

## Shiny happy

FROM PAGE 1  
"I used to sleep in the slums along the railway lines or by the roadside alone. I used to cover myself with a polythene sheet. Those were fearful nights, and I often wondered when the sun would rise and I would meet my parents."

"However, my life has changed in such a way that I never imagined. Now I can think of being self-dependent and building a better future," she said.

Happy Home is a project of ActionAid Bangladesh, a UK-based NGO, and it is being run by Action for Social Development (ASD), a local non-government organisation.

Zinath Rehana, in-charge of Happy Home, said when Asha was brought there, she was very depressed and would not socialise with other children. "But with time, she changed. She is quite smart," she said.

Like Asha, all the girls in the home have the potential to become successful in life if they are given proper guidance, she added.

Rina Akther, another girl of the home, wants to be a banker. A student of Determined Model School in Mohammadpur, she even earns a few takas by working at a nearby beauty parlour during holidays.

Rina came to Dhaka from Bhola with her relatives but got lost at Sadarghat Launch Terminal.

"Happy Home has given me a new life as I lost hope while living in the launch terminal area for several months. Now I want to build my own future," she said.

Rina will sit for the SSC examination this year.

The other girls at the home have a similar past, but the charity has been inspiring them to dream big.

Happy Home Project Coordinator Lutfun Nahar Kanta said, "We always motivate the girls so that they can forget the bitterness of their past and concentrate on their studies."

"Apart from basic education, we give them vocational and skill development trainings so that they can get a job in future," she said.

ActionAid Country Director Farah Kabir said Happy Home is an effort to give a better life to the underprivileged female children. Here they are safe and protected from sexual abuse or child marriage.

"We have established a model through Happy Home to rehabilitate such girls. The government, NGOs and other private organisations may use the model to support them," she said.

Expressing her resolve to continue with the project, Farah said, "The girls will be able to grow up as good citizens with the help of everyone, especially the solvent people. It is our responsibility to give them a secure life."

## Torture of youth

FROM PAGE 2  
alleged a relative, wishing to be unnamed.

Talking to journalists yesterday, Sayeed said he was in police custody for 24 hours. He was freed after his mother and brother lobbied with police for his release. He did not know about giving bribe to police.

## Ctg traffic chaos

FROM PAGE 5  
Paribahan Sramik Federation Mohammad Musa said as transport owners set a fixed amount of money to deposit daily, drivers often violate traffic rules by stopping in the middle of the road to drop and take passengers causing hindrance to other vehicles.

According to BRTA officials, about 1,14,230 vehicles got registered from January 1980 to December 2011 in the city but total numbers of registered vehicles stood at 1,52,000 by October 2016.

Actions are being taken against the traffic rule violators regularly, said Masood-ul-Hasan, additional commissioner (traffic) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP).

On an average they are giving Tk 1 crore to the government every month, realised from the traffic rules violators, he added.

"We are trying our best to mitigate traffic jam," he said, adding, but cooperation from all concerned is also required in this regard.

A separate system is required for vehicles, to and from Chittagong Port, so that those vehicles do not need to ply on the main road of the city, he said, adding, otherwise the problem would increase further.

They have a plan to fix parking spaces and designated bus stoppages to reduce traffic jam with the cooperation of the CCC, he added.

There are about 200km footpaths in the city, said CCC Chief Engineer Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahamed.

When asked about the length of the footpath that is illegally occupied, he said a survey is going on to find it out.

According to CCC sources, so far about 782 floating shops, constructed occupying footpaths, were demolished after AJM Nasir Uddin took over the mayoral responsibilities of CCC on July 26, 2015.

Nasir said they are conducting demolition drive regularly to free the footpaths.

"Everything is not possible overnight. We need time to solve the problem," Nasir noted.

# Obamas, Ivanka could soon be neighbours in DC

AFP, Washington

One of the most exclusive neighbourhoods in Washington was already abuzz with word that Barack and Michelle Obama will reside there when he leaves office. Now, it's reportedly making room for Ivanka Trump.

The elder Trump daughter and her husband Jared Kushner -- both seemingly headed to play important roles in the administration when Donald Trump becomes president on January 20 -- have chosen a house around the corner from the Obamas in the capital's Kalorama district, US media report.

