

Everyone

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result now? All we want is justice," Anwara said over phone, crying.

"More than four months have passed but police are yet to arrest any of the killers. I do not know how long it will take."

Tonu's brother Rubel Hossain said, "My sister enrolled in the history department as she liked reading history. Now she herself became part of history."

Tonu was very sick during her first-year exam, the last one in her life, he added.

Tonu, also a theatre activist, was found murdered inside the Comilla Cantonment on March 20.

Two autopsies could not determine the cause of her death though her father Yaar Hossain, who first spotted the body in a bush, saw the back of his daughter's head smashed and injury marks on her nose.

The police inquest report also did not cite any sign of injury.

However, the family members saw a ray of hope of getting justice as CID officials through DNA tests found that Tonu was raped before being murdered.

The officials on May 16 said the tests of the specimens collected from Tonu's clothes found spermatozoa of three males.

The agency was supposed to seek the court's permission to check if the samples collected from Tonu's clothes match DNA of any of the listed suspects.

Tonu's family members alleged that the agency officials have yet to apply for that permission. "They just say they are looking into it," Tonu's mother told this correspondent several days ago.

"We have lost everything. Now we are losing hope of getting justice."

CID Inspector Gazi Md Ibrahim, investigation officer of the case, could not be reached yesterday despite repeated attempts.

Taskforce

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AH Mahmood Ali in the chair.

Though reporters waited outside the guesthouse for hours together, they were advised to leave the venue and follow the foreign ministry media releases.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam, Principal Secretary Abul Kalam Azad, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque and representatives from the Ministry of Home, Economic Relations Division, Armed Forces Division, police and other agencies were present.

The meeting reviewed different security related issues of the diplomats and officials of the diplomatic missions as well as international organisations in Bangladesh, and took stock of the measures taken so far, according to a foreign ministry press release.

The meeting expressed satisfaction over the measures taken to enhance vigilance and patrol in the diplomatic area.

The government formed the taskforce after the Gulshan café terror attack on July 1 and the taskforce's first meeting was held yesterday.

Twenty-two people, including 17 foreigners, were killed in the attack.

Diplomatic sources said the government plans to further intensify its efforts to ensure security for foreign nationals and diplomats as a number of foreign countries came up with specific proposals to address security concerns.

Earlier, a number of countries, including Japan and Italy, have sought permission from the government to allow them to use bullet-proof vehicles for their officials living in Bangladesh as the July 1 terror attack eroded their confidence, home ministry sources said.

Even though the government has revamped security arrangements as part of the post-attack tightened security measures, a number of countries like the United States are also pushing the government hard to allow their private security forces to carry arms.

The home and foreign ministries are now on consultation over the two issues.

The existing law of the land does not have any provision for allowing private security forces to carry arms while there are some instances that bullet-proof vehicles were allowed to use in the past.

The Japanese government has already expressed its plan to introduce bullet-proof vehicles and modern safety equipment to ensure proper protection of its aid workers overseas, including Bangladesh, as terrorism has turned out to be a common threat everywhere.

300km in 38 days

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team along with some forest officials of Bangladesh yesterday went to Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila where the animal is now staying. The team arrived in Bangladesh on Wednesday to rescue and bring the animal back to Assam from where it came.

The officials, however, are finding it difficult to rescue the elephant, weighing around four tonnes, from the flood-hit char (shoal) area in Jamalpur.

They followed the elephant, which crossed around 15 kilometres of flooded terrain in Botbaria and Kandarpara char areas in Sarishabari, throughout the day yesterday.

"It was very hard to go near the elephant as it was continuously wading through floodwater. But we followed the elephant for almost 15 kilometres. They [the Indian officials] are yet to figure out how to rescue it," said Wildlife Inspector Ashim Kumar Mallick of the forest department.

He is one of the members of a 17-member team, including forest and veterinary officials, which has been monitoring the elephant for the last 15 days.

"But it would not be possible to tranquillise the animal until it reaches dry land," Ashim said.

The officials are now thinking of three possible ways to bring the elephant back home -- carrying it by a jumbo helicopter, by a vessel or a truck. If they want to carry it by a chopper, they would have to arrange a special helicopter, which the Assamese government would have to borrow from the central government, said another forest official, citing the Indian officials.

