



Around 1,480kgs of jatka (hilsa fry) put on display in front of the coastguard office in Chandpur town yesterday, hours after those were seized on a launch in the Meghna near Matlab upazila of the district. PHOTO: STAR

JOURNO SHIMUL KILLING Police arrest two more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday arrested two more people in Shahzadpur in connection with the killing of journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul of daily Samakal.

The arrestees -- Nazrul Islam, 45, of Barbila village and Hazrat Ali, 48, of Jannatpur village -- are close associates of detained Shahzadpur Municipality Mayor Halimul Haque Miru, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, a team arrested the duo in Shahzadpur bus stand area when they were trying to go to Dhaka, said Officer-in-Charge Rezaul Haque of Shahzadpur Police Station. "Although, they were not accused in the case, they were arrested after monitoring footage of the incident. We might get important information about the murder once they are interrogated," the OC added.

With these two, 12 people have so far been arrested, including 10 accused, in the case.

Shimul, Shahzadpur upazila correspondent of the daily Samakal, received a bullet during a factional clash of ruling Awami League on February 2. He died of his injury the next day.

The mayor allegedly opened fire, which led to his death.

The victim's wife filed the case against the mayor, his two brothers and 15 others the same day.

Mayor Miru, also organising secretary of Sirajganj district unit AL, and his brothers Habibur Haque Mintu and Hasibul Haque Pintu are among the arrestees.

A Sirajganj court has fixed tomorrow to hear the remand petitions of the key accused.

The AL has already suspended Miru from the party. The order reached the party's district headquarters on Thursday, insiders said.

KHANQAH SHARIF ATTACK Police sue 2,000; no arrest yet

A CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

Police yesterday filed a case against 2,000 unnamed people over Friday's clash between a mob and law enforcers at Miyarhat in Daulatkhan upazila of the district.

Sub-inspector Md Rafique of Daulatkhan Police Station filed the case on charges of assaulting policemen and preventing them from discharging their duties. No one was arrested as of last evening.

More than 50 people, including four policemen, were injured in the clash on Friday evening when police tried to disperse people who laid siege to Hakkani Khanqah Sharif, a religious educational institution run by Hakkani Mission Bangladesh.

Earlier that afternoon, Iman Aqidah Sangrokkhan Committee, an Islamist group, staged a rally to protest alleged "unethical activities" inside the Khanqah Sharif.

Zobair Hossain, khadem of the Khanqah Sharif, refuted the claim.

Those who held the rally under the banner of "Iman Aqidah Sangrokkhan Committee" ended the protest programme peacefully but an opportunist group took advantage of it and attacked the Khankah Sharif, Zobair said.

He alleged the attack was "pre-planned".

Zobair also said they were living in fear since the incident took place. The authorities of the Khanqah Sharif alleged that when demonstrators were returning from the rally, some of them entered the Khanqah Sharif and carried out vandalism there.

Mizanur Rahman, a leader of "Iman Aqidah Sangrokkhan Committee", said people of the committee were not involved in the attack.

Take action against case

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who have failed to catch the killers," said Raju Ahmed, former general secretary of Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU).

Shawkat Mahmud, president of a faction of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, said it was shameful that the attackers and their motive were still unknown.

The journalist leaders also sought court intervention in the matter, alleging that the officials concerned were wasting year after year without making any visible progress in the investigation.

They were speaking at a discussion marking the fifth death anniversary of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi on the premises of DRU in the capital. Several hundred journalists as well as the relatives of the couple, including their only son Mahir Sarowar Megh, 10, attended the programme.

Many of the speakers criticised Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal for one of his recent comments that he was not aware of the update of the case. They also demanded his removal.

Runi's younger brother Nowsher Alam Roman said, "Such a remark from the minister has disheartened us.

He, however, said, "We have lost almost all our hope for justice. But we won't stop [our movement] until we get it."

BFUJ Secretary General Omar Faruk said, "We are being attacked, tortured and killed. We have a guardian. He is Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu.

Central LPG line

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The Rajuk had been planning to set up LPG supply lines to the kitchens in the buildings. For that, engineers thought of installing a central Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) storage system in the basements of each building. From there, piped LPG would be supplied to the flats.

Raihanul, also the chief project engineer, said they needed additional time to ensure safe installation of the LPG storage and supply line.