Chez Trump is a white, six-bedroom, 6,870-square-foot house that sold for \$5.5 million in December, according to the New York Times. It is not clear if they are renting the place or if they bought it.

The Times said the home was previously owned by a Latvian-born businessman with extensive investments in Russia.

The neighbourhood -- a quiet and leafy one less than two miles (three kilometers) from the White House -- is home to many embassies and powerful Washington families.

Trump and Kushner, both 35, were very active in her father's presidential campaign and have also played roles in helping Trump make cabinet and other senior appointments.

Normally, American presidents leave Washington when their terms end, but the Obamas say they want to stay until their younger daughter Sasha finishes high school in 2018.

Elder daughter Malia is now taking a gap year and will attend Harvard University in the autumn.

## Radicalised by relatives

FROM PAGE 1  
Hasidur Rahman Sagor, according to counterterrorism officials.

Sohel is a former member of Majlis-e-Shura of mainstream JMB and Sagor is an ex-leader of the banned militant outfit.

The duo still at large are suspected to have played an important part in supplying grenades and firearms to "Neo JMB" for carrying out the July 1 attack, they said.

"We suspect that Sagor and Sohel are hiding in border areas and our officials are trying to hunt them down," Ahmedul Islam, assistant commissioner of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) Unit, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sohel is an explosives trainer of the "Neo JMB", which drew in many JMB leaders and activists frustrated over the leadership row after the execution of JMB's founding chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman in 2007.

Following the JMB chief's execution, it was believed that he would take the helm of the outfit, investigators said.

Marzan, who was born in Pabna's Afuria village, was slowly indoctrinated into radical beliefs by Sohel and Sagor after he had passed Dakhil examinations from Darul Ulum Markazia Madrasa in 2010.

He passed Alim exams from Arifpur Fazil Madrasa in Pabna two years later.

Later, Marzan got admitted to the Arabic department at Chittagong University. He was attached to Suhrawardy Hall but never stayed there. He joined Islami Chhatra Shibir at the initial days of his university life.

Marzan later joined "Neo JMB" along with Sagor and Sohel. He quickly became an important leader of the militant outfit for his dedication, fluency in English and Arabic, and his skills in information and communication technology.

He became a trusted aide to Bangladeshi-Canadian Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury, top coordinator of "Neo JMB", and started dealing with foreign financiers of the outfit, according to investigators.

"Marzan used to receive all kinds of arms and explosives shipments sent by Sagor and Sohel from India," said a high official of the CTTC unit, seeking anonymity.

## UN rights

FROM PAGE 16  
has undercut Aung San Suu Kyi's vow to bring peace to the country following her party's elevation to government last March.

The Nobel prize winner has also faced strong international criticism for failing to rein-in a months-long military crackdown on Rohingya villagers in northern Rakhine State.

Areas of Rakhine have been in lockdown since October, sending tens of thousands of the Rohingya minority fleeing to Bangladesh.

Lee has slammed the lockdown as "unacceptable" and called for an investigation into claims troops have raped, murdered and tortured civilians from the Muslim minority.

The army vehemently denies the allegations.

"The last few months have shown that the international community must remain vigilant in monitoring the human rights situation there," Lee said in a statement yesterday.

"Apart from what is happening in Rakhine, the escalation in fighting in Kachin and Shan (state)... is causing some disquiet regarding the direction that the new government is taking in its first year."

Lee's criticism of the treatment of the Rohingya, who are loathed by many within Buddhist majority Myanmar, has seen her face threats and demonstrations on previous visits.

Hardline Buddhist monk Wirathu caused outrage when he called her a "whore in our country" for criticising

Following the deaths of Tamim and several other key leaders, including Maj (ret'd) Zahid in different raids, the leadership of "Neo JMB's" operations wing went to Marzan, said investigators.

He was believed to be the youngest operations commander of the outfit, they said.

"Marzan was Tamim's second-in-command, and he coordinated the Gulshan café attack," Monirul Islam, chief of the CTTC unit of police, told the Daily Star.

He married his cousin Afrin Akhter alias Prioti in January, 2015.

**SADDAM CONTROLLED "NEO JMB" IN NORTH**

Marzan's accomplice Saddam Hossain used to control "Neo JMB" in the country's northern region. He was accused in 10 murder cases, and charges were pressed against him in five of those, said Monirul.

