



Police seizing cots and tables hawkers had set up on the pavements of a street in Rail Gate-2 area near Bangabandhu Road in Narayanganj yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Gunmen attack

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kitchen, appeared to have included suicide bombers.

According to one witness, who did not want to be quoted by name, the attackers took some hotel staff and guests hostage but there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest in a long series of attacks to hit Kabul.

The hotel, located on a hilltop and heavily protected like most public buildings in the city, was previously attacked by Taliban fighters in 2011.

It is one of Kabul's two main luxury hotels and had been due to host an information technology conference on Sunday.

More than 100 IT managers and engineers were on site when the attack occurred, Ahmad Waheed, an official at the telecommunications ministry, said.

On Thursday, the U.S. embassy in Kabul issued a warning to U.S. citizens, saying "We are aware of reports that extremist groups may be planning an attack against hotels in Kabul".

Although the NATO-led Resolute Support mission says the Taliban has come under pressure after the United States increased assistance to Afghan security forces and stepped up air strikes against the insurgents, security remains precarious.

As pressure on the battlefield has increased, security officials have warned that the danger of attacks on high profile targets in Kabul and other cities would increase as insurgents sought to undermine confidence in security.

After repeated attacks in Kabul, notably an incident in May last year in which a truck bomber outside the German embassy killed at least 150 people, security has been further tightened in government and diplomatic areas.

While it shares the same name, the hotel in Kabul is not part of InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), which issued a statement in 2011 saying that "the hotel Intercontinental in Kabul is not part of IHG and has not been since 1980".

Lakehead

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Station yesterday evening.

Mentioning the GD, Sub-Inspector Nuruzzaman told The Daily Star that Khaled was returning home from school. Some people told him to go with them and took him away in a microbus, the SI added.

Khaled, also the managing director of RM Group Ltd, a company that supplies construction equipment and materials, purchased the school in March last year.

Contacted, Sabbir Shetu, manager (HRM and Admin Division) at the RM Group Ltd, said they would talk to the media after consulting their lawyer.

On November 7, the district administration of Dhaka sealed off Dhanmondi and Gulshan branches of the school, closing all activities on allegations of patronising militancy, inspiring extremist views and helping militant outfits form.

The Supreme Court later ordered the school to be reopened with a new board of directors comprised of military officials and the Dhaka divisional commissioner chairing.

On January 13, the school was reopened.

The school was co-founded in 2000 by Rizwan Haroon, who has been dubbed as a top militant in some media reports, and Jenifer Ahmed, wife of alleged Hizb ut-Tahrir coordinator and Dhaka University teacher Syed Golam Mowla.

Talking to this newspaper on November 7, Khaled said they had bought the school not knowing the allegations against its management. He had claimed to have brought changes to the entire management of the school.

## Quader faces ire

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According to witnesses, Quader was discussing about district committee with some other senior leaders on the first floor of the new building of the party president's Dhanmondi office around 6:00pm.

At that time, some former BCL leaders, who are deprived of post, started demonstration in front of the room.

At one stage, they tried to enter the room, but it was locked from inside. Then the demonstrators chanted slogans for cancelling the committees.

Quader was confined in the room for more than half an hour, the witnesses said. Later party central leaders Jagangir Kabir Nanak, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury and SM Kamal Hossain appeared there and brought the situation under control.

Quader then said the recently announced sub-committees are put on hold and assured that new sub-committees with dedicated former

## Ticked off by test order

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"The consumption of such metals beyond the permissible limit may damage the kidneys of infants and the elderly and harm liver cells. It may also cause damage to the eyes and ears in the long run," Chittagong Civil Surgeon Azizur Rahman Siddique told The Daily Star.

This is the first time in the country that the food safety authorities have decided to test fish for detecting presence of such metals. Normally, tests on fish are done to detect hazardous substances such as formalin.

Following the directive, eight importers of the fish worth about Tk 15 crore are not taking the delivery, port officials said.

"They fear that there might be high levels of hazardous metals in the fish, for which they may face legal action," said one official.

The fish are now being stored in refrigerated containers in the port yard.

On January 6, the fish importers wrote to the BFSA, saying it would be a great hassle for them if the test was done in Dhaka because it would take a long time. They also sent a letter to the Chittagong customs commissioner the next day.

Later on January 11, the authorities decided to conduct the test in the lab of the Department of Fisheries (DoF) in Chittagong. But the test could not be done as the importers are not showing up to take their consignments.

Mohammad Shahjahan Ali, quality control lab in-charge of the DoF (Chittagong zone), said they could detect the presence of the four metals in question within a week, which is less time-consuming compared to the tests done in Dhaka.

Safar Ali, proprietor of Anika Enterprise, a clearing and forwarding agent, said the sudden decision by the authorities created a big problem for the importers.

