

The night the horror struck

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At another table, Hasnat Karim, former teacher of a private university, was with his family members to celebrate his daughter's birthday.

At the lawn, Fairuz Maliha and Tahana Tasmia were waiting to have ice-cream with their friend Tahmid Hasib Khan, who arrived in Dhaka from Canada in the morning.

Around 8:40pm, the diners heard a loud sound like that of a firecracker. They had no idea that their night out would turn into a nightmare.

Shouting "Allahu Akbar", five gunmen burst into the eatery and started firing indiscriminately. They turned off all the lights, held the diners hostage and sorted out targets through a test of reciting verses from the Holy Quran.

They then brutally killed the hostages with guns and machetes, and used the victims' phones to publish images of the bodies on the social media.

Law enforcers could not initially fathom the gravity of the situation. As they tried to close in on the place, the gunmen opened fire and hurled grenades, sending a wave of panic in the high-security area. Two police officers were killed in the attack.

Around 12 hours later, para commandos stormed the restaurant and found traces of mindless butchery. Twenty hostages, including 17 foreigners, were brutally murdered with the café's floor strewn with bodies.

The worst-ever hostage crisis in the country left people in a state of shock.

One year after the massacre, the survivors recount the gruelling hours of the siege.

"We heard a sound around 8:40pm. Initially, we thought it to be of a firecracker. Within minutes, we saw three to four youths of our age enter through the main gate. All of them had bags on their shoulders," said a female survivor, who was sitting at the lawn with her two friends.

In her statement to police, she said a gunman rushed towards the café and immediately shot at four to five foreigners sitting at a table there.

When the gunman approached them, they begged for their lives.

The gunman asked them in English whether they were Muslims. Hearing their reply, he then said they would not hurt Bangladeshi Muslims. He then went inside the café.

She and her friends hid behind a tree.

"From there, we could hear screams and sound of gunshots from inside the café," she said.

Later, another gunman discovered them and took them to the spot where they were sitting. The gunman (whom she later identified as Nibras) said in English that they needed not be scared and asked them to go inside the café as

another family was there.

Entering the ground floor, two of the survivors took cover under a table while another sat on a chair. They saw the attackers drag a foreign woman out of a bathroom.

"They first shot her and then started hacking her....," she said, according to a police document. 'LAST DAY OF MY LIFE'

A staffer of the restaurant gave a vivid description of the horror unfolding that night.

Around half of the 19 staffers working in the evening shift ran to the rooftop and managed to escape. But he couldn't escape and had to spend the whole night in fear amid bursts of gunfire and screams of diners.

He was in the storage of the café when he first heard screams of the diners. As he came out, he saw many of them running amid chaos and confusion, and a gunman holding a gun and a machete.

Seeking help, a foreigner approached him, and they both hid inside the storage.

Around 11:00pm, the gunmen broke its door.

Holding a gun, one of the militants, Rohan Imtiaz (whom he identified from a photograph in newspaper), said, "Come out".

He then came out of the storage and lay on the floor. "I saw many bodies lying on the floor in a pool of blood."

He begged for his life. The militants then asked him to identify himself. When he gave them his identity, they asked him to sit at the front side of the café where his co-workers were sitting.

But instead of joining his co-workers, he decided to hide behind a coffee machine next to a staircase.

"The lights were turned off but the gunmen had torchlight. Besides, light was coming in from outside. As I began to crawl, I saw bodies. I leapt over those and then crawled to the coffee machine."

"I shuddered at the thought that this would be the last day of my life," he said.

The gunmen later found him and made him sit with his co-workers at the front side of the restaurant.

ACT OF BRAVERY

Amid this horror, the story of a victim stands out because of his courage and selflessness.

Twenty-year-old Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, a student at Emory University's Goizueta Business School in the US, was given the choice of walking free from the café.

But he refused to leave his friends -- Abinta, a Bangladesh-born US citizen and also a student at Emory University, and Tarishi, an Indian student of the University of California, Berkeley -- with whom he had gone out to have

dinner. Faraaz was brutally killed along with his friends.

