



A vehicle plows into a group of protesters marching along 4th Street NE at the Downtown Mall in Charlottesville on the day of the Unite the Right rally on August 12, 2017. The picture won the Pulitzer Prize for breaking news photography.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladeshi

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also the essential role photojournalism can play in revealing it," Reuters Editor-in-Chief Stephen J Adler said.

Ponir's winning photo was taken on November 12, 2017 showing Myanmar's Rohingyas crossing the Naf River with an improvised raft to reach Teknaf in Bangladesh.

Reuters won Pulitzer Prizes on Monday for international reporting and photography.

The Pulitzer, the most prestigious awards in American journalism, recognised Reuters in international reporting for exposing the methods of police killing squads in Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs, and for feature photography documenting the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

In a Facebook post Ponir, a photographer of Thomson Reuters, said, "Such a great news!!!! Reuters staff has won Pulitzer Prize in feature photography category for exposing violence against Rohingya refugees in Myanmar. I'm so proud to be part of the team."

Shab-e-Barat

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Shab-e-Barat is observed on the 15th night of Shaban month.

According to Muslim belief, Shab-e-Barat is the night when Allah arranges the affairs of the following year. On Shab-e-Barat, Allah writes the destinies of all the creations for the coming year by taking into account their past deeds.

The Muslim devotees will offer special prayers, recite from the Holy Quran, hold milad, zikir and other religious rituals seeking divine blessings for the wellbeing of mankind.

US EMBASSY MOVE TO JERUSALEM

Arab ire unlikely to spark action

AFP, Dubai

Arab leaders at a summit in Saudi Arabia have slammed Washington's decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move its embassy there, but analysts say their words are unlikely to lead to action.

The shift by US President Donald Trump has sparked deep anger across the Arab world, particularly among Palestinians, who see East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

But it seemed clear at the Arab League summit, held in the eastern city of Dhahran on Sunday, that regional rulers, particularly in the Gulf, are unwilling to jeopardise close ties with Trump as they seek to counter Iran.

"Generally, Arab League summits produce more rhetoric than action," said Denis Bauchard, an expert from the French Institute on International Relations. "I don't think this will go beyond declarations."

For Riyadh, he said, "what is essential is the relationship with Washington".

Israel occupied mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem and the surrounding region in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it, declaring the city its capital.

Neither move was recognised by the international community -- but the United States is now set to shift its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May.

That breaks with decades of US policy and international consensus that the status of the city should be settled in negotiations.

Nour Odeh, a Palestinian political analyst, said Palestinians had low expectations for any Arab response.

"Ordinary people and politicians alike understand the dismal state of Arab affairs, and no Arab government is going to confront Trump," she said.

Islami Bank chairman quits

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am not interested to talk about this right now."

The Daily Star talked to three directors and a number of senior executives of the bank, and they were completely in the dark about the development.

"I had no idea about the changes," said a director, requesting to remain unnamed. "I don't know who are bringing the changes and why."

A Bangladesh Bank official told The Daily Star last night that the Islami Bank had been facing liquidity crunch over the past few months because of its aggressive lending.

Also, the advance-deposit ratio of the bank has recently crossed 92 percent, in violation of the permissible limit of 90 percent set by the BB for Shariah-based banks, the official added.

In some cases, the Islami Bank even faced crisis in disbursing large-scale loans in recent months, the BB official said.

The Islami Bank board also appointed Prof Selim Uddin of Chittagong University, as a board member and executive committee chairman of the bank yesterday. He replaced Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdul Matin.

Matin has been made chairman of the bank's risk management committee.

Selim said that the bank management recently requested him to serve the board as a director.

"I don't know yet whether I will be an independent director or a representative of a company in the bank's board," he said.

In January last year, the bank saw some major changes. At the time, its chairman, several directors, managing director and heads of different committees were changed.

The bank started witnessing the changes after some little-known companies bought shares of the bank.

The companies include Platinum Endeavours Limited, Paradise International Limited, BLU International Limited, ABC Ventures Limited, Grand Business Limited, and

Excel Dyeing and Printing Limited. They held over 14 percent stakes in the bank till November last year.

S Alam Group, a Chittagong-based conglomerate, is allegedly linked to these companies.

Arastoo, who became a director of the bank on December 15, 2016, was made chairman as a representative of Armada Spinning Mills, another little known company.

He had replaced Mustafa Anwar, who had represented Ibn Sina Trust, which is believed to have connections with the Jamaat-e-Islami.

The bank had also brought changes in the executive committee, audit committee and risk management committee, with Abdul Matin, Zillur Rahman and Abdul Mabud becoming the new chairmen of those committees respectively.

