

## Police Scotland

FROM PAGE 20

said: "I am delighted to make this announcement and welcome the support from both the Muslim community, and the wider community, as well as police officers and staff.

"Like many other employers, especially in the public sector, we are working towards ensuring our service is representative of the communities we serve. I hope that this addition to our uniform options will contribute to making our staff mix more diverse and adds to the life skills, experiences and personal qualities that our officers and staff bring to policing the communities of Scotland."

The announcement was welcomed by the Scottish Police Muslim Association (SPMA), a group that aims to build links between Muslim communities in Scotland and the police.

Fahad Bashir, chair of the SPMA, said: "This is a positive step in the right direction, and I am delighted that Police Scotland is taking productive steps in order to ensure that our organisation is seen to be inclusive and represents the diverse communities that we serve across Scotland. "No doubt this will encourage more women from Muslim and minority ethnic backgrounds to join Police Scotland."

Police Scotland's diversity drive follows statistics from the Scottish Police Authority released earlier this year which showed just 127, (2.6 percent) of the 4,809 applications to join the force were from people with ethnic backgrounds.

The report said: "If the black and minority ethnic groups (BME) national average of 4 percent is to be met within the organisation, an additional 650 BME recruits are required across all areas of the business.

"Considering current application trends, this would appear to be unachievable."

## Italy quake

FROM PAGE 20

The Red Cross began shipping in food and water supplies for homeless residents.

Among those who came to pick up emergency provisions were Maria Atrimala, 48, and her 15-year-old daughter.

"We escaped by pure luck, the stairs of the house held and we ran, blindly in the dark and dust," she said with tears rolling down her face.

"When we got out we could hear the cries of people still trapped and we helped those we could.

Hundreds of people spent the night sleeping in their cars or in hastily-assembled tents, the aftershocks adding to their discomfort.

The extensive damage to lightly-used properties has raised the spectre of some of the smaller hamlets in the region becoming ghost towns.

"If we don't get help, L'Arquata is finished," said Alejandro Petrucci, the mayor of Arquata del Tronto, which accounted for 57 of the confirmed deaths to date.

Petrucci said it was impossible to say exactly how many people were in the 13 tiny communities that make up L'Arquata when the disaster struck.

In Pescara del Tronto, which was virtually razed by the quake, there are only four permanently resident families but there could have been up to 300 people there on Wednesday.

Measuring 6.0-6.2 magnitude, the quake's epicentre was near Amatrice and its shallow depth of four kilometres exacerbated its impact.

It occurred without warning but in an area with a long history of killer quakes.

The Civil Protection agency which is coordinating the rescue effort said that in addition to the dead, 264 people had suffered injuries serious enough to be hospitalised. Several of them are in a critical state.

Rescue workers were pessimistic about the chance of finding any more survivors although the last survivor in L'Aquila was rescued after 72 hours under rubble.

Prime Minister Matteo Renzi vowed lessons from L'Aquila, which still bears the scars of 2009, would be applied. "The objective is to rebuild and start again," he said.

After L'Aquila, the Civil Protection agency made almost one billion euros available for upgrading buildings in seismically-vulnerable areas. But apparently little had been done so far.

"Here in the middle of a seismic zone, nothing has ever been done," said Dario Nanni of the Italian Council of Architects.

"It does not cost that much more when renovating a building to make it comply with earthquake standards. But less than 20 percent of buildings do."

Nanni said the quake's impact had been increased by the widespread use of cement rather than wood beams. "These indestructible beams hit walls like a hammer and that is what made so many (houses) collapse."

## Mohitul Islam

FROM PAGE 20

But at the same time he was confident that the trial of this assassination would one day be held.

With the changeover of political scenario, Mohitul filed a case on October 2, 1996 as a witness to one of the darkest and heinous crimes committed in Bangladesh's political history.

Though it took long, the nation finally got justice in November 2009.

The man who made it happen died at 63 of kidney complications at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

Mohitul was admitted to the hospital with kidney failure, hypertension and diabetes on July 12 and shifted to the ICU two or three days later, said BSMMU Vice Chancellor Prof Kamrul Hasan.

As his condition improved, he was moved to a cabin on July 20, but shifted to the ICU again seven days later as his health deteriorated, he said.