Son of Pachu Alam and Jobeda Khatun, Saddam was born at Bidyandanda village of Kurigram's Rajarhat.

He was charged with the murders of Japanese citizen Kunio Hoshi, priest Jageshwar Das Adikari in Panchagarh, Rahamat Ali Khadem and Bahai Ruhul Amin in Rangpur and Hossain Ali in Kurigram.

Saddam was also an accused in the cases over the killings of doctor Dipti, Rabbi, and Tarun Datta in Gaibandha, and attempted murder of Karbala's Khadem in Nilphamari and doctor Bimodro in Dinajpur, said Monirul.

Investigators said at least three dozen "Neo JMB" leaders and activists have been killed since the Gulshan attack.

Some of the absconding "Neo JMB" leaders are its IT in-charge Basharuzzaman alias Abul Bashar, trainer Jahangir alias Rajib Gandhi, Sohel Mahfuz, Ripon, Khalid, "big brother" Junayed Hasan Khan, Iqbal, Manik, Mamun, Azadul Kabiraz and Maynul Islam Musa.

Between September 2015 and August last year, global terror outfit Islamic State claimed responsibility for 26 attacks in Bangladesh. At least 45 people were killed in the attacks.

The government, however, has all along said those are acts of home-grown militants.

controversial legislation considered discriminatory to women and minorities.

Myanmar's government says its troops in Rakhine are carrying out legitimate clearance operations to hunt down "terrorists" who attacked police border posts in October.

On Wednesday an official mission probing the violence dismissed claims security forces are trying to force the Rohingya out of the country and said there was no evidence troops had carried out rape.

But days earlier the government detained eight members of the police after a video emerged showing officers beating and kicking unarmed Rohingya villagers.

## British PM to visit Trump in spring

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Theresa May will visit Donald Trump this spring, following his inauguration as US president, Downing Street announced on Thursday.

May's joint chiefs of staff Nick Timothy and Fiona Hill travelled to the US last month to meet Trump's team.

"This was part of a process leading towards the PM's first visit with President-elect Trump," a Downing Street spokesman told AFP.

## Five killed

FROM PAGE 16  
described the shooter as a "slender man" who was "directly firing at us" while passengers waited for their bags to come off the carousel.

"I put my head down and prayed," Schlicher said, adding that his wife gave first aid to someone who had been shot in the head.

His mother-in-law used her sweater to tend to another victim but it turned out that victim was already dead, Schlicher said.

The shooter reloaded once for a second burst of shooting, Schlicher said, but he could not say how many bullets were fired.

The shooting took place at the Terminal 2 baggage claim, said a post on the airport's Twitter account.

Mark Lea, another eyewitness, told MSNBC "there was no rhyme or reason to it."

"He didn't say anything, he was quiet the whole time, he didn't yell anything," Lea said.

Ari Fleischer, a former press secretary for US President George W Bush, said on Twitter shots were fired and "everyone is running."

"All seems calm now but the police aren't letting anyone out of the airport - at least not the area where I am," he said.

A woman tended to a bleeding, seated man outside an airport building, according to a photo posted on Twitter by a Michigan information technology company.

The Broward Sheriff's Office received a call at about 12:55pm local time about shots fired at 100 Terminal Drive at the airport, the department wrote on Twitter.

All services were temporarily suspended, the airport's Twitter feed said.

Florida Governor Rick Scott was travelling to Fort Lauderdale to be briefed by law enforcement, his office said in a statement.

The FBI's Miami office was "aware of the situation" and in contact with local authorities, a spokesman said in an email. No further information was immediately available.

Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport is the second largest in South Florida, serving as an intercontinental gateway, with Miami International Airport known as the primary airport for international flights in the area.

## Police seek

FROM PAGE 2  
people and spent money to incite them against the Hindus, added the inspector.

On Thursday, a patrol team of the capital's Bhatara Police Station picked up Anki, also a leader of the ruling Awami League, from Bhatara. Later, he was handed over to Brahmanbaria police.

He was shown arrested in a case filed with Nasiragar Police Station over vandalising the Gouramandir in the upazila.

On November 29, police arrested Jahangir Alam, owner of Al-Amin Cyber Point and Studio at Horinber Bazar in Haripur, who played an active role in inciting locals against Hindus after a post appeared on the Facebook wall of Hindu fisherman Rasraj Das.

