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2 KILLED IN MILITANT HIDEOUT

CHILLING desperation

Radicalised woman refuses to surrender, blows herself up, injures baby girl; dead militant's son fights with cops till death; 2 women surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Apparently her motive was to blow herself up in the midst of policemen as she detonated a suicide vest while rushing to them with her four-year-old daughter.

A few steps from the law enforcers, the suspected female militant, Shakira, died in the blast with parts of her body being damaged. The baby girl, Sabina, survived with serious injuries.

Counterterrorism officials witnessed the horrific scene while conducting a raid on a militant hideout in the capital's Ashkona

yesterday.

A 14-year-old boy, son of deceased "Neo JMB" leader Tanvir Kaderi, also got killed in the operation, codenamed Ripple 24.

Besides, two women -- wife of Major (retd) Jahid, allegedly the trainer of Gulshan and Sholakia attackers, and wife of "Neo JMB" leader Maynul Musa -- surrendered with two babies.

After ignoring for hours the call for surrender, Shakira walked out of the den slowly with her daughter in front of her around 12:30pm, according to a police official who

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Policemen escort the mother of militant suspect Shila to the militant den in Ashkona in the capital so that she could convince her daughter to surrender yesterday. The mother was eventually successful.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Teen boy talks of radical boy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On several occasions, Jony Islam, a 14-year-old local vegetable vendor, had visited the house raided by law enforcers at Ashkona in Dhaka yesterday.

Talking to reporters while the anti-militancy drive was still underway, he claimed that he knew two boys who lived in that house, and one of them had tried to convince him to join their so-called Jihad but he turned the proposal down.

Jony, who is from Mahasthangarh of Bogra, came to Dhaka a few years ago and had been living with his mother and two siblings in Ashkona of Dakshin Khan area since then.

He met the two boys some four to five months ago.

"One of them was Shaheed. He was around 14 years old. The other one was Obaidul. He was 10. They

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GREETINGS
The Daily Star
wishes its valued readers,
patrons, well-wishers
and advertisers a
Merry Christmas

Xmas today

UNB, Dhaka

Christmas, the biggest religious festival of the Christian community, is being celebrated across the country today.

For Christians, it is the celebration of rebirth, new beginning, forgiveness and peace, and renewing relationship with God and

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BERLIN ATTACKER
Tunisia arrests
nephew, two
others linked
to suspect

AFP, Berlin

Germany yesterday searched for possible accomplices of the suspected Berlin truck attacker who was gunned down by Italian police, as Tunisia announced the arrest of three men linked to the jihadist.

One of those detained was the nephew of the Tunisian-born attack suspect Anis Amri, the country's interior ministry said.

The three men, aged between 18 and 27, were arrested on Friday and were members of a "terrorist cell... connected to the terrorist Anis Amri," it said in a statement.

It made no direct link between the trio and the attack on Monday, when Amri is believed to have hijacked a truck and used it to mow down holiday revellers at a Berlin Christmas market, killing 12 people.

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FLYOVER PUZZLE FOR BANGLADESH

Costliest in South Asia

Takes longest time to build; labour, construction materials cheaper here

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

It costs more and takes longer to implement a flyover project in Bangladesh than in any other South Asian country, despite labour and construction materials being comparatively cheap here.

One kilometre of four-lane flyover costs on an average Tk 123 crore in Bangladesh. The average cost of that in India is Tk 100 crore and in Pakistan around Tk 70 crore.

In some cases, the cost of a flyover in Bangladesh is higher than that of in countries like Malaysia and China, where less than Tk 100 crore is spent for building a km of four-lane flyover, according to construction experts and project findings in those countries.

"Yes, the construction cost here is much higher," said Shamsul Haque, who is involved in almost every flyover project in Bangladesh. The professor of civil engineering department in Buet is not sure exactly why the cost goes up.

WHY THE HIGH COST?

Though there is no specific study on why flyover construction cost in Bangladesh is the highest in the region, related experts single out corruption among other reasons.

FOUR-LANE FLYOVER AVERAGE COST PER KM

Bangladesh	Tk 123-250 crore
India	Tk 100-150 crore
Pakistan	Tk 70-110 crore
Malaysia	Tk 60-130 crore
China	Tk 90-130 crore

Delay in implementation of projects is also a major reason behind the cost escalation. Most of the infrastructure projects are taken up at a lower cost but due to repeated time extensions the costs go up several times.

For example: The 8km Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover project was taken up in January 2011 by the LGED and it was supposed to be completed by December 2014. The authorities concerned extended time by one and a half years, until mid-2016, as the work was not done. The cost jumped to Tk 1,219 crore from Tk 773 crore, an increase by 58 percent.

The construction cost was calculated at Tk 97 crore per km at the beginning but now it stands at Tk 152 crore per km. The work has not been completed yet even though an extended deadline expired several months ago.

Similarly, the Mayor Hanif Flyover project, worth around Tk 350 crore, suffered massive delays in implementation since 1998. In June 2010, the construction work finally began.

Initially, the plan was to build a three-km flyover but later it was redesigned to be a 11.7km-long flyover.

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State agencies in a race to rule others

CJ tells judicial conference judiciary is only exception

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha yesterday said all agencies of the state, except the judiciary, were in a competition to dominate each other.

"This tendency to dominate is most visible among those who are close to power," he said while speaking as chief guest at the inauguration of a two-day national judicial conference at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Not only the agencies or institutions, the departments of the state are not beyond such competition, he said, adding that he was not criticising any particular agency or department.

"The judiciary was not involved in such contest in the past and will not be ever. Rather, we have tried always to keep a balance between the departments and institutions of the state. For this, we will exercise the powers that the constitution has given us to discharge duties. I will hope that other departments and institutions of the state will assist the judiciary in that manner," he said.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star that the office of the chief justice was an institution. "I will not say anything against this institution. If required, I will give my reaction after having gone through the CJS's full statement online.

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Waste from a nearby tannery floods a street in Kalunagar of Hazaribagh in the capital. Several notices have been issued to tanners there to relocate to a designated place in Savar and many deadlines have passed but the situation remains almost the same in Hazaribagh. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



The Mustafizur question

AL-AMIN from Christchurch

Will Mustafizur Rahman play Bangladesh's opening one day international against New Zealand at the Hagley Oval on Monday?

The 21-year-old left-arm fast bowler is eager to play, but soreness and stiffness on the left side of his body -- which has so far limited his athleticism while fielding, especially his ability to throw from the deep -- is the most worrying aspect for the team management at the moment.

"Mustafizur has not been playing for quite some time. He has just come back and played one game. So we will make sure everything goes well with him. Yes, he is good but he has some stiffness and soreness. He is being monitored and it's so far so good," was the observation of Bangladesh bowling coach and West Indies great Courtney Walsh.

"If the coach and captain want, I will play," said the soft-spoken Mustafizur after a training session in Christchurch on Saturday.

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THE KING IS IN BASHUNDHARA
OPENS AT 4 PM ON 25 DECEMBER. KA/9/A, BASHUNDHARA R/A GATE.

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