"One importer brought 200 tonnes of fish through me, but I am not taking the delivery. I hope that the authorities will reconsider their decision," he added.

Importers and their agents also claimed that they were singled out by the port authorities, which will cost them a large sum of money in demurrage and electricity bills.

"The port authorities can order such tests, but it will affect our business badly. As a result, fish prices will go up," said Soumendu Basu, general secretary of Sea Fish Importers Association, also an importer.

Under the rules, importers must collect their consignments within 30 days of their arrival.

On expiry of this timeframe, the port authorities will write to the importers to collect their fish within the next 15 days. In case they fail, the port authorities will run the mandatory test on the fish on their own initiative. If the test result is negative, the fish will likely be sold in auction, port sources said.

But the fish will be destroyed if hazardous metals beyond permissible limits are found. In that case, the

BCL leaders would be announced within three months, said party insiders.

Later, the deprived former BCL leaders staged demonstration in front of the party office. They surrounded Quader's car when he was leaving the office, witnesses said.

But, no party leaders were ready to make comments on this.

An agitating former BCL leader said, "It was not any movement, rather we came here being driven by our moral responsibility to prevent intruders into Sheikh Hasina's Awami League."

Contacted, Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) of Dhanmondi Police Station Parvez Islam, told The Daily Star a tense situation arose at AL's Dhanmondi office over a committee, but police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Asked whether Obaidul Quader was confined, he replied in the negative.

importers will face fine or cancellation of licence, if they are found involved in applying harmful preservatives in the fish, they added.

On Monday, the food safety authorities held a meeting with the importers and officials of other relevant authorities to find a solution, said Md Mahbub Kabir, a member of the BFSA.

"We will carry out the testing for three months. If we get satisfactory results, the rules will be relaxed. Since testing takes time, importers can collect their consignments, leaving some samples for the test. But they will not be able to sell the fish until the test results come," he said.

Asked, Mahbub said their officials would monitor the market to ensure that these fish could not hit the market.

The DFSA has also assigned its own officials to collect samples from the port following allegations that importers and their agents alter the samples on way to the labs.

It was not clear from where these consignments came, but about 90 percent of Bangladesh's fish imports come from Myanmar, the Maldives and Oman. Nearly half of the total import volume comes from Oman, according to port sources.

In the first five months of the current fiscal year, 16,032 tonnes of fish worth Tk 66.36 crore have been imported. For the last four years, the average annual fish imports through Chittagong Port stood at 48,000 tonnes, port officials said.

The food safety watchdog, which began its journey in February 2015, said it was urgent to take quick measures to ensure safe food to attain the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Currently, lab tests are mandatory for more than 500 types of goods, including chemicals, food items, fruits, seeds, textile goods and scrap for detection of various harmful substances.

Facebook

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program won't affect how much news people see in their feed, according to the company.

"The hard question we've struggled with is how to decide what news sources are broadly trusted in a world with so much division," Zuckerberg said. "We could try to make that decision ourselves, but that's not something we were comfortable with. We considered asking outside experts, which would take the decision out of our hands but would likely not solve the objectivity problem."

The company said the move won't impact publishers based on how big they are or their ideological leanings.

The scores won't be made public and will be one of many factors the company will consider when weighing news feed placement. The new scoring system is only rolling out in the US to start, but the company plans to eventually expand it globally.

## No action yet

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Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on Thursday pledged to take action against those who brandished firearms and took laws in their hands during the Tuesday's incident.

A leader of Narayanganj Jubo League, Niazul on Wednesday through his brother filed a general diary (GD) with Narayanganj Sadar Police Station, said Abdur Razzaq, acting officer-in-charge of the police station.

Asked about the whereabouts of Niazul, the OC said police were investigating the complaints mentioned in the GD.

In the GD, the Jubo League leaders said he lost his pistol in the attack by the mayor's supporters. He accused 17 people of beating him up when he was on his way to the Narayanganj Club. He also complained that the suspects snatched a pistol from him when he pulled it in self-defence.

Ivy on Wednesday alleged that Shamim wanted to kill her and accordingly, sent one of his close aides Niazul to carry out the mission.

Refuting the allegation, Shamim said Niazul was not a criminal and he wielded his pistol in self-defence.

NO CASE FILED YET

Police were yet to file any case in connection with Tuesday's incident till last night.

Legal experts said police can file a case without waiting for anyone to do so and can carry out an investigation to identify the criminals if they were really sincere and were allowed to work without political interference.

Meanwhile, the ruling AL was yet to take any organisational action against anyone involved in the attack. Party General Secretary Obaidul Quader earlier said he had summoned Shamim and Ivy to Dhaka.

Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Naufel, organising secretary (Dhaka divisional) of AL, told this newspaper that sitting with them would not be possible now as Ivy was sick.

Now undergoing treatment at Labaid Hospital in the capital, the condition of Ivy, who suffered a brain haemorrhage, improved yesterday, according to doctors.