Rasraj is now behind bars. Jahangir in his confessional statement to a Brahmanbaria court on December 8 said Anki ordered him to gather people and hire trucks for carrying out the attack.

Armed with sticks and sharp weapons, around 200 people attacked at least five temples, and vandalised and looted about 100 Hindu houses in several localities in Nasiragar on October 30.

Eight cases have been filed so far in connection with the attacks. Law enforcers have arrested 109 people, including AL and BNP leaders.

## BNP

FROM PAGE 2  
for the sake of welfare of the people.

In a separate programme, BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed alleged that the ruling AL was misleading the nation by observing "democracy victory day" on January 5. "Observing the January 5 election day as 'democracy victory day' is nothing but a farce".

Moudud made the remarks at a discussion organised by Jatuya Ganatantrik Mancha at National Press Club.

On January 5, the ruling Awami League celebrated "democracy victory day" across the country with great fanfare while the BNP faced obstructions in holding rallies and processions to observe the day as "democracy killing day".

BNP leaders and activists alleged that their party workers were obstructed in different districts as they tried to bring out processions with black flags as part of their nationwide programme.

There have been reports of sporadic violence on January 5 in several districts including Barisal, Tangail, Naogaon, Narayanganj, Sylhet and Rajshahi.

## Under fire

FROM PAGE 1  
and anomalies, including spelling mistakes, wrong arrangements of paragraphs and omission of articles, hit newspaper headlines. The issue also triggered a firestorm of protests on social media platforms.

Many took to Facebook to share the goofs, in some cases with exaggeration, and express their resentment over NCTB's role.

On Thursday, Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman said the mistakes would be corrected.

The NCTB authorities have already been asked to take steps to this end, he told reporters at a programme at Khamarbari in the capital.

**SOME BLUNDERS**  
Chapter 12 of class one's Bangla textbook deals with identifying the alphabet. As the chapter proceeds, the Bangla letter 3 (O) is accompanied by the sentence along with a picture of a little girl: I want a scarf (*orna*).

This drew huge flak as, many argued, the word is gender-bias: It's a piece of garment worn by adult girls and women. And it's not something that boys and girls as old as five or six would like to learn from their textbook.

"I find no rationale behind this attempt to teach students a letter with the help of this particular piece of clothing. What would the teachers say if the students asked them about the use of an *orna*?" said Hasibur Rahman, a parent.

But consider this: Do not "heart" anybody. So reads the translation of a moral advice -- *kauke aghat dio na*. The translation should have read, "Do not hurt anybody."

This particular goof-up on the back cover of "Hindu Shikha" for class-III students of English version raised serious questions about the quality and seriousness of those behind formulating textbooks.

In the class-III Bangla textbook, the famous rhyme "Adarsha Chhele" written by Kusumkumari Das has lost its original order.

In the textbook, the rhyme begins inaccurately. The first line reads *amader deshe shei chele kobe hobe* instead of *amader deshe hobe shei chhele kobe* (when the country will have such a boy).

More mistakes follow in the poem. In the same book, the poem "Boi" (book) written by Humayun Azad has been dropped.

Hefajat-e Islam, a Qawmi madrasa-based organisation, and Bangladesh Awami Olema League have been demanding the exclusion of some of

## Padma embankment

FROM PAGE 16  
beyond the sites selected by the authorities would definitely have some adverse impact on the river.

Asked, he claimed that he was unaware of any violation of the rules by the sand traders who have got lease of Balumahals.

**THE SAND TRADERS**  
This year, all the 11 Balumahals in the district were leased out to eight sand traders, who have direct links with ruling Awami League and its associate bodies, said district administration officials and locals.

Azizul Alam Bantu, organising secretary of the Rajshahi City AL, has alone got lease of three Balumahals, 406 acres in the river, in Poba and Godagari upazilas.

Contacted, Azizul said he coordinates sand trade in all the 11 Balumahals. He said they had dredged the river wherever it had strong currents so that silt could fill those up.

One of Azizul's companions, Babar Ali, who is Horipur union Jubo League president, got the lease of the biggest Balumahal (3,142 acres) in the district, for Tk 75 lakh, according to the lease documents. City unit Swechhchasebak League Vice-president Anwar Hossain got 140 acres in Godagari.