HORRIFIC MEMORIES

Shahriar Ahmed, a 28-year-old staffer who hid at a washroom along with several other co-workers, said the horrific moments of the night flashes through his mind every now and then and would haunt him for the rest of his life.

As the terrorists took them out of the washroom, he saw bodies lying on the floor and blood all around.

"I often have nightmares," he told this newspaper.

Several survivors told police that the militants placed two big gas cylinders next to the glass doors of the café. They were using mobile phones, tablets and laptops. They read news on mobile phones and laughed.

Late at night, they asked the chefs at the café to cook and serve food to the hostages and also the staffers.

As the day dawned, the gunmen allowed several hostages to walk out of the restaurant. But they didn't release the staffers, who were rescued later by para commandos.

The five terrorists and a chef of the café were killed in the commando operation. Another injured staffer later died in hospital.

CRACKDOWN ON MILITANTS

Following the terror attack that left a deep scar on the nation's psyche, law enforcers launched a massive crackdown on terror networks and eliminated a number of militants.

The investigators claimed that they made significant progress in the case filed with Gulshan Police Station over the July 1 incident.

They also mentioned that Tamim Chowdhury, the mastermind behind the terror attack, and seven other militants involved in it were killed.

Law enforcers are still looking for five militant suspects in connection with the attack.

"We can submit charge sheet in the case once we arrest at least two or three of the five militants..." Monirul Islam, chief of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, told The Daily Star.

Around six months after the July 1 attack, the café reopened a few blocks away from its original location.

Ali Arsalan, co-owner of Holey Artisan Bakery and O'Kitchen, told The Daily Star that around 44 staffers used to work at the restaurant and they re-appointed 30 of them after its reopening. The rest got jobs at other places.

"In memory of the victims, we are going to organise a programme on July 1 [today]."

The scene of the attack would be open to public for four hours from 10:00am for paying tribute to the victims, he added.

It's ruling party men's deposits

Alleges BNP on Swiss banks

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP yesterday alleged that the deposits by Bangladeshis in Swiss banks rose sharply as the Awami League men were siphoning off their ill-gotten money there.

"The Swiss National Bank launched a series of annual reports titled 'Banks in Switzerland 2016' on Thursday revealing that deposits by Bangladeshis in different banks rose further as over Tk 5,000 crore was deposited there within a year," said BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

Speaking at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office, he said the AL men mainly siphoned off the money that they made through "looting and corruption".

Referring to Finance Minister AMA Muhith's remark that the banking sector was in a very bad shape, the BNP leader said people believe that AL leaders plundered banks and deposited the money in Swiss banks.

He warned that those who siphoned off money abroad would be put on trial someday through proper investigations.

Rizvi said the finance minister cannot take actions against the money launderers as the ruling party high ups were involved in it.

He also blasted the government for its failure to identify those who indulged in plundering money from banks and other financial institutions and mete out punishment to them.

The BNP leader came down hard on Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader for his comment that this year's Eid journeys were the most comfortable in the country's history. Rizvi said the minister "mocked the sufferings of people" through making such a comment.

He said although most of the media ran news and published photos on the sufferings of holidaymakers, Quader was trying to "cover up the truth".

Faraaz showed

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for the whole world, is a youth. His name is Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, he said.

Bangladesh ambassador to Italy Abdus Sobhan Sikder, among others, was present there.

The ambassador yesterday said Vincenzo talked about the fight against terrorism and the great deeds of Faraaz and praised him wholeheartedly.

Vincenzo said Faraaz was a young man. The terrorists gave him the opportunity to save his life. Faraaz could have taken the opportunity very easily. But he didn't do that. Faraaz made the surprising decision that he would not leave the bakery without his friends with whom he went there.

The whole world wonders how a young man, who knew death was imminent, could take such a decision. People will always remember this as an act of valour, he added.

Vincenzo said Faraaz set a unique example of how the spirit of a Muslim youth should be.