Since then Mohitul was in a critical condition and was on life support, the VC said adding, "We have tried our best but failed."

After his death, the hospital authorities gave bath to the freedom fighter and wrapped the body with the national flag, the VC said.

The first namaz-e-janaza was held at the BSMMU mosque, participated, among others, by Awami League lawmakers and leaders.

Mohitul left behind his wife, a daughter and a host of relatives, admirers and friends to mourn his death.

Family sources said he would be buried tomorrow after Zohr prayers at

his family graveyard at Kashimpur village under Monirampur upazila in Jessore, reports BSS.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina conveyed deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

In a condolence message, the president said the nation would remember with gratitude the courageous role of Mohitul in the trial of Bangabandhu murder forever.

Only because of his courageous steps, the killers were punished, and Bangladesh and Bangalees were freed of a curse, he added.

PM Hasina recalled with profound respect the courageous role of Mohitul during the brutal killing of the Father of the Nation in 1975.

Mohitul was at the Dhanmondi-Road-32 house when the killing took place on the dreadful night of August 15, 1975.

"He (Mohitul) hid Sheikh Russell, the youngest son of Bangabandhu, to save him from the heinous killers. But the murderers killed Russell after snatching him away," Hasina said in her condolence message.

"Through his (Mohitul) death, we lost a person who was dedicated to the Awami League and Bangabandhu family," she added.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique also expressed shock at the demise of the freedom fighter.

## Attack on Kabul US

FROM PAGE 20

Hundreds of trapped students were rescued during the overnight operation, many of whom tweeted desperate messages for help. Some used classroom furniture to barricade the doors while others made a mad scramble to escape through windows.

The attack began just after dusk, when the private university is usually packed with students, many of them working professionals doing part-time courses.

"Students were pushing each other out of the classroom window," Farzana, a young student who managed to flee told AFP. "I was reluctant to jump but a fellow student pushed me and I fell down. The rest I don't remember."

Authorities refused to confirm whether any hostages had been taken.

Nato military advisers helped Afghan forces to respond to the attack, a US official said, without specifying how many troops were involved.

At dawn, after the assault had ended, a few women students, some of them terrified and weeping, were escorted out of the campus by policemen.

**'BRUTAL ATTACK'**

The attack, apparently the first major militant assault on a prominent university in Afghanistan, has cast a pall on the education sector, seen as a rare symbol of hope for the country's burgeoning youth at a time of rising insecurity.

The growing number of students attending university, especially women, has been hailed as a success story in Afghanistan since the 2001 ouster of the Taliban regime, which banned women's education.

"Terrorist groups, by attacking civilians, educational institutions, residential areas, culverts, bridges, electricity stations... want to obstruct growth and strengthening of the values that Afghans believe in," President Ashraf Ghani said in a statement, condemning the "brutal attack".

The attack was "organised and orchestrated" from Pakistan, his office said in a separate statement, adding that Ghani spoke to Pakistan's powerful army chief General Raheel Sharif to demand "serious measures against the terrorists".

The elite American University of Afghanistan, which opened in 2006 and enrolls more than 1,700 students, was long seen as a high-profile target for militants partly because it attracts foreign faculty

## Saarc finance

FROM PAGE 2

commitments at home, the official said.

The two-day event is being attended by around 100 delegates from the eight Saarc countries.

The member countries are reviewing different activities being carried out under Saarc mechanism, including customs cooperation, avoidance of double taxation, promotion and protection of investment, cooperation in banking sector, and trade liberalisation.

The conference will also recommend measures to enhance regional cooperation to move fast towards South Asian Economic Union.

members.

The two foreign professors at the university were seized from their vehicle on August 7, when the kidnappers smashed the passenger window and hauled them away at gunpoint.

Their whereabouts are still unknown and no group so far has publicly claimed responsibility for the abductions, the latest in a series of kidnappings of foreigners.

The uptick in violence comes as the Taliban escalate nationwide attacks, underscoring the worsening security situation since Nato forces ended their combat mission at the end of 2014.

Afghan forces backed by US troops are seeking to head off a potential Taliban takeover of Lashkar Gah, the capital of the southern opium-rich province of Helmand.