"But they need more time to observe the elephant before making any decision," he said.

The members of the Indian team are Coalpara district Forest Officer Suleman Uddin Choudhury, retired conservator of forests Rithesh Chandra Bhattacharjee and veterinary professor KK Sarma, said Gobinda Roy, divisional forest officer (DFO),

Mymensingh.

"The team will first examine the ground situation on how to rescue the elephant safely and then go for rescue operation," the DFO added.

The wild elephant got separated from her herd in Assam and entered Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, floating with the currents of the Brahmaputra, on June 27.

From then on, it was seen frantically moving from one place to another.

(Our Jamalpur correspondent contributed to the story.)

ELEPHANT MOVEMENT

On June 27 - came into Bangladesh from Assam through Kurigram's Chilmari upazila. Moving from one place to another near the Jamuna River

On July 11 - a char area under Chikajani union of Dewanganj upazila in Jamalpur district

On July 13 - moved to another Char area Tinerghar in Chukaibari union under the upazila Dewanganj upazila in Jamalpur

On July 14 - afternoon, she traveled to Hariampurchar area under Sariakandi upazila of Bogra through the Jamuna river crossing several Brahmaputra and Jamuna chars of Jamalpur.

On July 19 - moved to Chhinnarchar under Munsurnagar union in Kazipur upazila of Sirajganj floating with the currents of the river Jamuna.

On July 22 - moved to a newly emerged mass land (char) of village Juktigachha under Khasrajbari in the Kazipur upazila of Sirajganj.

On July 24 - night from the mass land, she traveled to Char Jamira under Sarishabari upazila in Jamalpur

On July 25 - moved to village Rayerchhara under Madarganj upazila of Jamalpur district

On July 26 - she again came back to Garushinga Math area under Sarishabari municipality

Until Wednesday afternoon she had finally taken shelter inside a sugarcane field of Char Shishua mass land under Satpua union in Sarishabari upazila and was still seen there

Police probe finds

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months, police came up with its report yesterday, stating that it didn't find any truth in the incident involving Shyamal.

Citing the report submitted by Bandar police for placing it before the HC, Deputy Attorney General Motaher Hossain Sazu said police recorded statements of 20 people, including Shyamal, a few teachers at his school, the local upazila chairman and some witnesses, but found no truth in the incident.

Without elaborating, the DAG told this correspondent that police didn't specifically say what was the incident involving Shymal.

A police official from Bandar Police Station brought the report to the DAG's office. But he sent it back as some parts of it were handwritten.

He asked police to submit the report on Sunday after having it composed in a computer.

The DAG said the HC is set to hold hearing on a rule on the issue on August 11 and his office would submit the report to the HC that day if police provide it on Sunday.

On May 13, Shyamal was humiliated in public and made to squat holding his ears in the presence of local Jatiya Party lawmaker AKM Salim Osman.

A video clip of the incident went viral on the social media, triggering public outrage and a firestorm of protests on social networking sites.

A quarter, believed to be followers of the local lawmaker, spread propaganda that locals "punished" Shyamal for allegedly making offensive comments about religion while meeting out corporal punishment to a student on May 8.

On May 26, the education ministry submitted a probe report to the attorney general's office, saying Piyar Sattar Latif High School committee forced headteacher Shyamal to resign following unproven allegations that he had hurt religious sentiment of the Muslims.

The allegation brought against Shyamal was not found true, the probe body said, adding that relevant rules were not followed in suspending

Sholakia attacker

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medical officer at Nandail Upazila Health Complex, told our Mymensingh correspondent that the two were taken dead around midnight.

Shaful is originally from Dinajpur. He was injured during an hour-long gun battle with police in Sholakia, when assailants attacked policemen with sharp weapons, guns and bombs.

Two policemen were killed in the attack while a woman from a nearby house died after being hit by stray bullets. Police later shot one suspected attacker dead.

Shaful was allegedly involved in at least two other targeted killings in Kurigram and Panchagarh.

him. It also recommended that he should be reinstated.

Later, Shyamal was reinstated as headmaster of the school.

Pvt universities

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Following allegations of militant activities in some private universities, the UGC has recently made a recommendation to the government to amend the private university act to appoint observers to the boards of trustee of all private universities.