"Vincenzo praised Faraaz so well that I felt proud to be present there as the ambassador of Bangladesh," said Sobhan.

Born in Naples in 1973, Vincenzo is an Italian politician. On 29 January last year, he became the undersecretary.

Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano was also present at the event.

Self-driving

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With a wheel base less than four by two feet, the sensor-heavy O-R3 is fitted with 360 degree HD cameras, thermal imaging, a laser scanner and Lidar (light detecting and ranging), utilizing SLAM (Simultaneous Localization and Mapping) technology to navigate its surroundings, identifying objects up to 330 feet away.

Brigadier Khalid Nasser Alrazooqi of Dubai Police confirmed to CNN that the O-R3's surveillance tools will be used to identify faces, wanted vehicles and unattended objects. The robot will alert police officers in central command, with data also available via mobile apps.

At 275 lbs and with a top speed of 9.3 mph, the O-R3 ground vehicle can't chase down criminals. However it does have an ace in the hole. Or rather, in the trunk. The robot's deployable drone can reach 27.9 mph to track suspects -- and not even Usain Bolt can outrun that.

Other features according to OTSAW's website include perimeter breach detection and monitoring environmental factors including CO2 levels.

"It will be part of our smart police IoT ('Internet of Things') systems all integrated (with) each other," Brigadier Alrazooqi adds, saying that the force will start with one unit "and will increase the numbers after we ... take all the feedback from the police units."

Manufacturer OTSAW told CNN that Dubai Police have agreed in principal to acquire up to 100 units by 2020, leased at a cost of \$10,000 per unit per month. OTSAW adds that it is currently in talks with "multiple government agencies from different countries" regarding the model.

Education a mirage

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According to the draft of Bangladesh Education Statistics 2016, over 2.87 crore students are currently studying in primary and secondary schools. Last year, the net enrolment rate at primary level stood at 97.96 percent and 73.10 at secondary level.

The Unesco paper says six countries are home to more than one-third of all out-of-school children of primary age. They are Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sudan. Globally, there are 61 million children of primary school age who are out-of-school right now.

It says: "Far too many children, adolescents and youth are still out-of-school for multiple reasons relating to their living conditions, financial constraints and social adversities."

While it is very challenging to bring out-of-school youth back to education, there is also a worrying slowdown in the pace at which the world's children and adolescents are being integrated into national education systems, it said.

The global number of total out-of-school population has dropped from over 374 million in 2000 to 264 million now, the Unesco report notes, adding that the out-of-school rate has not budged since 2008 at the primary level, since 2012 at the lower secondary level and since 2013 at the upper secondary level.

Unesco's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report shows that nearly 60 million people could escape poverty if all adults had just two more years of schooling. If all adults completed secondary education, 420 million people could be lifted out of poverty, reducing the total number of poor people by more than half globally and by almost two-thirds in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, says the paper.

Studies have shown that education has direct and indirect impacts on both economic growth and poverty. Education provides skills that boost employment opportunities and income while helping to protect people from socio-economic vulnerabilities. A more equitable expansion of education is likely to reduce inequality, lifting the poorest from the bottom of the ladder, said the report.

Despite education's potential, new UIS data shows that there has been virtually no progress in reducing out-of-school rates in recent years, according to the report.

68 killed in 6 months

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during the corresponding time and three of them committed suicide. One woman and four men were killed as they protested against sexual harassment.

Besides, 201 women fell victim to domestic violence and 144 of them were killed and 23 others committed suicide. Alongside, 34 women became victims of physical torture.

The ASK report says 143 women fell victim to dowry-related issues. Of them, 68 were killed, six committed suicide, 58 suffered physical torture and 11 others were abandoned by their husbands.

The report further says 22 domestic helps faced different forms of torture. Four of them were killed after physical torture, one was killed after being raped and seven others died due to mysterious reasons.

As many as 18 women were thrown acid and four women fell victim to arbitration and Fatwa.

Violence against children was alarming in the country this year, warns the report.

