

UK marks first anniv of Westminster Bridge attack

AFP, London

Britain yesterday marked the one year anniversary of the terror attack on Westminster Bridge, the first in a series of assaults in the UK in 2017 that killed dozens of people and left scores injured.

On March 22 last year, Khalid Masood, a 52-year-old British convert to Islam, drove a car at pedestrians on the bridge over the River Thames in the heart of the London, before fatally stabbing a policeman on guard outside parliament.

The attack left five people dead and around 50 injured, and only ended when police shot Masood dead.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility, but investigators have said they found no evidence of an association.

The incident mirrored truck attacks in Europe, including the 2016 Bastille Day assault in Nice that killed 86 people, and a similar attack months later on a Christmas market in Berlin that claimed 12 lives.

Britain endured a tumultuous period following the March 22 rampage, with four further terror attacks, including three in the capital at London Bridge, Finsbury Park and Parsons Green tube station.

Mourners left flowers at the scene yesterday, with one note reading: "Kurt, taken too soon, but never forgotten -- RIP Much love, Sandy", in tribute to US musician Kurt Cobran, who died in the attack. "It's very moving," Mick Hodges, 67, who had travelled from the East Midlands to pay his respects, told AFP.

"Our thoughts are with the families and also the people that acted so bravely that day, trying to revive the people."

In the House of Commons on Wednesday, Prime Minister Theresa May praised the "exceptional bravery of our police and security services", while MPs yesterday held a minute's silence.

Rab picks

FROM PAGE 2

This made the Rab members inside the microbus furious. They came out, beat up the three students, took them inside at gunpoint and left the area, the witnesses said.

"The students were released around 11:00pm," said DU Assistant Proctor Soheli Rana, quoting law enforcers.

Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said the three students -- Kazi Tanveer Rahman and Imran Hossain, third year students of the university, and Muslim Uddin Himel, of Mohammadpur Central College -- were in their custody.

Contacted, Shahabuddin Khan, commanding officer of Rab-10, said, "It was just a misunderstanding. The Rab officials were probably misinformed. We released them [the students] after confirming their identities with the university authorities." No case was filed.

Red-green

FROM PAGE 1

Bangla", while hoisting Bangladesh's flag at Bangabandhu's residence.

A crowd of Bangladeshis thronged in front of the house to hear orders for the next course of action from Bangabandhu himself.

Meanwhile, independent Bangladesh's Central Student Agitation Committee and Central Workers Agitation Committee observed this day as "Protirod Dibosh".

A meeting on economic issues was held on this day between the representatives of President Yahya Khan and an Awami League team.

It was the Bangladesh flag displayed on every car that was carrying the members of the AL-- a sight which clearly disturbed the junta.

The Awami League submitted a draft of what was considered the final proposals regarding a transfer of power. General Pizada promised to get back to the AL the next day.

Meanwhile, General Yahya Khan spent the day not at the President's House but in the cantonment instead, where formal preparations for a military strike against the rebellious province were being given its final shape.

Thus, while the pretence of political negotiations was being carried on by the Yahya Khan regime, the military was in fact rushing its plans through to bring the civil disobedience movement to an end, through violence and mayhem.

What would come to be known as Operation Searchlight was formally authorised on this day.

The dark night of Bangladesh was near.

2 'Neo JMB' leaders held

FROM PAGE 20

on Niloy after hearing the remand petition.

As the court asked Niloy about his past whereabouts, the suspect replied that he was in Malaysia and was studying in a university there, court sources said.

Asked whether he knew café attacker Nibras Islam, who was also a student of a Malaysian university, Niloy got angry and asked Aminul Haque if he was a magistrate.

As the magistrate replied in the positive, Niloy said, "You can remand or punish me, even sentence me to death, but I despise you and your order as I only obey the rule of Allah."

Hailing from Kishoreganj, Niloy is the son of Abu Torab Khan.

Counterterrorism officials arrested Torab, 56, his wife Sadia Hossain Lucy,



Sagor

46, and their daughter Tajreen Khanam Shuvo, 29, from the capital's Gulshan on November 12 last year.