Other lease holders who got Balumahals below 100 acres are Rajshahi city ward-1 AL General Secretary Rajab Ali, Charghat Jubo League President Mahmudul Hasan, Rajshahi district Bangladesh Chhatra League General Secretary Merajul Islam, son of a former lawmaker

## Gunmen kill Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 1  
village in Satkhira, he left behind his wife and a five-month-old son.

Rahim was a soldier of contingent-20 BIR, Bangladesh Battalion (BANBAT)-3 under United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the ISPR said.

He was killed in the northwest of the country in Bokayai on Tuesday when "the convoy he was travelling in was returning from a patrol in the region" and came under attack, MINUSCA said in a statement, according to AFP.

"The convoy of Bangladeshi peacekeepers ... came under fire from around 50 attackers. The driver of the vehicle was fatally shot in the head. The Bangladeshi soldiers responded to the attack."

On Wednesday, MINUSCA had

the poems written by "Hindus and atheists".

Many have alleged that some poems and prose have been dropped from Bangla textbooks of different classes as per the demand of the two groups.

There are also numerous spelling mistakes in the textbooks.

**'DONE IN A HURRY; WITHOUT SKILLED PEOPLE'**

Prof Akhtaruzzaman, who was head of a 15-member national textbook expert committee formed in 2009, said mistakes in textbooks happened mainly because the NCTB did the job in such a hurry that the authors and the editors got little time to go through the texts.

"From my experience of editing a textbook, I can say that the people who do this job do not get enough time to go through each line properly," he told The Daily Star on Thursday.

More alarmingly, the NCTB does not have professional people for editing and proofreading, he added.

Echoing his view, noted educationist Rasheda K Choudhury said writers and editors should be given adequate time and honorarium.

"At the same time, their accountability must be ensured," she said.

A former primary education adviser to a caretaker government, Rasheda said that those involved with formulating textbooks must consider whether the contents are appropriate for the kids.

Rasheda, also the executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, said the volume of textbooks is increasing every year and therefore time has come to rethink about NCTB's role.

The NCTB should be divided into two parts -- one will deal with the quality of textbooks and the other will look after the printing jobs like procurement of papers and tendering, she suggested.

Renowned academician Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam, a former Dhaka University teacher, said there were some qualified people in the NCTB, but they were sidelined by "politically influential people and sycophants".

Such mistakes happen when skilled people cannot work properly, he noted.

And like in other government offices, a group of fundamentalists is working in the NCTB too, said Prof Manzoorul, who was involved with the formulation of a textbook of higher secondary level.

"This group tries to implement its agenda whenever it gets the chance. We often see its reflection in the textbooks," he said.

Aktarruzzaman Rony and Charghat Municipality Ward unit AL General Secretary Ahsan Habib.

Locals and some district administration officials said they did not hear about any drive against "illegal" sand lifting.

During spot visits between October and November, The Daily Star correspondent saw two dredgers in operation in Tangon area that according to the lease deeds were not Balumahals. The areas from where sand was being lifted were close to the Balumahals leased out to Azizul.

Azizul, however, denied having any knowledge of lifting sand outside the designate areas.

Many houses, farmland and chars in at least 10 villages were washed away in strong currents over the years, said locals.

During the 22-day ban on hills, netting that ended on November 2, the dredging went on. Environmentalists say that such practices hamper the spawning of the fish.

Contacted, Mohammad Salahuddin, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Rajshahi, said they hardly monitored the dredging activities after leasing out the Balumahals since "no one filed any complaints".

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela) Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan said usually in Bangladesh, no environmental assessment is done before leasing out Balumahals to traders.

It is high time the authorities concerned took the matter seriously, she added.

revealed that two Moroccan peacekeepers were killed in a separate attack the day before.

Two other soldiers were also injured in that incident before "the attackers fled into the bush", MINUSCA said.

Landlocked and chronically poor, the Central African Republic is struggling to emerge from a brutal civil war that erupted in 2013 following the overthrow of former president Francois Bozize, a Christian, by Muslim rebels from the Seleka coalition.

The 12,500-strong MINUSCA peacekeeping mission was deployed in December that year under the aegis of the African Union and with the support of France, the former colonial power.

France officially ended its CAR mission in October, but militias are still flourishing and terrorising the population.