Under the project, 79 buildings are being built in Block-A, 52 in Block-B and 48 in Block-C of Sector-18 in Uttara, which will have a total of 15,036 flats. The project is being implemented on around 214 acres of land at a cost of over Tk 9,000 crore.

Rajuk sources said 900 flats were still unsold. The second phase of the flat handover in Block-A is likely to begin in June.

To ensure a clean environment in the project area, kitchen waste would be collected door-to-door by forming community-based cleaning teams.

Besides, a sewage treatment plant would be set up in the area to purify waste water before releasing it in the sewer system, added the sources.

Interior walls of the flats would be painted with plastic paint while the exterior walls would be protected with weather coat paint. There would be a reception and a lift lobby with mirror polished tiles in each of the buildings.

The door frames of the apartments

However, he has remained tight-lipped.

Speakers from several journalist organisations pledged to stay united and step up their movement for this cause. A faction of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) will hold rallies today and on March 11 in front of the Jatiya Press Club, demanding immediate arrest of the killers.

Runi, senior reporter of private TV channel ATN Bangla, and her husband Sagar Sarowar, news editor of another TV station Maasranga, were murdered in the bedroom of their apartment in the capital's West Rajabazar on February 11, 2012.

Megh, who was only five-year old, was at home that time.

Immediately after the incident, the then home minister Sahara Khatun assured that killers would be arrested in 48 hours.

The Rapid Action Battalion, which is probing the case for four and a half years after the failure of the Detective Branch (DB) of police, hasn't made any visible progress in finding out the perpetrators. The investigators have got the time extended for 48 times for the submission of the progress report.

Former BFUJ president Ruhul Amin Gazi, former general secretary Abdul Jalil Bhuyian, DUJ President Shaban Mahmood, General Secretary Sohel Haider Chowdhury, DRU President Shakhawat Hossain Badsha, General Secretary M Mursalin Nomani, among others, spoke at the discussion yesterday.

Taliban suicide bomber kills 6 in Afghanistan

AFP, Kandahar

At least six people were killed yesterday when a Taliban bomber rammed an explosives-laden car into Afghan soldiers who had queued outside a bank in southern Helmand province to collect their salaries, officials said.

Nearly two dozen others, including women and children, were wounded in the explosion in the capital Lashkar Gah, many of them critically.

The Taliban, who control vast swathes of the opium-ravaged province and have repeatedly threatened to seize Lashkar Gah, claimed responsibility for the bombing. Insurgent

would be made of teak-Chambol and the aluminum window panes would be covered with tinted glasses.

There would be a transformer in each of the buildings for supplying electricity. The buildings would be equipped with concealed conduit electric wiring, an earthing connection, concealed telephone, internet and TV cables, firefighting gears and a standby generator for emergency services.

Every building would have three stairs, one for general use and the rest for emergencies. Trails of greenery will be used in the project area.

Raihanul said the Rajuk initiated the project in 2012 to meet the housing demand of the low and middle-income people.

Architects and engineers of the Rajuk and Public Works Department were working hard to make the project a success, said the chief project engineer.

Rab arrests

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Khagrachhari, trawler driver Abdur Rauf of Laxmipur and Abdur Razzak Miah of Rangpur.

Maj Ruhul said Sultan had been using fish trade as a cover for yaba smuggling. He used two trawlers, owned by his son-in-law, for smuggling.

The arrestees were being interrogated, he added.

spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi said the target was Afghan army soldiers.

"A suicide car bomber killed six people, including five soldiers, and 21 others were wounded," Helmand police chief Agha Noor Kentoz told AFP.

Omar Zhwak, the provincial governor's spokesman confirmed the casualties, saying the wounded had been rushed to hospitals in the city. The Italian-run Emergency hospital in Lashkar Gah said it had received at least 12 people, including a woman and a child.

The bombing upturned military vehicles and left the area strewn with charred debris, witnesses said.

Akbar Ali critical of search committees

Khaleda calls on party
men to prepare for next
JS polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, yesterday said none of the search committees in the last 10 years could pick competent people as members of the Election Commission.

"The search committees couldn't provide names of those people who could have served the commission," he said. "That's why the committees could not be successful."

Pointing to the recently-formed search committee, Akbar said it has also not been able to recommend names of competent people.