They allegedly provided financial assistance for carrying out an attack on the National Mourning Day programme at Dhanmondi 32 that year. The terror plan, however, didn't succeed.

After arrest, Torab admitted to CTTC officials that they sent money twice through bKash to militant suspect Saiful Islam, killed in the Hotel Olio blast.

Niloy's family members, now in jail, also told investigators that they had planned to go abroad to join Islamic State after selling all their property, officials said.

A high official of police, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star that Niloy is a top leader of a faction of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) -- "Neo JMB" as law enforcers call it.

He had direct connection with Gulshan attack mastermind Tamim Chowdhury and was a friend of Nibras, said the official.

Tamim was killed during a raid in Narayanganj on August 27, 2016 while

Nibras died in the military operation that ended the café siege on July 1 the same year.

Niloy completed his O-level and A-level from two reputed institutions in Dhaka and studied in Lincoln University of Malaysia. He met Nibras while studying in that country.

He was drawn to militancy while attending sermons at a mosque in Gulshan and became a follower of Salafism in 2012, the officials said.

"Niloy came back to Bangladesh from Malaysia as instructed by Tamim, and after the death of Tamim, took responsibility of running the militant outfit's activities," the police official said, adding he used to operate under the pseudonym, Abu Abdullah.

On the other hand, Sagor was alleg-



Niloy

edly a Shura board member of "Neo JMB" and responsible for its activities in the southern part of Bangladesh.

Hailing from Joypurhat, he completed Dakhil from Kalua Koyrapara Dakhil Madrasa and Alim from Baniapara Aliakanda Madrasa and joined the mainstream JMB in 2001. He had relation with top JMB leaders, said a CTTC official.

Requesting anonymity, the official told The Daily Star yesterday that Sagor joined the "IS-inspired outfit" through Sarwar Jahan Manik, who died on October 8, 2016 jumping off a five-storey building during a Rab drive.

A high official of police, now investigating militancy issue, said Sagor had supplied one AK-22 rifle, 22 rounds of bullets, two 7.62mm pistols and four hand grenades for the Gulshan café attack.

"As instructed by Marzan, he brought the arms and ammunition from Jessore to Dhaka by a bus, hiding those in a mango basket and handed those over to Tamim on June 25, 2016 near the Kalyanpur bridge," he said, requesting anonymity.

Garo women murdered



The four arrestees

FROM PAGE 20

On Tuesday, the bodies of Sanjib's aunt Sujata Chiran, 40, and her mother Besat Moni Chiran, 65, were recovered from their flat around 8:00pm.

The killers confirmed Sujata's death by 14 stabs in her back, chest and hands, while Besat was strangled, according to Rab and sources in the morgue at Dhaka Medical College.

As per their plan, Sanjib, Shanto and Prabin arrived in Dhaka from Sherpur on Monday and met hotel employee Raju in Kuril area. That night they stayed at the house of Raju's friend in Uttara, Mufti Mahmud told a briefing at Rab Media Centre in Karwan Bazar.

Sanjib collected a knife from Razu and all four went to the victims' house in Kalachandpur in Gulshan around 9:00am on Tuesday.

Prabin and Razu went to the victims' house on the third floor of the building and pretended to look for Sujata's husband so that they could learn about the house.

Seeing many people inside, they came out and informed it to Sanjib. After waiting for hours nearby they entered the house again around 3:30pm when they found Sujata and her daughter Mayabi inside, Mufti said.

Sanjib, who lived with the family for a month about one and a half years ago, introduced his three accomplices as his friends. After having snacks, he proposed Sujata to drink local alcohol. By this time, Mayabi left the house for her

job.

The four and Sujata went on to take alcohol. At one stage, Sujata fell dizzy and lied on the bed and Besat arrived there from another room.

The four decided to kill Besat. Razu held her legs, Shanto pushed a pillow on her mouth and Sanjib strangled her with a scarf, the Rab official said. After the murder they hid the body under the bed, he added.