LOCALS STAGE PROTEST

A group of city residents yesterday formed a human chain in front of the Narayanganj Press Club demanding arrest of Niazul, Nizam and others involved in Tuesday's attack.

Organised under the banner of Narayanganj Sangskritik Jote (Cultural Alliance of Narayanganj), speakers at the programme said Nizam was present during the inauguration of the "Unnayan Mela" by the deputy commissioner of Narayanganj on January 12.

They questioned police's inaction over arresting the attackers of Mayor Ivy and her supporters.

"It is quite clear that the authorities are acting in a biased way in favour of a vested quarter," said Mahbubur Rahman Masum, president of Narayanganj Press Club.

4 killed

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Sensing police presence, some "criminals" fled the spot. However, two bullet-riddled bodies were found there, he claimed.

Police recovered two shutter guns, two bullets and five other weapons from the spot, he said.

However, Majid Member, one of the locals in Nongarpur, said they did not hear any gunshots during the time of the incident.

Abu Saleh, officer-in-charge of Jhikargacha Police Station, said they rushed to Chapatala area around 4:00am, getting information that two groups of criminals had locked into a gunfight there.

The other two bodies were recovered from the spot. The rest of the criminals had fled by the time police reached there, he claimed.

A foreign pistol, two bullets and other weapons were recovered from the spot, he added.

Kamal Hossain of the locality said they heard gunshots in deep night. He said it was a lonely area.

Stalker stabs

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Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. The attacker managed to flee, said SA Newazi, additional police superintendent (ASP) in the district.

While trying to save herself, the girl suffered serious injuries to her hands and neck, said M Kamruzzaman Manik, a physician of the hospital's orthopedic surgery department. She had an operation and might be released a week later.

The victim's mother has filed a case against Kashem with Kotwali Police Station.

## Teachers

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he added.

With the demand of nationalisation of their institutions, their strike waged into the sixth day yesterday with at least 85 of them falling sick and at least 25 being hospitalised.

Several hundred teachers began the indefinite hunger strike at Jatiya Press Club on January 15 to press home their demand. Earlier, they staged a sit-in for five days since January 10.

According to the forum, there are 39,092 private secondary and higher secondary institutions with 506,637 teachers.

## Akheri Munajat today

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The second day began with delivery of sermon by Maulana Mohammad Hossain of Bangladesh after Fazr prayers yesterday. Sheikh Ismail of Saudi Arabia and Maulana Zakir Hossain of Bangladesh gave sermons after the Zohr prayers.

Bangladeshi scholars Maulana Rabiul Haque and Maulana Zobayer delivered sermons respectively after Asr and Maghrib prayers.

Two devotees have meanwhile died during the second phase. They are identified as Mobarak Hossain alias Mohor Ali, 65, of Jamalpur and Shahidul Islam, 56, of Keraniganj in Dhaka.

Chitta Ranjan Das, a physician at Tongi Government Hospital, said the two devotees died due to old-age complications and breathing problems. In the first phase, five devotees including a Malaysian died.

Around 4,500 foreigners from 80 countries and several lakh local devotees from 14 districts took part in the second phase, said Gazipur Deputy Commissioner Dewan Muhammad Humayun Kabir.

ROAD DIVERSION

The stretch of Chandra intersection to Tongi Bridge on Dhaka-Mymensingh

## Inmates exposed

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"Had I got any indication, I would have taken him to a safer place," he said and broke down in tears.

The participants of the programme, first of its kind, urged the authorities concerned to immediately launch de-radicalisation programmes in jails. They said the current accommodation system in the prison gives radicals the opportunity to spread their sick ideology.

"Keeping them [militants] in one building in jail, the authorities are thinking that they cannot mix with others and radicalise people. But they [the militants] are able to discuss radical ideas among themselves and it is not changing their mentality," said a former top militant recruiter, who is now on bail after staying in jail for over a year.

The man, who realised his mistake and currently is helping law enforcers, said, "It is an ideological conflict and we have to fight it ideologically with all our efforts."

He said militants were sparking anger in talented and pious people to recruit them.

He emphasised on strong coordination among law enforcers and intelligence agencies to root out militancy.

A brother of Jebunnahar Shila, wife of "Neo JMB" leader Major (ret'd) Jahidul Islam, who was killed in a raid in Mirpur, urged the authorities concerned to keep those with terror charges separate from each other in jails.

"When my father and I visited her in the jail, we came to know that she [Shila] realised her mistake. However, there are some radicals there who can misguide her once again," he said.

A mother of a suspected militant who has recently been released on bail

## Win or bust for Lanka

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Experienced opener Hamilton Masakadza provided a solid start alongside Solomon Mire as Zimbabwe posted a challenging 290 for six in their previous game against Sri Lanka. However, despite getting starts, Brendon Taylor has been unable to prolong his innings.