He was addressing as chief guest the inaugural ceremony of "UCB Public Parliament-2017" at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation in the city. Private television channel ATN Bangla and United Commercial Bank jointly organised the programme.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the new Election Commission led by its chief KM Nurul Huda would "never be able to play a neutral role in discharging its duties".

He also termed the EC biased while talking to reporters at a book launching ceremony at the Bangla Academy.

In reply to a query on the dismissal of the Padma bridge corruption conspiracy case, he said he would not comment on the proceedings of any court.

"The reality is that the World Bank had stopped financing the Padma bridge construction on corruption charges. At that time, an allegation surfaced regarding the Padma bridge project. And now, what has been proven and where is not our concern."

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night instructed her party leaders and activists to take preparations for the next general elections scheduled for 2019, although the party has raised questions about the impartiality of the new CEC.

She gave the instruction while meeting the party's vice-chairmen at her Gulshan office, said one of the participants, wishing not to be named.

"Madam has instructed us all to visit our respective constituencies frequently, keep in touch with the people and hold rallies there," he said.

BCL clash

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CMCH where doctors declared Yasir dead around 3:45pm.

Harun and Ifran had stab injuries in their hands.

Contacted, Mayen Shahriar, organising secretary of Chhatra League, Chittagong city unit, said it was "not a case of Chhatra League infighting", rather the clash erupted as a result of "personal enmity" between Yasir and Harun.

He said both are from Satkania upazila of Chittagong.

Trump mulling new immigration order

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that as president, he has learned of "tremendous threats to our country."

"We'll be going forward and continuing to do things to make our country safe. It will happen rapidly," he told reporters. "We will not allow people into our country who are looking to do harm," he said. "We will allow lots of people into our country that will love our people and do good for our country."

Trump's executive order issued in late January summarily denied entry to all refugees for 120 days, and travelers from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days. Refugees from Syria were blocked indefinitely.

The White House has not provided any evidence to support Trump's view that a ban on travelers from the seven countries was urgently needed.

An appellate court denied unanimously on Thursday to maintain a block on Trump's order put in place by a lower court judge a week before.

The debacle has raised questions about the competence of Trump's White House in working through the practical and legal implications of the order.

After first suggesting a quick appeal to the Supreme Court was off the table, US officials reversed course, insisting a legal challenge had not been dropped, including a possible motion to the high court.

20 DU students hurt in attack by Gazipur Safari Park workers

5 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

At least 20 students of the Institute of Health Economics of Dhaka University were injured after a lessee of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park and his men reportedly attacked them following an altercation over entering the park in Gazipur yesterday.

The incident took place around 12:30pm. On information, police arrested five workers of the park identified as Abdul Latif, 35, Kabir Hossain, 35, Mostofa, 32, Saiful Islam, 38, and Helena, 48.

All the arrestees work for Shafiq Rahman, one of the lessees of the park.

Syed Abdul Hamid, director of Institute of Health Economics, DU, said a group of 185 students after obtaining special permission for a group tour from the forest department went to visit the park yesterday.

Rahman's staff asked the students for their ID cards but the first year students have not yet been issued with IDs from the university so they showed the staff the admission permission receipt instead.

The men refused to allow the stu-

dents enter and an altercation followed. The workers beat up the students under the directions of Rahman, who is also the Shreepur Thana unit Swechhasebak League president, and local Krishok League president Kabir Hossain, Syed said quoting the students.

However, Rahman refuting these allegations said the students attacked him when he tried to stop an altercation between the students and his staff.

Golam Sabur, additional police super of Gazipur, said they have already arrested five people after watching CCTV footage and legal action is being taken against them.

Tourist police are supposed to be deployed in such tourist zones and when enquired about it Meer Rezaul Haque, additional police super of tourist police (Dhaka zone), said Gazipur district police was scheduled to be on duty in the area on the day.

Mohammad Shahbuddin, assistant conservator of forest, declined any comments over the issue.

A case regarding the incident was under process, till filling of the report yesterday evening.

A thorn in the flesh

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"We did not think it was a good idea to discriminate between male and female and that was why the 'special circumstances', we thought, should be applicable for both. Apart from the exception, the marriage ages remain 21 and 18 for male and female respectively."

She hoped that there would be a day when such a provision would not be required.