It also announced formation of a three-member committee which will closely watch possible militant activities at both the private and public universities across the country.

Won't be part

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stays in it. "We told Khaleda Zia that Jamaat should be left out of the unity as it committed war crimes in 1971. The Janata League will not join Jamaat in any platform," a leader of the party told The Daily Star after a meeting with the BNP chief.

The two-hour meeting, organised to discuss ways to start the process of forging a national unity, started at 8:00pm at Khaleda's Gulshan residence. Party President Abdul Kader Siddique along with his wife Nasrin Siddique and General Secretary Habibur Rahman attended the meeting.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Kader Siddique said, "I will not do any politics with Jamaat. I want to die doing Bangabandhu's politics."

He said he would hold a press briefing today at 11:30am at the party's Motijheel office to inform the media what was discussed in the meeting.

Kader Siddique said he had a long discussion with the BNP chief and that he was pleased with her even though they disagreed over several points. He also said he had a separate meeting with Khaleda.

"There is not that much difference between us when it comes to national interest," he said.

He said he would protest any conspiracy against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as well as against Khaleda Zia.

Meeting sources said Kader Siddique suggested the BNP avoid celebrating Khaleda Zia's birthday on August 15 as Bangabandhu and his family members were killed on that day.

After the meeting, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told newsmen that the BNP chief invited Kader Siddique to seek his advice on how to pull the country out from the current situation and how to unite the whole nation.

A day after the gruesome militant attack on a Gulshan café, Khaleda at a press conference called upon all to form a national unity to rid the country of militancy.

The ruling Awami League, however, rejected the call, saying the BNP would have to sever its ties with Jamaat-e-Islami.

Bogra barrister

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the phone and said they would return home next week but they did not.

Khaleque then filed a general diary (GD) with Kalabagan Police Station on June 9.

Around a month later, Sifat called his brother-in-law Sadman over the phone and said he was staying with his family in Turkey and was doing well.

"We suspect that they might be in Turkey now. They also might have gone to Syria," Khaleque said.

An official from the Detective Branch (DB) of police in Bogra said they came to know about the disappearance of Sifat's family from his relatives.

Sifat's relatives had noticed some changes in his behaviour a few years before he went missing, said the official, wishing not to be named.

"We suspect that Sifat might have gone to Syria from Turkey. He may have joined the IS [Islamic State] too. But we are not sure about it," he said.

The Daily Star could not verify the claims independently.

Khaleque, owner of Rahmania Cloth Store in Bogra town, said Sifat was only a class-IV student when he was sent to Siliguri in the Indian state of West Bengal for studies.

He came back after his O-level examination in 2004.

Completing his A-level two years later, Sifat went to London to study law. He returned in 2011 with a law degree, said the father.

"But we noticed a sudden change in his behaviour. He also started offering his prayers regularly something he never used to do before," Khaleque said.

Back from India, Sifat used to have a very lavish lifestyle. He would hang around with friends most of the time.

On completion of his studies, Sifat started practicing law in Dhaka and worked as a part-time teacher at a private university, said Khaleque.

He married a retired army officer's daughter in Chittagong in December 2011 and used to live in their Lake Circus residence in Dhaka. Sifat last visited Bogra during the Eid-ul-Azha in 2014.

"I sent my son abroad for higher education at an early age so that he doesn't get addicted to drugs or have bad companies. But now, he has gone to the dogs and is missing," added the father.

Amirul Islam, officer-in-charge of the DB in Bogra, told The Daily Star that they came to know about Sifat's disappearance recently while gathering information about missing people following the Gulshan terror attack.

Sifat's family members in Bangladesh were interrogated on Wednesday night, he said.

Contacted, Md Assaduzzaman, superintendent of police in Bogra, said last night that they were investigating the matter "through their own sources".

He declined to give details.

Talking to this correspondent, Sifat's grandfather Ayub-Uddowla Benu said Sifat stayed away from his family from a very young age. His parents also had divorced.

"All these things might have prompted him to take the dark path of life," he added.

Earlier, a couple along with their two daughters and a son-in-law reportedly went to war-ravaged Syria, leaving behind first-class government jobs, huge properties and a legacy of pride in Bangladesh.