Mabud was removed from the board within a few months.

Then on May 20 last year, a group of seven directors threatened to step down if a single of them had to resign under pressure.

They made the threat following disclosure by Syed Ahsanul Alam, former vice-chairman of the bank, on May 11 that he was being asked by some quarters to resign.

Ahsanul was finally removed from his executive post on May 23. A few days later, he was also removed from the board of directors.

Earlier this month, five top officials of the bank, including an additional managing director and three deputy managing directors quit.

"More changes in the top management will come soon," another director said yesterday.

The IBBL was established in 1983 as the country's first Shariah-based bank. Individuals, government institutions and some banks in the Middle East had over two-thirds shares in the bank at that time. Now their holdings have come down to 46 percent.

A share of Islami Bank was traded at Tk 27 in Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday, down from Tk 40 a year ago.

JU teachers scuffle

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around 15 teachers loyal to the VC assaulted them around 5:00am, leaving all six injured, they alleged.

In protest against the "assault", they held a press conference on the campus around noon. They also continued their pre-scheduled strike from 8:30am to 4:00pm, hampering regular classes and exams.

They also demanded that the JU authorities remove the proctorial body.

Meanwhile, around 60 teachers loyal to the incumbent VC formed a human chain in front of the JU administrative building around noon protesting "illogical strike".

Speaking at the human chain, Prof Hanif Ali of computer science and engineering department said the anti-VC group is trying to create unrest on the campus.

While talking to this correspondent after the human chain, Hanif alleged that some of their teachers were also injured by the anti-VC group when they tried to prevent the group from locking the transport office.

He said they had also verbally complained of assault to the VC.

While talking to this correspondent, JU VC said the incident was "sorrowful for us".

She said she had called a meeting today with the teachers.

One of the allegations of the anti-VC group is that VC Farzana forcibly "removed" nine hall provosts on April

11 by exercising special rights, and appointed new ones.

According to the statute, the provost of a hall shall be appointed by the syndicate. But the VC appointed new provosts without the syndicate's approval, they alleged.

The teachers also alleged that VC appointed those who had been involved in controversial activities on the campus.

However, Prof Farzana denied all the allegations.

Moreover, a three-member probe body was formed to investigate the incident and submit its report within the next seven workdays, said the VC.

Meanwhile, terming the strike "unexpected", JU authorities issued a statement yesterday saying the nine hall provosts were replaced maintaining the university rules as their tenure had expired.

"It is not a violation of the university act," the statement added.

On the other hand, the anti-VC group also rejected the probe body, alleging that it was not "neutral".

Associate Prof Farid Ahmed, also a spokesperson of the anti-VC group, said they would continue their strike from 8:30am to 12:00 noon.

Only two administrative buildings will remain within the purview of the strike, he said, adding that classes and exams would continue as usual.

He said they would form a human chain on the campus today wearing black badges.

Banking

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One of the steps taken by the finance ministry is lowering the banks' cash reserve requirement, which is a specified minimum fraction of the total deposits that banks must hold as reserves either in cash or as deposits with the central bank, by one percentage point to 5.5 percent.

The move is likely to encourage the poorly performing private banks to continue with their business-as-usual practices and may also encourage banks to lend more aggressively and indiscriminately.

"The attempt on the part of the finance ministry to rescue the private banks through CRR reduction was in fact similar to government's recapitalisation support for the state-run banks."

Between fiscal 2009-10 and fiscal 2016-17, the government had allocated Tk 15,705 crore for the purpose of recapitalising the state lenders.

"Such support has not improved the performance of these banks," said CPD Research Fellow Towfiqul Islam Khan, who presented the analysis at a press conference at the CIRDAP Auditorium.

Rather, the amount of the non-performing loans had piled up on a continuous basis over the past years.

"Now I think the banking sector has turned into an orphan and its protectors are abusing it," said CPD Distinguished Fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya.

India boils

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"moment of existential crisis" in which the government's response would determine whether the nation could "overcome the crisis of constitutional values, of governance and the ethical order".

In a strongly worded letter the 49 signatories, including secretaries and top law and order officials, sought to pin the blame on right wing politics.

"The bestiality and the barbarity involved in the rape and murder of an eight-year-old child shows the depths of depravity that we have sunk into. In post-independence India, this is our darkest hour and we find the response of our government, the leaders of our political parties inadequate and feeble," the letter said.

"At this juncture, we see no light at the end of the tunnel and we hang our heads in shame. Our sense of shame is all the more acute because some of our younger colleagues... also seem to have failed in their duty," it added.

A 2014 UN report said one in three rape victims in India was a minor. Nearly 11,000 cases of child rape were reported in India in 2015, according to the National Crime Records Bureau's latest figures.