Rebeka, a ruling Awami League MP from Netrakona, said "special circumstances" would be clarified once the government publishes a rule through gazette in the light of the new law.

The committee also suggested that in the absence of parents, a girl's or boy's guardians, with a court order, would be able to marry their wards off before they are 21 and 18 for their (the children's) "best interests", she said.

Rebeka defended the "special circumstances" provision saying, "We will also constitute upazila-level committees, which would educate and raise awareness in communities against early marriage and check any abuse of the provision."

Ayesha Khanom told The Daily Star, "We have engaged with the government on this particular issue many times in the last few years. We submitted memorandum to the prime minister and an alternate draft law on this to the women and children affairs ministry but to no avail."

She recommended that the government re-evaluate its position before passing the law. "Such a law would impede the progress of women empowerment in the society. We'll see more children bearing child," said Ayesha.

Girls Not Brides, a UK-based global partnership of more than 700 civil society organisations committed to ending child marriage, said, "The

Bangladesh Government is concerned that pregnant adolescent girls, particularly in rural areas, would be ostracised by their communities if they could not marry. Allowing marriage in "special cases", such as pregnancy, is their proposed solution. But marriage does not protect girls. Research consistently shows that child marriage goes hand in hand with dropping out of school, losing out on job opportunities, and experiencing domestic violence."

It further noted that Bangladesh's neighbour, Nepal, increased the age of marriage to 20 and came up with a national strategy to end child marriage, which addresses the concerns that drive parents to marry off their daughters before 20. "The strategy focuses on ensuring quality education for girls, working with families and communities -- including men and boys -- to change mentalities, and ensuring access to government services," it added.

Social Action Committee is a platform of 69 women rights, human rights and development organisations working in the country. While holding a rally protesting the special provision in the proposed Child Marriage Restrain Act at the Central Shahid Minar recently, it said the provision would not only encourage child marriage but also affect children's rights and women empowerment.

According to Unicef, "Early marriage leads to early pregnancy. One third of teenage girls aged 15 to 19 are mothers or are already pregnant (in Bangladesh). Adolescent mothers are more likely to suffer from birthing complications than adult women."

With the exception of a few countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Bangladesh has the highest number of under-aged married girls.

temporary freeze in the lower courts now seems unlikely.

The measure -- given with no notice -- set off detentions of incoming travelers, protests at airports and international condemnation until a federal judge in Seattle stepped in and suspended the order a week later.

In upholding the suspension, the US court of appeals in San Francisco said Thursday the government had provided no evidence that any alien from the countries named in the order had carried out a terrorist attack on US soil.

"We hold that the government has not shown a likelihood of success on the merits of its appeal, nor has it shown that failure to enter a stay would cause irreparable injury," the three-judge appellate panel ruled.

Trump's initial reaction came minutes later on Twitter: "SEE YOU IN COURT, THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION IS AT STAKE!"

He followed up early Friday with a tweet calling the court's ruling "a disgraceful decision!"

On Friday, CNN, which was first to break news of the briefing to Trump and Obama, said intelligence officials had confirmed some aspects of the damaging Russia dossier, which were initially collected by a former British intelligence agent, Christopher Steele. He collected it as opposition research for Trump's opponents - Republicans and then Democrats - during the presidential campaign.

It said the elements that had been

confirmed were several conversations in the dossier involving foreign nationals. None of the conversations involved Trump or members of his team.

It also said that intelligence officials had at this stage, neither confirmed or disproved any of the more salacious claims included in the dossier, which was published in full by BuzzFeed and several other news outlets.

"We continue to be disgusted by CNN's fake news reporting," White House press secretary Sean Spicer said.

Spicer's comment hearkens back to Trump's disavowal of the story earlier this year, conflating both CNN's reported story in January and BuzzFeed's release of the full documents.

"I win an election easily, a great 'movement' is verified, and crooked opponents try to belittle our victory with FAKE NEWS. A sorry state!" he tweeted. "Intelligence agencies should never have allowed this fake news to 'leak' into the public. One last shot at me. Are we living in Nazi Germany?"

Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper expressed his "profound dismay" at the leak, which was circulated by politicians, intelligence officials, and journalists for weeks before the report.

Clapper said that both he and trump "agreed that [the leaks] are extremely corrosive and damaging to our national security."