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RAJIB MURDER PLANNER

# He was into militancy in Malaysia also

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Redwanul Azad Rana, a key militant of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), who fled to Malaysia to avert arrest over the killing of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider, continued militant activities there, according to police.

During his stay in Malaysia, Rana was in contact with Ashraful Islam alias Ashraf and radicalised him. Ashraf had been living in Malaysia since 2008, police said.

Ashraf became so radicalised that he agreed to join the Islamic State and the so-called IS jihad in Syria, Mohibul Islam, deputy commissioner of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Although Rana was an organiser of ABT in Bangladesh, he was motivated by Junnun Shikder, a militant suspect who was once arrested by the Detective Branch of police in Bangladesh, he said.

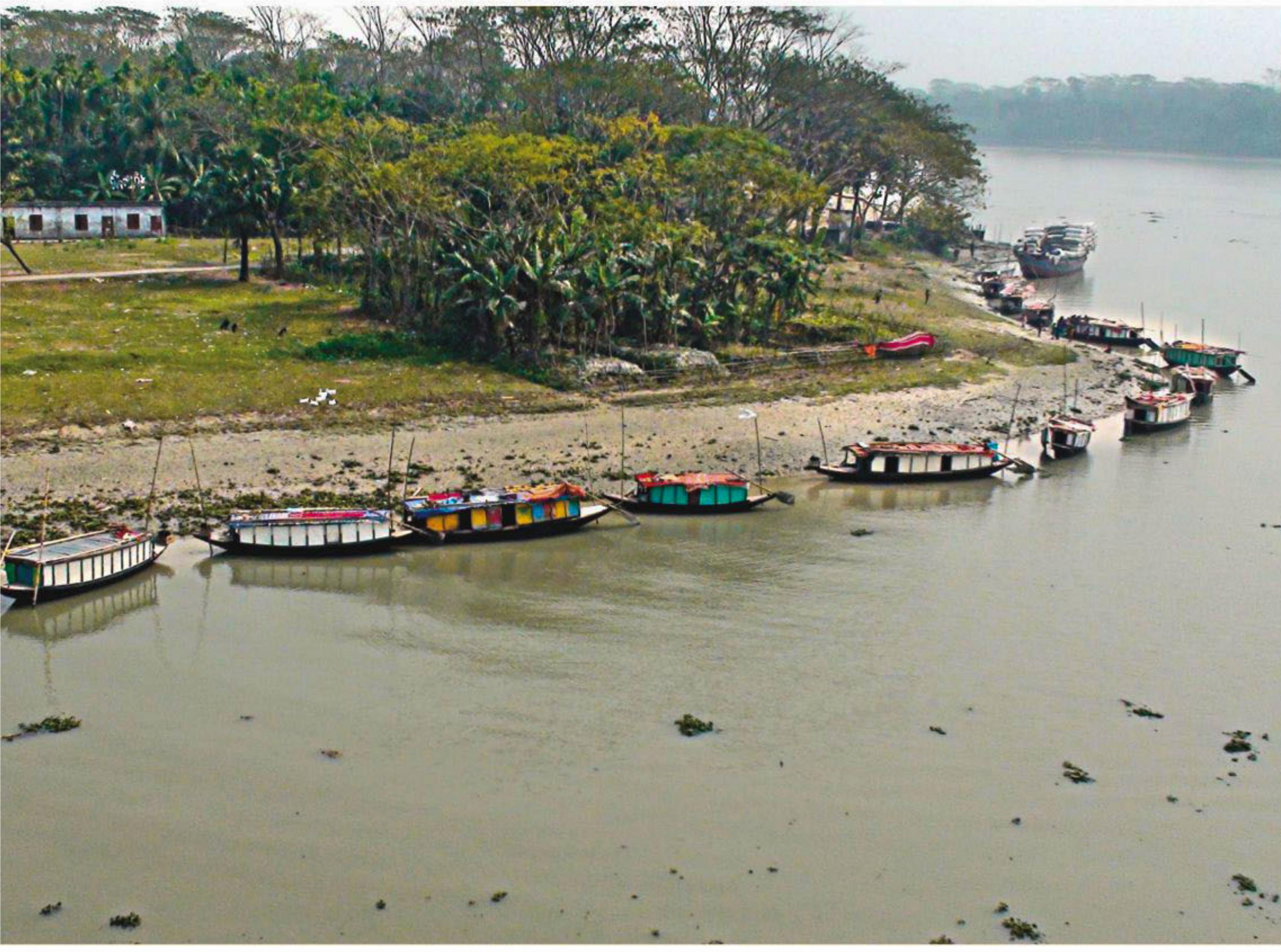
According to police, Junnun is now in Syria.