The turmoil convulsing Helmand, blighted by a huge opium harvest that helps fund the insurgency, has left thousands of people displaced, sparking a humanitarian crisis.

The Taliban have also closed in on Kunduz -- the northern city they briefly seized last year in their biggest military victory so far -- leaving Afghan forces stretched on multiple fronts.

## CPJ calls

FROM PAGE 1

"Proposed cyber-crime legislation, if passed, would have a stifling effect on media freedom in Bangladesh," said Shawn Crispin, CPJ's senior Southeast Asia representative.

"The draft law's language dangerously conflates cyber-crime with fair critical comment. We strongly urge parliament to reject the bill and ensure that any future version includes clearly defined press freedom and freedom of expression guarantees," Crispin added.

The Digital Security Act-2016 was approved on August 22 by the Bangladesh cabinet and is pending in parliament, the CPJ said in its news alert from Bangkok on Wednesday, quoting media reports.

If passed into law, the bill will enable the creation of a new agency charged with monitoring for violations, including the use of electronic media to "carry out propaganda," "hurt religious sentiments," or "create enmity and disturb law and order", it said.

Maximum penalties would include life in prison for spreading false information about the Liberation War or about Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, seven years for disturbing public order and two years for defamation or harming religious sensitivities, the reports said.

Cybercrime laws intended to extend penal codes to the online world can too easily be broadened to criminalise the standard practices of online journalists, the CPJ has found.

While publicly justified as a means of preventing terrorism or promoting stability, the laws are also used to restrict information critical of or embarrassing to authorities.

Bangladesh ranks 12th on CPJ's Impunity Index, a global measure of countries where journalists are slain and the killers go free.

## Missing kid

FROM PAGE 20

Raiganj Upazila Health Complex for illness, said Md Golam Sarwar Liton, chairman of the local union parishad.

"The imam dug a pit on the day floor of his room and kept the kid there," said Md Mahbub Alam, officer-in-charge of Raiganj Police Station.

After receiving a complaint from the child's family, police on Monday night detained Robiul, also an irrigation pump operator, at the village.

Following the rescue of Pallab, his father filed an abduction case with the police station on Wednesday night accusing the imam. The minor boy used to go to the imam as they were neighbours, the OC said.

Talking to journalists at her home, Pallab's mother Dola Chakraborty said her son was playing near their home on August 21. She had seen her son walking to Robiul before he went missing.

Polan thanked the police and locals for rescuing his son. He, however, was worried about Pallab's security.

Meanwhile, police yesterday produced the imam before the Sirajganj Judicial Magistrate's Court and sought 10-day remand for him. The court fixed Sunday for hearing the remand prayer and sent the accused to jail, said OC Mahbub.

UP Chairman Sarwar said Robiul was removed from his post yesterday. Villagers demanded exemplary punishment for the abductor's", he added.

## Empty seats

FROM PAGE 20

hajis, Biman on August 23 got permission from Saudi Arabia to operate the extra flights, which should remove the uncertainty of at least 5,400 people performing their hajj.

"A number of Biman flights, which could carry at least 5,500 hajis, had been cancelled. And then, the permission to operate the extra flights gave us a relief. But unoccupied seats in each flight has now become a matter of concern for us," said the top Biman official.

Wishing not to be named, he said, in the last two weeks, at least 1,100 seats remained unoccupied in around 45 hajj flights, meaning around 24 seats remained empty in each flight. "If the situation does not change, fate of several hundred hajis would become uncertain. Then, Biman would need permission to operate more flights," said another top Biman official.

The official also said a section of "corrupt" officials from the religious affairs ministry is making money by helping several hajj agencies to have "replacement visas" issued.

Meanwhile, Abu Saleh Mosfata Kamal, director at the hajj office at Ashkona Hajj Camp, said over 92,000 hajis have already got visas while 61 percent aspirant hajis have flown to Saudi Arabia.

On Wednesday, Religious Affairs Minister Motiur Rahman at a press briefing said the ministry will take action if any officials were found involved in corruption regarding hajj operations.

## Himal mag

FROM PAGE 20

Executive Board on August 22 took the decision to shut down the publication of the pioneering magazine promoting "cross-border journalism" in the region after 29 years of publication.