The biggest setback for Zimbabwe is perhaps their inability to handle spin, a weak-link that Hathurusingha is surely going to attack.

"I think a lot of it depends on the wicket. If it is a really good wicket, both seam and spin will have an even balance," Irvine told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"In recent times, we have been playing spin a bit better. Sri Lanka may think of adding an extra spinner instead of a seamer. We just have to turn up tomorrow regardless of what team they pick. We just have to be on top of the game."

Bowling has been another concern for the Zimbabweans as nobody apart from Tendai Chatara has quite been able to threaten the opposition.

Sri Lanka will miss the services of their regular skipper Angelo Mathews

Death toll

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Stone extraction is prohibited in Shah Arefin Tila area, but stone lifter continue their operation.

Abul Lays, Companiganj upazila nirbahi officer, said the administration has built walls preventing roads into the area to stop stone lifting but traders somehow manage to find alternative ways.

A taskforce formed with members of the administration, police, environment department and Border Guard Bangladesh has been working to stop illegal stone extraction in the district.

"The administration and the taskforce are trying their level best, but we also need support from the people," the UNO said.

highway would remain closed today due to the Akheri Munajat, said Superintendent of Police in Gazipur Harun-ur-Rashid.

Besides, the stretches of Majukhan Bridge to Station Road and Kamarpara Bridge to Munnu Textile Mill Gate on Kaliganj-Tongi Road would also be off limits, the SP said at a briefing yesterday.

He added 15 shuttle buses would carry devotees from Bhogra intersection to the Ijtema ground. Moreover, 19 special trains would also ply to carry the devotees and inter-city trains would stop for two minutes at Tongi Railway Station.

Six waterbuses are also set to carry the devotees from Narayanganj and Sadarghat to Tongi.

Vehicular movement towards the Ijtema venue from Tongi Nimtoli crossing, Kamarpara Bridge, and Bhogra Bypass areas remained off limits since midnight today.

However, vehicles would ply from Bhogra towards Konabari and Chandra.

Next year, the first phase is supposed to take place on January 11-13 and the second phase on January 18-20, said Engineer Gias Uddin of Tabligh Jamaat.

said the prisons seem to be a dangerous place.

Many people, who got arrested at the initial stages of their radicalisation, became more radicalised while in jail, she said, quoting her son.

The woman urged the country's Alem Ulema to speak against the distorted explanation of the holy Quran that the militants use to radicalise innocent youths.

Mother of the café attacker alleged that they had informed a law enforcement agency about her son going missing but "the matter was not taken seriously". She demanded introduction of a separate cell for lodging complaint over missing youths. She said all law enforcement agencies could take information from the cell for taking prompt action.

Some of the parents said while being radicalised, their sons turned absent minded, frustrated, reluctant to study, and used to react to violence against Muslims around the world.

Father of another militant, who was arrested in Comilla and is now in jail, said the rehabilitation programmes for the radicals should be visible for encouraging others to return to the right path.

Visible rehabilitation is necessary as when youths realise their mistake and intend to surrender, their leaders discourage them by saying the law enforcers will kill them, he said.

Several participants urged the law enforcers to show sympathy towards the radicals who return to normalcy and agree to help police find other militants.

About the programme, Monirul Islam, chief of CTC, said they started the initiative as it was not possible to solve the problem only through raids.

as the all-rounder, who sustained a hamstring injury during the game against Zimbabwe, is out of the tournament and will be flying back today.

The Lankans' morale will also be considerably low on the back of Friday's 163-run loss to the Tigers -- the hosts' biggest margin of victory in an ODI. A toothless Sri Lanka were bunched out for just 157 runs and alongside their approach they also need to work on fielding, with dropped catches costing them in previous games.

Dinesh Chandimal's side will desperately require a collective approach to stay in the hunt as anything other than a win will see the side crash out of the tournament.

Two hurt

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A police team went the spot and brought the situation under control, said Additional Superintendent of Police (Hathazari Circle) Abdullah Al Masum.

Additional police members were deployed on campus to avert further untoward incidents, he added.

In the afternoon, BCL faction Sixty Nine and Choose Friends with Care (CFC), took position in front of Shahjalal Hall and Shah Amanat Hall following the attack, said Inspector Md Akhteruzzaman, in-charge of CU Police outpost.

Police and witnesses said BCL activist Md Shawan, a second-year student of chemistry and loyal to Sixty Nine, was beaten up in front of his room in Shah Amanat Hall around 1:30pm by some 10 to 12 activists of CFC.

He was sent to CU Medical Centre where he took primary treatment, said police.

Iqbal Tipu, a leader of Sixty Nine group, alleged that CFC men attacked their activist without provocation. "We have informed the matter to the university authorities," he added.

Rejaul Haque Rubel, leader of CFC, denied the allegation.