Both Rana and Ashraf tried to go to the war-torn country from Malaysia but failed as Rana's passport had fake information and Ashraf's passport needed renewal, said Mohibul.

Later, they planned to go to the Philippines, but before they could leave, a team of Malaysian intelligence arrested them earlier this month and deported the two.

On February 20, a CITC team followed Rana from the airport and arrested him and Ashraf at Uttara. Later, a

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Boats of Bedey people on the banks of the Baleshwar river in Pirojpur's Indurkani upazila last week. Traditionally nomadic, the Bedey usually travelled in boats through the rivers. But now, most of them use roads to go from one place to another.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

We're worried about AQIS in Bangladesh

Says ex-Nato Gen;

Home boss says it's propaganda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gen John W Nicholson, former commander of Nato Allied Land Command, said he was concerned about al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent's (AQIS) "interference" in Bangladesh.

"With our growing relationship with India, we're concerned about the instability in Bangladesh, and we've seen a lot of AQIS interference in Bangladesh," he said in an interview.

The interview was published on Wednesday on

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# Hurdles even stiffer for journos at grassroots

At Daily Star roundtable, editors of regional papers call for unity, coordination to see off challenges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pressure from politicians, police, local administration and criminals are the major obstacles to journalism at the district and regional levels, editors of some regional newspapers said yesterday.

Journalists often receive death threats and face harassment for publishing news on corruption and anomalies while their newspapers get a fewer number of government advertisements, one of the main sources of their revenue, they said at a roundtable at The Daily Star Centre.

They called for a broader unity and coordination among the editors in the capital and other districts to overcome the common challenges facing all.

The roundtable titled "Challenges before

Regional and District Newspapers: Problems and Way Forward" was organised on the occasion of the 26th founding anniversary of The Daily Star.

Twenty-five editors and publishers from different districts and three editors of national dailies attended the meeting.

Earlier on Wednesday, The Daily Star honoured the 25 for their contribution to flourishing journalism in the country's rural and urban areas.

Addressing the roundtable, the editors stressed the need for improving professional skills through training and coping with the fast-growing technological advancement through holding interactive sessions with professionals from different sectors.

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YASMIN MURDER 1995  
Media played a brave role despite threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

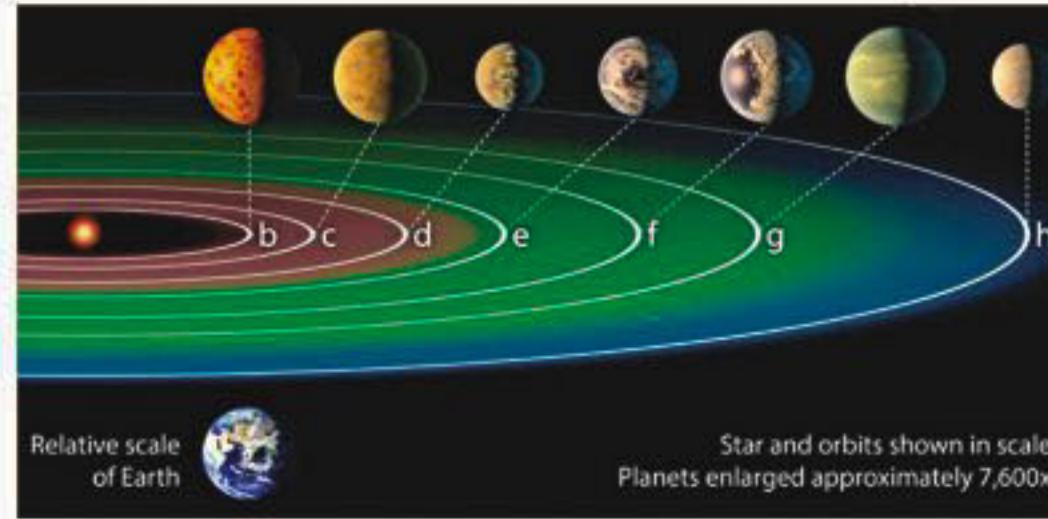
Police did everything to ensure that the news of Yasmin Akhter, who was brutally raped and murdered by three policemen on August 24, 1995, was not published in the local newspaper, said editor of a local daily in Dinajpur yesterday.