After killing Besat, they went to Sujata's room. Sanjib sat on her and stabbed her indiscriminately when another killer pushed a pillow on her face.

Razu collected a knife from the house and stabbed her with it, while Sanjib confirmed her death by slitting her throat.

The killers searched the house for money and valuables before leaving. They returned to Sherpur and planned to trespass the border as Mayabi had seen them minutes before the murder.

Sujata had been living in the flat along with her mother, husband, two daughters and a granddaughter for the last two years. As all the family members are working people, the killers thought there would be a hefty amount of money in the house, Rab said.

The elite force added they would investigate whether there were any other motives behind the murders.

A case was filed with Gulshan police on Wednesday accusing Sanjib and three other unidentified people.

His fight takes new turn

FROM PAGE 1

staged protest programmes demanding justice.

Centre for Disability in Development (CDD), a non-government organisation, provided him with a prosthetic leg free of cost. During the legal fight, Limon got backing of Human Rights Watch, National Human Rights Commission, Ain o Salish Kendra, and some other human rights organisations.

"Limon fought two fights simultaneously -- one to prove his innocence and the other against poverty," said Akkas Shikder, a Jhalakathi court lawyer who has been supporting him since 2011.

The teachers at Gono Bishwabidyalay also praised Limon for his resolve.

"Limon always seemed determined. He was very serious about his studies," said Rafiqul Alam, chairman of the Department of Law at the university. He wished Limon all the success.

On April 10, 2011, Limon's mother Henora Begum had filed an attempt to murder case with Jhalakathi Judge Court against six Rab personnel for shooting her son.

Akkas, Henora's lawyer in the case, said the trial was underway and the next hearing was on April 1 at Jhalakathi Additional District Judge's Court.

Limon says he still believes justice will be served and the culprits will be punished. In fact, he wants to assist Akkas in taking the Rab members in question behind bar. For now, the legal battle seems far from over.

23 appeals

FROM PAGE 1

Six war criminals were executed. Two convicts died of old age related complications while their appeals remained pending with the SC.

Investigators said 23 cases were pending with tribunal 1 while 30 other cases were being investigated.

FRUSTRATED AND AGGRIEVED "It is frustrating for us," said Sanaul Huq, co-coordinator of the investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal.

He said witnesses and victims testified risking their lives and a lot of work went into taking the cases into final stages.

Having the appeal proceedings piled up at the SC like any other cases goes against the spirit of International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973, which advocated for expediting the trials, he added.

"Witnesses and other stakeholders are frustrated. We have to face many questions from them," Sanaul told a press conference on Wednesday.

The press conference was held at the agency's Dhanmondi office.

The senior investigator said they have very little to do in this regard. They wrote to the home ministry on multiple occasions about the issue.

The attorney general and law minister may play a role in this regard, he said, adding that the SC can form a separate bench for quick disposal of the cases.

Contacted, Tureen Afroz, a senior member of tribunal's prosecution team, said due to backlogs in the SC, convicts were getting "biological impunity" as they were gradually moving towards natural death.

"It is not acceptable at all... We have worked hard to complete the trials quickly. We are not seeing any speed at the SC. It is frustrating," she said.

Prominent campaigner for war crimes trial Shahriar Kabir said, "We are aggrieved."

Due to the long delay, victims' family members are dying without seeing justice, he said.

"We know, there is a huge backlog of cases in the Supreme Court and that is why we suggested the last chief justice on several occasions to form a separate appeal chamber at the tribunal building where the judges would sit on two or three days a week.

"These are not ordinary cases.

These involve 30 lakh martyrs. It is unfortunate that the SC is not taking this into consideration," Shahriar, also the president of Ekattarer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, said.

He, however, hoped that the new chief justice would prioritise the disposal of the appeals.

Contacted, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said the appeals of war crimes cases were not heard by the SC for many reasons, including the hearing and disposal of 16th amendment case and the resignation of Justice SK Sinha and many other important cases.

"I hope hearing of these appeals will start soon," he said.