The man, Rokonuddin Khondoker, a doctor of Dhaka Shishu Hospital, and his wife Naima Akhter, an associate professor of Botany of Jessore MM College, their daughters -- Rezwana Rokon Nadia and Ramita Rokon -- and Nadia's husband Saad Qayes Shishir left Bangladesh in July last year and law enforcement agencies are suspecting that the entire family was radicalised and is now living in Syria.

Brazilian

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The samba will be followed by the athletes' parade, when 12,000 athletes and delegation members of 206 nations will walk through the athletics track, which will be the longest part of the show.

The most eagerly anticipated part of the show, the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron, has been kept a secret like always even though football legend Pelé is highly tipped to perform this act.

The whole event, which will be more than three hours long, has been designed and orchestrated by three creative directors. Acclaimed movie director Fernando Meirelles being the head of the creative team. Meirelles, the director of Oscar-nominated 'City of God', said that while there will be no shortage of Brazilian culture and its exotic elements showcased during the show, budget constraints have meant the razzmatazz will be low-key compared to London 2012 and Beijing 2008.

"We were looking at a budget of 113.9 million US dollars for the four ceremonies -- opening and closing ceremonies for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. But now our budget is 55.9 million US dollars for four ceremonies. Most of this money is for security, and all the stuff around the show. I think it is 12 times less than London, 20 times less than Beijing. This makes it very challenging," Meirelles said in a statement released by the local organising committee.

"I have never done anything on this scale, and will never do so again in my life," he added. "Everything is very big, the stage is very big. It's a huge responsibility."

Hasnat, Tahmid

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hostage in the café.

The attackers killed 20 hostages -- nine Italian, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshis, one Indian and one Bangladesh-born US citizen -- and two police officers who tried to end the standoff soon after it began around 8:40pm.

Tahmid went to the restaurant with two female students of a private university.

They both survived the attack.

Islamic State took credit for the attack and published photos of the victims and the attackers within hours, but the government blames JMB, a banned militant outfit.

Hasnat, who is also a British citizen, went to the restaurant with his wife and two children, family members said, adding they were celebrating the birthday of one of his daughters.

The attackers allowed the family to leave before army commandos stormed the café to end the country's deadliest militant attack and the first-ever hostage situation.

While police kept claiming that Hasnat and Tahmid were released after questioning, their families insisted that they never returned home and could not be reached by any means.

Contacted yesterday, Hasnat's wife Sharmina Karim said they were relieved a bit now that they knew he was under police custody.

"It is a relief that he is alive," she told The Daily Star by phone.

The family will fix the next course of action and deal with the case after discussing with lawyers, she added.

Family members of Tahmid could not be contacted for comments.

THE REMAND PETITION

In the petition, Inspector Humayun Kabir of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit said there was "information" that the duo was loitering suspiciously inside the café during the siege and "developed intimacy" with the militants.

At 8:57pm, about 13 minutes after militants entered the upscale eatery, Hasnat downloaded Wikr -- a mobile

app normally used by militants for communications, he said in the petition.

"The accused needs to be interrogated to know details about this and find out what information was exchanged by militants through the app and why Abul Hasnat downloaded the app at the time."

Citing secret sources, it said Hasnat was a former member of the banned militant outfit Hizb-ut Tahrir while Tahmid worked as his assistant.

Defence lawyer Sarowar Hossain opposed the remand petition, saying it was needless because they had already been in police custody for 32 days.

PRESS BRIEFING

Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), said Hasnat and Tahmid were arrested from the streets of Gulshan and Bashundhara.

All the survivors, including the two, were interrogated separately and then released, he claimed, adding that Hasnat and Tahmid were suspects as their body language during the siege as seen on video clips was unusual.

Also, their accounts of the incident were inconsistent, he added.

BTRC orders

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rtnews24.com, haquekotha.com, amrabnp.com, real-timenews.com, bnation24.com, nationnewsbd.com, bhoreralap.com, banglapost24.com, dailytimes24.com, mynewsbd.com, livekhabor.com, rikhan.com, sheershanevnewsbd.com, natuneradok.com, sylhetvoice24.com, somoybangla.com, prothomnews.com, banglatatnews.com, bdmonitor.net, bdupdatenews24.net, newsdaily24bd.com, amardeshonline.com, doinikamardesh.com, onnojogot24.com, amarbangladeshonline.com, desh-bd.net, crimebdnews24.com, natunsokal.com, sheershakhor.com, onb24.com, dinkalshonline.net, sarabangla.com, parstoday.com, weeklysonarbangla.net and 24banglanewsblog.wordpress.com.