As many as 629 children were either killed or tortured. Of them, 132 children were killed, 37 committed suicide, bodies of 18 children were recovered after they had gone missing and

Globally, nine percent of all children of primary school age are still denied their right to education, with rates reaching 16 percent and 37 percent for youth of lower and upper secondary ages, respectively.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the highest out-of-school rates for all age groups. Of the 61 million children of primary school age currently out of school, 17 million will never set foot in a classroom if current trends continue, it said.

Girls in poor countries continue to face particularly steep barriers to education. According to UIS data, in low-income countries, more than 11 million girls of primary age are out of school, compared to almost 9 million boys. The good news is that the girls who do manage to start school tend to complete the primary cycle and pursue their studies at the secondary level, added the Unesco paper.

Call to close

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price for lifting an almost month-long "blockade" on Qatar.

The four countries have given Qatar a 10-day deadline for implementation ending on July 4.

UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein "is extremely concerned by the demand that Qatar close down the Al Jazeera network, as well as other affiliated media outlets," his spokesman Rupert Colville told reporters.

"Whether or not you watch it, like it, or agree with its editorial standpoints, Al Jazeera's Arabic and English channels are legitimate, and have many millions of viewers," he said.

"The demand that they be summarily closed down is, in our view, an unacceptable attack on the right to freedom of expression and opinion."

Colville stressed that countries that take issue with items broadcast on other countries' television channels, "are at liberty to publicly debate and dispute them."

"To insist that such channels be shut down is extraordinary, unprecedented and clearly unreasonable," he said.

He warned that if Qatar goes ahead and shuts Al-Jazeera, "it would open a Pandora's Box of powerful individual states or groups of states seriously undermining the right to freedom of expression and opinion in other states, as well as in their own."



The newly opened Holey Artisan Bakery, a year after a deadly siege by militants at its old location.

PHOTO: AFP

A tribute to the power of bravery

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I, as a Bangladeshi youth, look at my brother Faraaz as an inspiration to make a difference so that I too can leave a positive impact on my country and the world.

I reach out to the youth of Bangladesh, I urge you to continue on a path of righteousness and tackle every hurdle life presents with exceptional bravery. Let us forever remain united in our fight against extremism

and continue to express with our words, our actions and with our hearts that terrorism has no place in Bangladesh. Let us continue to stand in solidarity regardless of the boundaries of race and religion.

Let Faraaz be an example that inspires us to continue reaching for what seems impossible, a light that guides us to greater heights and our example of what it means to be invincible.

As for the future of our country, let

us continue pursuing our dreams leaving behind our own legacies, legacies that will inspire generations. Legacies that will continue take Bangladesh forward.

Let July 1st be the day the world remembers a young hero, a day each and every year when we remember the light of a valiant sacrifice that shone through the suffocating darkness. Let this day be a tribute to the power of Faraaz's act of bravery.

what's going on, and to report back what we're seeing," Camille Mackler, director of legal initiatives at the New York Immigration Coalition, told The Daily Beast.

She was among volunteers at JFK Airport in New York awaiting flights from London, Istanbul, Doha and Abu Dhabi. "We think we're going to see it abroad, because it's really for people applying for visas," Mackler added.

The Trump administration says the temporary ban is necessary to keep

terrorists out of the country, but immigrant advocates charge that it illegally singles out Muslims.

Under a Supreme Court ruling this week that allowed part of the ban to take effect -- and ended, for now, five months of skirmishes in lower courts -- the 90-day ban on visitors from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, and a 120-day ban on refugees, will allow exceptions for people with "close family relationships" in the United States.

US travel ban

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But the first hours of the new version of the ban, as allowed by the Supreme Court, appeared to unfold calmly.

Gone were the dramatic scenes of some people arriving from seven mainly Muslim countries being detained and questioned for hours, with some even deported on short order to where they came from.

"We're not really expecting any issues at the airport. But we're here just in case, to monitor, to tell people

Supreme Court Bar Association