PENDING APPEALS

Mobarak Hossain, Abdus Subhan, ATM Azharul Islam, Syed Mohammad Quasar, Mahidur Rahman, Forkan Mallik, Serajul Haque alias Siraj Master, Khan Akram Hossain, Obaidul Haque Taher, Aatur Rahman Nani, Shamsuddin Ahmed, SM Yousuf Ali, Shamsul Haque, Muhibur Rahman Boro Mia, Mujibur Rahman Angur Mia, Abdur Razzak, Shakhawat Hossain, Billal Hossain, Moslem Prodhon, Abdul Latif, Ujer Ahmed and Yunus Ahmed are the convicts who filed appeals with the apex court.

The government also submitted an appeal seeking death penalty for former Jatiya Party lawmaker Abdul Jabbar, who is on the run.

On February 24, 2015, the ICT-1 sentenced Jabbar to imprisonment until death in absentia for crimes against humanity.

Panic as large crocodile blocks hospital entrance in Zimbabwe

AFP, Harare

Wildlife authorities in Zimbabwe shot dead a large crocodile that strayed into the northern town of Hwange and blocked entry to a hospital, an official said yesterday.

The crocodile took up position outside the main gate to St Patrick's hospital and charged at anyone trying to enter or leave, creating panic among residents, local media reported.

Parks and wildlife authority spokesman Tinashwe Farawo confirmed the incident, adding that crocodile attacks were on the rise in recent weeks due to heavy rain.

"We received a report on Tuesday from Hwange where a crocodile was seen in the residential area and we had to put it down because it had become a threat to human life," Farawo told AFP.

Facebook, Google warn Singapore against 'fake news' law

AFP, Singapore

Internet giants Facebook and Google yesterday testified before a parliamentary committee in Singapore as they warned the city-state against introducing new laws to combat "fake news", saying that existing legislation is adequate to address the problem.

Their warnings were made to a parliamentary committee which is examining possible measures, including legislation, to tackle false online information which the government says could threaten national security.

Executives from Facebook, Google and Twitter appeared before the committee yesterday, and are among scores of experts, academics and activists called to testify over eight days.

The financial hub is among several countries looking at legislation to rein in fake news but critics have cautioned this could be used to curb free speech. The Singapore government has denied

it is trying to restrict free speech.

In a submission given to the committee before testifying, Alvin Tan, Facebook's head of public policy in Southeast Asia, said: "We do not believe that legislation is the best approach to addressing the issue."

"Singapore already has a variety of existing laws and regulations which address hate speech, defamation and the spreading of false news."

His comments came as Facebook is embroiled in a privacy scandal following revelations that British data analysis firm Cambridge Analytica exploited the personal data of millions of users of the social network.

Facebook's Asia-Pacific vice president for public policy Simon Milner admitted during the hearing that the social media giant could have told users earlier that their data had been breached by Cambridge Analytica between 2014 and 2015.

Festivity all over

FROM PAGE 1

and departments to bring out processions. The secretaries issued official orders to employees and staffers.

Officials and employees of NGOs and educational institutions were also informally asked to join the processions, said sources.

A holiday mood gripped public offices on the week's last working day as officials and employees were busy preparing for the processions and rallies since morning. They left work around noon.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) requested city dwellers to avoid 11 areas in the city between 2:00pm and 6:00pm. The 11 areas were: Shahbagh, Kakrail Mosque intersection, Nightingale intersection, Fakirerpool, Shapla Chattar, Gulistan, Fulbaria, Chankharpool, Bakshibazar, Palashi and Nilkhet.

The closure of certain intersections and roads had detrimental effect on others streets. People were stuck in traffic for hours. Lack of public transport on other streets only made things worse.

A huge number of people were seen walking to their destinations.

Processions from across the capital started to head towards the Bangabandhu National Stadium since noon. The people in the processions carried festoons, posters of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and his daughter Sheikh Hasina, banners describing their success stories, and colourful flags. Bangabandhu's historic March-7 speech and patriotic songs were on loudspeakers.