US woman killed

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Rowley. Initially he said that terrorism was a line of inquiry.

Police, who arrived within six minutes of being called, used a Taser electric shock gun while detaining the 19-year-old suspect. He was later formally arrested on suspicion of murder.

Police cordoned off the southern part of the square, which sits at the heart of London's university area and is close to landmarks such as the British Museum, for several hours as forensic officers examined the attack scene.

Later, workmen hosed blood off the pavement.

London's Sadiq Khan, the first Muslim mayor of a major Western capital, called for vigilance and urged Londoners to report anything suspicious to the police, who increased their presence in the capital.

"The safety of all Londoners is my number one priority and my heart goes out to the victims of the incident in Russell Square and their loved ones," he said.

Just hours before the Russell Square attack, London's police chief said that

he would deploy an additional 600 armed officers across the capital to protect against attacks.

London counter-terrorism police chiefs have previously warned that Islamic State was seeking to radicalise vulnerable people with mental health issues to carry out attacks. In some operations, police commanders have taken advice from specialist psychologists.

Islamist militants hit London with coordinated suicide bombings on July 7, 2005, killing 52 people. One of the bombs detonated on a bus close to Russell Square.

Since then, dozens of plots have been foiled and there have been smaller-scale attacks, such as the beheading of an off-duty soldier by militant Islamists in a London street in May 2013.

A man who attacked passengers at a London underground train station in December was jailed for life earlier this month. The judge said the attacker was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia at the time of the offence but may have been motivated by events in Syria.

The Hobby of the hills

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zenith. Even in midday, a December mist clung onto the mossy barks of the towering trees like tendrils. An eerie quietness existed, perhaps the moss-covered banks absorbed sound, creating an unearthly hush, and light and shadows danced under our eyes. We were mesmerised as if under a spell of admiration and respect. The trees made sure that there was no horizon and the feeling of claustrophobia was all too real. The sporadic calls of Racket-tailed Drongos and Hill Mynas broke the spell momentarily only to be casted again by the haunting calls of Hoolock Gibbons. A perennial hilly stream flowed over rocks nearby.

The team was conducting biodiversity surveys and the routine involved starting very early before sunrise and head out into the forest, walking the forest trails used by the local tribes, deeper into the forest recording every bird and animal species seen and checking camera traps. We were finally able to follow the barely visible footpath out of that surreal realm and were greeted by the steel grey of a wintry sky. The sky was seen for the first time in hours and the claustrophobic feeling subsided. The footpath widened as we reached the top of a hill and we could see the small indigenous village near our base camp. The lush and sombre forest stretched underneath. While we descended, we spotted a lone, leafless tree, towering over all others. And on the highest branch of that tallest tree, silhouetted against the dull December

sky, sat a raptor.

The raptor majestically scanned the valley and hills from its perch. Its head was deep black, almost as if it was wearing a dark mask with long pointed wings. Poor light hindered our visibility and we were able to take a few photographs before leaving as we were still a long way from our base camp. We initially identified the raptor as a sub-species of the Peregrine Falcon.

Couple of weeks later, in the monstrous city of electricity and traffic jams, we discovered that the raptor is not what we had initially thought. It was figured after further analysis that the raptor was an Oriental Hobby and it was the first confirmed record of this species from Bangladesh! Previously, there was just one unconfirmed record that was dismissed as there was no solid evidence.

The Oriental Hobby was just a beautiful surprise from a land of pure magic!

Special thanks to the project, "Biodiversity Conservation through protection of streams of Plabkhali area", implemented by the Department of Environmental Science and Management of North South University, spearheaded by respected Dr Md Jakariya. Thanks to Abdul Majid Shah, Muntasir Akash and Md Foyzal for identification of the bird.

Sakib Ahmed is an aspiring conservationist working for IUCN Bangladesh and enjoys a life in wilderness. Sayam U Chowdhury is a conservation biologist currently working for threatened species conservation and research in Bangladesh and abroad.