the old Bangladesh back."

"Bangladesh is at a crossroads," he

Most of the 17 foreign nationals brutally murdered by terrorists inside the Gulshan cafe were working for the economic and infrastructure development of Bangladesh. Besides, some of them did charity work out of their love for Bangladesh and its people. Italian national Claudia Maria is one such great soul.

CLAUDIA indeed a friend in need

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and JAMIL MAHMUD

She was not an expert in medical science and yet she did her best for the burn victims in Bangladesh to ensure free treatment.

She rushed from one place to another during her years of stay in the country to raise fund for the destitute out of her passion.

A true humanitarian, Claudia Maria D'Antona, 37, was among the nine Italian nationals killed by militants during the hostage standoff at Holey Artisan Restaurant and Bakery in the capital's Gulshan on July 1.

Her friends and well-wishers said the killing of a person like her would only serve to tarnish Bangladesh's image abroad.

"We will never forget her. The



A victim of Gulshan café attack, Italian Claudia Maria D'Antona, with two doctors on her left at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



IN RUN-UP TO GULSHAN ATTACK Nibras was in a Jhenidah mess

AZIBOR RAHMAN and AKRAM HOSEN

One of the Holey Artisan attackers had lived in Jhenidah for around four months and left the place only a couple of days before the bloody siege of the Gulshan café on July 1.

Along with seven other young men, 22-year-old Nibras Islam, one of the terrorists killed during the siege, rented two rooms at Sonalipara village for Tk 2,300 a month in early March.

He had identified himself as Sayeed and stayed there till June 28, said Bilkis Nahar, wife of the house owner.

All the eight men claimed that they were students, she said.

Asked whether she knew the names of the seven tenants apart from Nibras, Bilkis said she remembered the name of only one other tenant named Mustafa.

She said Nibras told them that he was seeking admission to Islamic University. "I didn't personally know every boy in the house. But I thought they were good people..."



Nibras Islam

Read out anti-terror sermon

Islamic Foundation asks mosques to follow common khutba

STAR REPORT

The Islamic Foundation authorities have urged mosques across the country to follow the sermon to be delivered at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque during Juma prayers today, reports UNB.

The call came following the recent terrorist attacks at Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital and at Sholakia Eid congregation in Kishoreganj that left more than two dozen people killed.

The common sermon (khutba) has been formulated in efforts to create

Sole Japanese survivor hid in cafe's garden

THE JAPAN TIMES

Tamaoki Watanabe, the sole survivor among eight Japanese caught up in a deadly attack at a Bangladesh restaurant earlier this month, has told police he managed to hide in the establishment's garden, investigative sources said.

The 46-year-old, who is currently recovering in a Tokyo hospital from a gunshot wound sustained in the attack, reportedly ran from the Holey Artisan Bakery cafe in Dhaka as the shooting started, taking cover outside during the 12-hour siege that left 20 hostages dead.

In his first interview with Japanese police, Watanabe confirmed that he had been at the restaurant with the seven Japanese who were killed in the assault targeting foreigners, and said he did not see the other members of his party after running out of the building, the sources said Wednesday.

Of the seven, five were shot, with bullet wounds including to the head identified as the cause of death in at least four cases.

Two police officers and six of the seven assailants also died in the standoff, which ended after military and police officers stormed the building in an upscale area of the capital.

Boris shock stuns world

Britain's 'jester' BoJo becomes FM in Theresa May's cabinet

AGENCIES

He's called foreigners "piccaninnies" and "cannibals," and once referred to Hillary Clinton as a "sadistic nurse in a mental hospital."

On a trip to Tokyo in 2015 he wiped out a 10-year-old schoolboy during a game of touch rugby, and in May he won a £1,000 prize for a poem about Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan having sex with a goat.

Meet the UK's new Foreign Secretary, Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson, also known as "BoJo."

Dubbed a liar by his French counterpart and lampooned as a "political jester" in European newspapers, chief Brexit campaigner Johnson faced a wave of criticism and mockery yesterday after being named Britain's foreign minister.

In a shock move, new Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday appointed the

eccentric former London mayor as the top diplomat to lead the country out of the EU.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said that as a "Leave" campaigner Johnson had "lied a lot" and said his appointment "reveals the British political crisis" following the referendum.

Ayrault claimed he was not worried about working with Johnson but stressed the need for a "clear, credible and reliable" negotiating partner.

The outspoken European Parliament chief Martin Schulz also slammed May's new cabinet, saying it was based on solving internal party splits rather than the national interest.

"The United Kingdom has to break this dangerously vicious cycle which has direct impacts on the rest of Europe," Schulz said.

There is widespread animosity in Europe toward Johnson who recently compared the



An apology pinned to Boris Johnson's house. PHOTO: HUFFINGTONPOST.CO.UK



An experimental plot of the country's first aromatic hybrid rice variety -- BU Aromatic Hybrid Rice-1 -- at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University. Scientists at the BSMRAU have bred the fine and slender fragrant rice, inset, unlocking potential for tapping export markets.

PHOTO: BSMRAU



Aromatic cheers Public university develops first hybrid rice variety

REAZ AHMAD

Scientists at a public university have developed the country's first aromatic hybrid rice variety which is twice as productive as its low-yield indigenous counterparts.

Most of the cultivated aromatic rice varieties have low yield potentiality of two to three tonnes per hectare, but the hybrid one, approved recently by the National Seed Board, would give more than six tonnes per hectare, the scientists have confirmed.

The development came at a time when Bangladesh has been struggling in aromatic rice export market due to lack of price competitiveness owing to low-yield potentials.

Aromatic rice is there in Bangladesh's export basket since 2012 fetching a yearly earning of Tk 80 crore. But further growth is being hindered due to the farmers' reluctance in growing fragrant rice, which yields less compared to non-aromatic fine varieties.

"If the farmers are given more productive aromatic rice varieties, it would give us an edge in the export market," said Shah Alam Babu, president of Bangladesh Rice Exporters Association.

To make the aromatic rice more competitive and also to meet the demand of domestic and international market, scientists Dr MA Khaleque Mian and Dr Nasrin Akter Ivy have developed the first aromatic hybrid rice variety -- BU Aromatic Hybrid Rice-1.

Mian and Ivy, both of whom teach genetics and plant breeding at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU), have developed the