Processions started simultaneously from a number of designated spots, including Bangla Academy, Shilpakala

Academy, Matshya Bhaban, Shishu Academy, Doyel Chatter, Suhrawardy Udyan, Engineering Institute, Dhaka University, Ramna Park, Bangladesh Bank Chattar, Shilpa Bhaban Chattar and Nagar Bhaban.

Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Controller General of Accounts and several organisations brought out such marches.

A cultural programme was held at the stadium from 7:00pm. There was a seven-minute laser show and 12-minute-long fireworks.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was at the stadium.

Earlier, as part of the celebrations, Hasina was accorded a reception at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC). Finance Minister AMA Muhith handed her the UN letter that recognised Bangladesh's achievement.

Like in Dhaka, processions were brought out and rallies were held across the country and the celebrations would continue until Wednesday. Local administration would organise photo exhibitions, art competitions, cultural programmes, sport events, and show videos on the government's development activities.

An international seminar would be held at Hotel Radisson Blu at 10:00am today. Muhith would preside over the seminar attended by civil society members, economists, NGO workers, and high officials of UN bodies.

A views-exchange meeting of experts would be held at the same venue around 4:00pm.

There would be a cultural programme and fireworks at the city's Hatirjheel today.

I am really sorry

FROM PAGE 20

European governments expressed dissatisfaction with Facebook's response and said the scandal showed the need for strong regulation.

"It shouldn't be for a company to decide what is the appropriate balance between privacy and innovation and use of data. Those rules should be set by society as a whole and so by parliament," British minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Matt Hancock, told BBC Radio. "The big tech companies need to abide by the law and we're strengthening the law."

Germany's justice minister Katarina Barley demanded that Facebook executives explain to her whether the site's 30 million German users had been affected.

Zuckerberg said he was open to additional government regulation and happy to testify before the US Congress if he was the right person.

"I'm not sure we shouldn't be regulated," he told CNN. "I actually think the question is more what is the right regulation rather than yes or no, should it be regulated? ... People should know who is buying the ads that they see on Facebook."

Zuckerberg said Facebook was committed to stopping interference in the US midterm election in November and elections in India and Brazil.

Facebook shares fell 1.5 percent in premarket trading yesterday as the apology failed to quell Wall Street nerves.

The company has lost nearly \$46 billion of its stock market value over the past three days on investors' fears that any failure by big tech firms to protect personal data could deter advertisers and users and invite tougher regulation.

Zuckerberg told the New York Times in an interview published on Wednesday he had not seen a "meaningful number of people" deleting their accounts over the scandal.

Facebook representatives met US

congressional staff on Wednesday and planned to continue meetings on Capitol Hill on Thursday. Facebook was unable to answer many questions, two aides who attended the briefing said.

Zuckerberg told the website Recode that fixes to protect users' data would cost "many millions of dollars."

The whistleblower who launched the scandal, Christopher Wylie, formerly of Cambridge Analytica, said on Twitter he had accepted invitations to testify before US and UK lawmakers.

On Tuesday, the board of Cambridge Analytica suspended its Chief Executive Alexander Nix, who was caught in a secret recording boasting that his company played a decisive role in Trump's victory.

Psychologist Aleksandr Kogan, who provided the data, dismissed on Wednesday Cambridge Analytica's assertions that the information was "incredibly accurate".

Kogan, who gathered the data by running a survey app on Facebook, also said he was being made a scapegoat by the social media firm and Cambridge Analytica. Both companies have blamed Kogan for alleged data misuse.

About 300,000 Facebook users responded to Kogan's quiz, but that gave the researcher access to those people's Facebook friends as well, who had not agreed to share information, producing details on 50 million users.

Facebook has said it subsequently made changes that prevent people from sharing data about friends and maintains that no breach occurred because the original users gave permission. Critics say that it essentially was a breach because data of unsuspecting friends was taken.

Analysts say the incident may reduce user engagement with Facebook, lessening its clout with advertisers. Three Wall Street brokerages cut their price targets.