Matiur Rahman, editor of The Daily Uttarbanga published in Dinajpur, narrated how police and the then local administration tried to cover up the rape and murder of Yasmin and how local journalists overcame the threats and published the news that sparked public outrage and led to bringing

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# Nasa's 'holy grail'

Entire new solar system that could support alien life discovered



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have found a new solar system filled with planets that look like Earth and could support life, Nasa has announced.

At least three of the seven planets represent the "holy grail" for planet-hunting astronomers, because they sit within the "temperate zone" and are the right temperature to allow alien life to flourish, the researchers have said. And they are capable of having oceans, again suggesting that life could flourish on them.

No other star system has ever been found to

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MP LITON MURDER  
Another held, pistol, ammo recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested one more person in connection with the murder of Awami League lawmaker Manzurul Islam Liton.

Anwarul Islam Rana was arrested in the capital on Wednesday night, Ashraful Islam, superintendent of police in Gaibandha, told journalists at his office yesterday.

Anwarul, of Gaibandha's Sundarganj upazila, works at a garment factory in Dhaka.

No other detail was revealed. He was produced before a magistrate yesterday for the recording of his statement under section 164, said police.

The law enforcers also claimed to have recovered the murder weapon, a pistol, buried under a mango tree on the courtyard of the alleged murder mastermind's home in Gaibandha's Chhaporhati union on Wednesday night.

Now on a 10-day remand, Col (retd) Abdul

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Shafik Rehman barred at Dhaka airport Given permission later

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite having all valid documents for a trip abroad, immigration police at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday prevented eminent journalist Shafik Rehman from going to London to see his ailing wife.

However, police gave him permission to go abroad hours later.

He was scheduled to fly on a Turkish Airlines flight at 7:00am yesterday to attend to his wife Taleya Rehman receiving treatment at University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in London.

"But the police sent me back after completing my immigration procedure," Rehman told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

The High Court on February 8, according to

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 24

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-20 12-30 4-30 6-03 7-30

JAMAT 5-55 1-15 4-45 6-07 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Two children showing Pope Francis a drawing as he meets the relatives of Gulshan attack victims during a private audience at the Vatican on Wednesday.

PHOTO: HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

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Pope meets families of Gulshan cafe attack victims

CNA/EWTN News, Vatican City

Pope Francis has met with the families of nine Italian victims of a terrorist attack that took place at Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka last summer.

The attack was carried out July 1 last year during a hostage scenario. Twenty-eight people, including six gunmen and two police officers, died in the attack.

Most of the 20 hostages killed in the attack were from Italy and Japan, with one each from India and the US. Although the attack was staged by radical Islamist militants, the authorities said the gunmen had no ties to the Islamic State, reports BBC.

Pope Francis Wednesday morning met 36 family members of the nine victims. He embraced and comforted the families, Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano reports.

"It's easy to take the road from love that leads to hatred, while it is difficult to do the opposite: from bitterness and hatred to go towards love," he said.

"You are left in anger, bitterness and desire for

# Pakistan on edge

8 killed, 28 hurt in fresh Lahore blast after military announces nationwide anti-terrorist operation

AFP, Lahore

At least eight people were killed and 28 injured after a bomb ripped through Pakistan's Lahore yesterday, officials said, the tenth attack in just under a fortnight pointing to a resurgence in Islamist violence.

The blast, the second to hit the provincial capital this month, crumpled cars and sent panic rippling through the city after the wave of attacks across Pakistan killed more than 130 people.

"My God, my God, I saw so many bodies."

ies," said Imtiaz Ali, a barber in a Tony & Guy hair salon opposite the blast site in the posh Defence Housing Authority suburb of the city, replete with upscale boutiques and cafes.

The building where the bomb went off was under construction in a market crowded with people, including children, the 34-year-old told AFP.

"When I came out I first just saw smoke and dust... Bikes upturned. Cars destroyed. My own colleague's car windows blown out. My clients' cars blown out. I was close to fainting."

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An explorer coming out of Runagchari cave in Bandarban's Thanchi upazila.

PHOTO COURTESY: MAHMUDUL HASSEN

Mysterious, majestic caves

ANISUZZAMAN KHAN

Cave is an underground hollow space, primitive homes of Stone Age hominid, sacred cultural and religious heritage. Popular Bangla names of cave are "guha" and "surang" and it is one of the rare ecosystems in the hill ranges of greater Sylhet, Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox's Bazaar.

I came across a good

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