RAPE AND MURDER SPARKS RIOT IN KARACHI

Meanwhile, in Pakistan's Karachi, at least one man was killed and several injured yesterday when a riot broke out in protest at the rape and murder of a six-year-old girl.

Crowds took to the streets after the body of the victim was discovered late Monday.

The rioting comes months after six-year-old Zainab Fatima Ameen was raped and killed in eastern Pakistan's city of Kasur, sparking nationwide outrage and soul-searching over how the country fails to protect its most vulnerable.

In February a Pakistani court handed down four death sentences on the man charged with the killing.

5 killed

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was turned over to police in connection with mugging, said Officer-in-Charge Mosarraf Hossain Tarafder of Akhaura Police Station.

The OC said Khokon was captured by locals when he was trying to rob Tk 18 lakh from a representative of a firm near Janata Bank at Lal Bazar.

Police then launched a raid near Titas Railway Bridge taking Khokon with them to recover arms and capture his cohorts, he said, adding that Khokon's accomplices opened fire on police realising their presence.

Police also retaliated.

Khokon was hit at one point and he died on the way to hospital, Mosarraf added.

The OC claimed that three policemen were injured in "gunfight" and a pistol, two bullets and some sharp weapons were recovered from the spot.

An alleged member of an outlaw group was killed in a "shootout" between police and his armed cohorts in Joukura Ferry Terminal area of Rajbari Sadar, said Rajbari Superintendent of Police Asma Siddika Mili.

Three policemen were slightly injured in the incident.

The deceased was identified as Saidur Rahman, 32, she said at a press briefing.

Police recovered two guns (one foreign made), 55 bullets, and a knife from the spot.

Saidur had seven cases filed against him, including two for murder, she added.

At least 144 people were killed in such "crossfires" or "shootouts" last year, according to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra. In the first three months of this year 45 had been killed in such incidents.

Dhaka wants

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climate change although we're the least polluter," she said, adding that the rise in sea level would induce displacement of millions in the country.

"It's a shared responsibility of the global community to protect our planet, our biodiversity and our climate," the prime minister said, adding that Bangladesh was in the process of developing "Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100" to mitigate and manage the climate change impacts.

About terrorism and militancy, the prime minister said Bangladesh was following a "zero-tolerance" policy for the menace.

ON WOMAN EMPOWERMENT

At another event, Hasina stressed the need for building a future where world peace and women empowerment would remain the cornerstone to create a peaceful society free from poverty and discrimination.

She was delivering her keynote speech at a discussion on "Educate to empower: Making equitable and quality primary and secondary education a reality for girls across the Commonwealth".

"We want to build a future where world peace and women empowerment remain the cornerstone to create a society free from poverty, discrimination and conflict," she said

The Commonwealth Women's Forum organised the programme in London's Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

Hasina said education for all would remain Bangladesh's prime objective towards achieving the overarching policy visions of inclusive development with the guiding norm of sustainable development goals.

The Bangladesh government attaches importance to girls' education which helps eliminate various social hurdles and it has also enhanced the living standards of the rural women, she said.

"Besides, incidences of exploitation and domestic abuses have also gone down substantially following the development in female education sector."

Hasina said the National Education Policy 2010 laid emphasis on education that promotes economic productivity and social and humane qualities. "Without proper education, it's not possible to empower women."

For empowering women politically, the government has undertaken vari-

ous measures like increasing reserved seats in parliament and keeping aside 30 percent seats for women in various local government bodies, she mentioned.

The PM said Bangladesh was the only country in the world where the Speaker, the leader and deputy leader of the House and the leader of the opposition were women.

She elaborated steps, including distribution of free textbooks, providing stipends to students, development of training infrastructures for teachers, women's participation in income-generating activities and creating opportunities for them in the job market.

She said Bangladesh had now reached a new trajectory in its development journey as its GDP was projected to grow at 7.65 percent in the current fiscal year.

Hasina arrived in London early yesterday on a six-day official visit to the UK to join the 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

British Prime Minister Theresa May's representative Neil Holland and Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK Nazmul Qaunine received the premier at the airport.

From the airport, she was taken to Claridge's Hotel Limited where she will be staying during her visit to the UK.

ACC questions

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However, while talking to journalists, Atiur Rahman said the allegations brought against him were baseless.

"I want to prove that I am the only person who does politics with honesty and transparency. I proved it in the past and will do so in future," he said.

"A group has brought the allegations to tarnish my image," he alleged.

Replying to a question over the source of money, Atiur Rahman said he had built the house by taking loan from the Sonali Bank.