"Reflecting the trend in other parts of South Asia in terms of independent media and civil society organisations, Himal is being silenced not by direct attack or overt censorship but by the use of the arms of bureaucracy to paralyse its functioning. Though Nepal has been a leader of free press since the introduction of democracy in 1990, continuous socio-political chaos over two decades has progressively weakened the commitment of the political class to open society," reads the statement.

Relying as it does on external funding support, Himal's publisher The Southasia Trust has adhered to the strict regimen of rules and regulations that govern its day-to-day functioning, the statement further reads.

Grants meant for Himal were not approved for seven months without any notification, obtaining work permits for non-Nepali editorial staff became impossible, and there were unreasonable delays in processing payments for international contributors, the Trust laments in its statement.

"Our dwindling workforce tried to overcome these and other challenges and continued production in print despite repeated challenges over the past three years despite political attack in Parliament and escalating targeting of its Chairman and Himal's founding editor Kanak Mani Dixit, but in the end suspension was the only option," the statement adds.

The Trust said it will continue to publish till November 2016 and meet all its outstanding obligations before suspension of operations. The Trust added that it will resume publication when circumstances in Nepal (or elsewhere) make it possible.

## Grameen Foundation

FROM PAGE 1

"There is no basis for the allegations in your article," said Grameen Foundation, referring to the AP's article, headlined "Many Donors To Clinton Foundation Met With Hillary Clinton At State Department", published on August 23.

"They misrepresent our work, our history, and our values," said Steve Hollingworth, president and CEO of Grameen Foundation, in a letter to the AP on Wednesday.

Hollingworth said the article incorrectly states that Prof Yunus "runs" Grameen Foundation, and insinuates that Grameen Foundation received USAID money based on unethical behaviour, rather than through standard competitive processes and based on the merit of their organisation and programmes.

Prof Yunus was a founding member of the board of Grameen Foundation in 1997, and has been Emeritus Board Director since. However, Grameen Foundation is an independent US-based nonprofit organisation with its own leadership and staff.

"While we continue to gain inspiration from the vision and leadership provided by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, he does not "run" Grameen Foundation."

Furthermore, said Hollingworth, the AP article incorrectly implies that Grameen Foundation's original partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and subsequent grant funding, were the result of a meeting between Prof Yunus and Hillary Clinton in April 2009.

"On the contrary, the partnership entered between the USAID and Grameen Foundation in 2009 was based on both organisations' strong commitment to microfinance as a path out of poverty for the world's poor."

The statement said Grameen Foundation had worked in microfinance since its founding in 1997. The partnership, formalised by a memorandum of understanding signed in October 2009, was to extend \$162.5 million as loan guarantees in support of microfinance institutions in poor countries, thus enabling those institutions to support more low-income individuals and small businesses with microloans, as a pathway out of poverty.

The \$162.5 million was not money that went to Grameen Foundation. It was a pool of funds to provide credit guarantees to enable microfinance institutions in poor countries to operate and continue to serve low-income clients. Grameen Foundation managed the fund on behalf of the USAID and provided additional co-guarantee funding.

The AP article, said Hollingworth, also implies that the money received by Grameen Foundation from the

USAID between 2012 and 2016 was unethically procured or sourced.

"In fact, Grameen Foundation competed for the USAID-funded grants, participating in its rigorous and strictly regulated competitive bid process.

"During that time, we were awarded four grants totalling \$3.1 million to design and implement projects aimed at improving child and maternal health, and improving the financial security for the poor. In addition, we were sub-grantees on an additional six grants totalling \$2.2 million. Again, we were selected as subgrantees based on the merit of our work and expertise."

The Foundation said: "We are proud of our history, and of the inspiration provided by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus."

It said as the founder of microcredit, Prof Yunus has helped to change the lives of tens of millions of poor people the world over. He founded and ran the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, and founded a whole family of associated organisations and social enterprises in Bangladesh.

"This work has demonstrated how it is possible to create self-sustaining institutions that operate within the market system and serve the needs of the poor. These are models all people, countries, and governments can learn from as they strive to address the deep-seated problems of poverty, inequity and hunger."