"The Government's image will not be tarnished because I will prove that I am clean," he said.

ACC Secretary Shamsul Arefin said, "The commission received the allegations against him [Atiur Rahman] three years ago."

The matter remained pending with the High Court. That is why the ACC could not initiate an enquiry, he observed.

Six years on, no progress

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night," said an emotional Rushdir over the mobile phone from a city hospital where she was undergoing treatment.

Pointing to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's assurance in 2012 that Ilias would be traced, Rushdir said she did not see any initiative on the part of the PM in this regard.

In an emotion-soaked voice, Rushdir said, "We still appeal to the prime minister to take initiative for finding Ilias Ali. We want him back."

After Ilias went missing, Rushdir claimed several times that her husband was a victim of political enmity.

Quoting Ilias, Rushdir on several occasions told reporters that intelligence agencies had prepared a list of opposition leaders who were vocal against the government on some international issues. Ilias told her that he was on the list.

Talking to this newspaper last year, OC Forman said they had been submitting a report on the progress of finding Ilias to the HC every month since May 2012.

The police official that time also claimed the Banani police had con-

ducted "search operations" in different parts of the country almost every month to get Ilias.

In May 2012, five law enforcement agencies, including police and Rab, had submitted reports to the HC as ordered by the court, claiming that Ilias was not in their custody since they had not picked him up or detained him.

Following a writ petition filed by Rushdir on April 19 that year, the HC issued a rule upon the law enforcement agencies to explain within 10 days why they should not be directed to produce Ilias before it or prove that he was not detained by them.

"GOVT BEHIND DISAPPEARANCE" BNP leaders in Sylhet yesterday alleged that the government was behind the disappearance of Ilias as he led the movement against Tipaimukh Dam in India.

Speaking at a human chain at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar marking six years of his disappearance, BNP leaders lambasted the government for its failure to find Ilias, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

'Licensed' guns going

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CT inspector Mejbah Uddin said they submitted a prayer seeking five days remand but the court granted them two days.

Of the arrestees, Bacchu has been working as a manager at a legal arms-selling shop, "Samsul Islam Arms", in the city's Kotowali for long, says the First Information Report filed with Jatrabari Police Station yesterday over the recovery.

The FIR says the arrestees are accomplices of top listed criminal Sanjidul Hassan Emon, who was awarded 17 years of rigorous imprisonment by a Dhaka court in 2015 over possession of illegal arms and ammunition.

An accused in a dozen cases, including the one for the murder of film actor Sohel Chowdhury, Emon had remained underground in India for years but local police arrested and handed him over to the Bangladesh government. He is now in jail.

A top official from the CT team told The Daily Star that the arrestees, during their primary interrogation, confessed that 43-year-old Linkon, owner of Samsul Islam Arms shop, was going to sell the gun to Babu, a close aide of Emon, through Bacchu for Tk 1.2 lakh.

"Made in Germany" was written on the revolver. Its serial number was erased by a drill machine.

"We are now looking for Linkon who has gone into hiding," said the official, wishing not to be named.

The official claimed that Linkon's brother Swapan was also involved in illegal arms trade and he was arrested a couple of years ago with five arms. He is now in jail too.

Asked how licensed arms could be sold to others, officials said when any licensed arms holder dies, the weapon

can be kept in selected arms shops. Sometimes, the guns are illegally sold from there.

A section of legal arms dealers sell those arms to the underworld criminals, they said.

The Daily Star went to Samsul Islam Arms shop but found it closed. This correspondent made repeated attempts to reach Linkon in vain.

Jahangir Alam, additional Deputy Commissioner of CT Arms Enforcement Team, said they suspect more people's involvement in the racket.

"We are raiding several places to arrest them," he said.

Nasir Ahmed, secretary general of Bangladesh Arms Owners Association, however, refuted the involvement of any authorised arms dealer with the underworld.

About the incident involving Linkon, Nasir said they were yet to get any specific information about it.

The association will help law enforcers if anyone is found guilty, he said.

According to the association, there are 69 authorised arms dealers across the country. The number of such traders in Dhaka is 24.

On March 29, the CT team arrested four people, including an authorised arms dealer from Rangpur Anwar Hossain Babu, for allegedly selling legal arms to criminals. Babu is the owner of Sarker Arms Company in the district.

In 2012, Detective Branch of police arrested BM Shahabuddin alias Khokon and Sayed Asadul Abbas with illegal arms. Shahabuddin is a legal arms dealer in Khulna and owner of "Shahabuddin and Sons" while Abbas is the owner of "Sayed and Sons" in Dhaka.

Following the arrest, detectives recovered nine illegal arms from criminals.