In a separate response, Grameen America Inc, which is dedicated to helping women who live in poverty build small businesses to create better lives for their families, denied that Prof Yunus donated any funds to the Clinton Foundation.

Grameen America said it is a fully independent nonprofit organisation registered in the United States.

"All tax deductible payments made by Grameen America to the Clinton Foundation have been solely for standard conference fees to attend the annual Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meetings. Public commitments made by Grameen America at these meetings are announcements about Grameen America's independent programme and impact, and have never involved any funding to or from the Clinton Foundation."

Prof Yunus founded Grameen America based upon the belief that Grameen Bank, a system that has succeeded with remarkable results in the villages of Bangladesh, could work in urban America.

The organisation offers microloans, training and support to transform communities and fight poverty in the United States. Since opening in January 2008, Grameen America has invested \$480 million in more than 75,000 low-income women entrepreneurs.

## On bail, he took part

FROM PAGE 1

Gobindaganj Bazar. He was allegedly distributing leaflets of banned militant organisation Hiyb-ut Tahrir and was accused in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act, said Ashek Suja Mamun, officer-in-charge of Chhatak Police Station.

The same year, Sifat obtained bail from the High Court until the disposal of the case, said Superintendent of Police of Sunamganj Md Harunur Rashid.

The case is on trial and Sifat appeared before the Sessions Judge's Court of Sunamganj during its hearings, Harun told The Daily Star yesterday.

The last hearing of the case was in June.

Sifat, 24, who had a Tk-2-lakh bounty on him, hails from Madhabpur village of Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj. Son of late Abdul Quddus, Sifat also used two other aliases -- Samir and Imran.

A team of the Detective Branch of police arrested him at Tongi on Tuesday.

Relatives and family members said Sifat was a business student at Madan Mohan College in Sylhet city and used to stay at a students' mess.

One of his six brothers said, "We have heard that he is involved in terrorism and has killed people, but we have not had any communication with him for a long time. He did not even visit us on last Eid."

Sifat was a student in Shahjalal Jamea Islamia School and College.

Dipan, owner of Jagriti Prokashana, was hacked to death inside his office on the second floor of Aziz Cooperative Super Market in the capital's Shahbagh on October 31 while blogger Riyad Morshed Babu, a student of Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology in Savar, was killed in a similar fashion on January 4 last year.

According to police, the prosecution and Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, around 500 militant suspects got out on bail in the last few years.

Many of them were later arrested by law enforcers for their suspected link with terrorism and even murders. Junnun Sikder is one such youth.

His photo was among those of the 10 missing youths published by the media. Their families want to know about their whereabouts.

Junnun was arrested on August 25, 2013, along with eight other suspects.

He had then told journalists at the Detective Branch office in Dhaka that he believed in the ideologies and policies similar to Al-Qaeda's for establishing sharia law in Bangladesh.

He had said he wanted to participate in an armed jihad and go to Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria. He would set about fulfilling his wish once he was released from jail.

Junnun along with six others were out on bail in late 2014.

All detective wings of the state are now looking for him all over again.

Recently, government ministers urged judges to be more circumspect in granting bail to militant suspects.

The Supreme Court on August 22 stayed for three months the High Court order that granted bail to Fida Muntaseer Shaker, an alleged coordinator of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) in two cases.

**2 ARRESTED AT SUST**

Police, meanwhile, arrested two more students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) on Wednesday for their alleged involvement in militancy.

The arrestees are: Rokonuzzaman Rana, 22, a fourth-year student of petroleum and mining engineering (PME), and Mehedy Hasan Tuhin, 19, a second-year student of industrial production engineering (IPE).

Prof Rashed Taluckder, adviser of students' welfare at the university, said a team of the plainclothes law enforcers showing Rab identity cards arrested them after informing the university authorities.

Police have arrested six students of Sust in the last two months in connection with militancy.

Earlier, three fourth-year students of Sust, Abdul Aziz, Iffat Ahmed Chowdhury Nahid and Sadman Abedin, and one master's student Jewel Ahmed were arrested.

Police later said Aziz was a coordinator of militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team at Sust and Jewel Ahmed was an active member of Hiyb-ut Tahrir.