



Gazipur city mayor-elect Jahangir Alam greets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with a bouquet at the Gono Bhaban yesterday. PHOTO: BSS

# Gazipur win heralds future victory for AL

*Says PM as mayor-elect meets her; asks party grassroots to remain united*

STAR REPORT

Ruling Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said the wins of Awami League candidates in the recently concluded Gazipur City Corporation election is showing the path for the party's victory in polls.

"The election results are showing the path for our win and taking us to victory," she said, highlighting the importance of the recent elections in Gazipur and Khulna when newly elected mayor of GCC Jahangir Alam along with new councillors met her at the Gono Bhaban, reports UNB.

Congratulating the newly elected mayor and councillors, Hasina said it was the unity that acted as the key factor behind the Awami League's victory. This has been possible as all the party followers were united there, she added. Hasina, also the Awami League president, said her party won the Khulna city polls as all the party workers were united overcoming their differences and grievances.

"Whenever Awami League was united, it could overcome all the barriers. This victory has proved that when Awami League is determined, it gets victory," the AL chief said.

Hasina, at the special extended meeting of her party at the Gono Bhaban later, asked her party grassroots leaders and activists to remain united to achieve victory in the national election slated for December.

She also assured them that party nominations would be given based on grassroots' recommendations.

The extended meeting was participated by grassroots leaders of the party from Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Barisal. The first phase of the meeting was held on June 23 and the next phase

would be on July 7.

In her address, Hasina cautioned nomination seekers about conflicts and propaganda against one another. She also asked party men to work together to ensure victory for Boat, electoral symbol of AL.

Sounding a warning, the AL chief said she does not want to see any intra-party feud and asked them to resolve all disputes as soon as possible.

She also sought cooperation from her party's grassroots leaders and activists in carrying out the government's ongoing drive against drugs.

"Now the drive continues against drugs... I want your cooperation against... You together with all will conduct drives against drugs and convince all (against drugs) as you were united against militancy," Hasina said.

The government has been able to curb militancy, she said, adding that this has been possible due to the public awareness created against the menace by coordinated efforts of the grassroots people, including guardians, teachers, Imams and religious leaders, and the administration, and the law enforcement agencies.

The AL chief also asked her party-men to publicise the government's development activities and successes among people so that they could vote for Boat.

After Hasina's formal address, there was a closed-door meeting with the grassroots where nine grassroots leaders spoke.

General Secretary Hemanta Talukder of Mohanpur union AL under Sunamganj described party infightings and said the grassroots should unite for party candidates nominated by Hasina.

"The main enemy of Awami League is within the Awami League," as source quoted him as saying.

## Epitome

FROM PAGE 1

Bakery. The assailants entered the bakery with crude bombs, machetes, pistols, and took several dozen hostages, including both foreigners and locals.

The gruesome incident left 22 people dead -- nine Italians, seven Japanese, two Bangladeshis, a Bangladeshi American and an Indian. The five militants were killed during the joint forces operation the next morning.

Among the victims killed by the militants was Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, who became a beacon of hope for the country after his untimely death in the attack.

As the nation watched humanity stoop to the lowest of levels that night, he stood out as an inspiration for generations that would continue to reaffirm the faith in mankind.

Twenty-year-old Faraaz was the epitome of bravery as he stood up to the attackers for his friends at the cost of his own life, portraying the true spirit of courage, friendship and humanity.

A student of Economics at Emory University in Atlanta, US, Faraaz came to Dhaka on May 18, 2016, for his summer holidays.

He went to the upscale Gulshan café, with two friends -- Abinta Kabir, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin and of the same university, and Tarishi Jain, an Indian and a student of the University of California, Berkeley -- on the fateful night when the militants launched the attack at the café frequented by foreigners.

During the attack, the terrorists specifically targeted foreigners dining at the restaurant. The gunmen were looking for "infidels," testing who could recite verses from the Holy Quran and who couldn't.

Faraaz recited verses from the Holy Quran.

However, he was given the choice of walking free from the café. But he refused to abandon his friends and chose to stay. Eventually, all three of them were killed.

And he died a hero.

Faraaz was the grandson of Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Group, and Shahnaz Rahman. He was the son of Simeen Hossain and Muhammad Waqar bin Hossain. Before going to the US, he studied at Sir John Wilson School and American International School in Dhaka.

With his name etched in the annals of bravery, his sacrifice and valour are being recognised all over the world. Faraaz was honoured with a place in the Garden of the Righteous at the Italian embassy in the Tunisian capital Tunis.

The Milan-based non-profit organisation called Garden of the Righteous Worldwide (GARIWO), with help from the Italian foreign ministry, took the initiative to set up the first Garden of the Righteous in an Arab country on July 15, 2016. The garden hosts trees and memorial stones dedicated to five righteous Arab and non-Arab Muslims. One of those five Muslims is Faraaz.

The tree dedicated to Faraaz bears the inscription: "In Dhaka, he chose not to leave his friends and was murdered by the terrorists."

In March this year, students of Rummo High School in Benevento of Italy planted a tree honouring Faraaz.

After the bloody siege in Gulshan café, Faraaz became synonymous with friendship. His sacrifice is being recognised across the world.

He was awarded Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice in November 2016. Faraaz's mother Simeen and elder brother Zairaf Ayaat Hossain received the award in Mumbai.

Some of the past recipients are Médécins Sans Frontières, the Dalai Lama, Malala Yousafzai, Dr Mahathir Mohammad and Baroness Caroline Cox.

In recognition of his courageous act, PepsiCo Global launched the annual Faraaz Hossain Courage Award in 2016, setting up a fund of \$200,000. The money would allow a \$10,000 prize to be awarded every year for the next 20 years.

The purpose of the award is to recognise individuals for their acts of exceptional courage and empathy, the very spirit Faraaz showed.

This month, he was recognised as a graduate by Goizueta Business School of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Apart from this, the university also introduced the Faraaz Hossain Core Value Award, the first of which went to Gurbani Singh, a student of the university.

By sacrificing his life, Faraaz showed how the power of love and humanity can make people indomitable.

## Ten hurt

FROM PAGE 16

Meanwhile, Habiganj BCL President Saidur Rahman claimed that some newly admitted students clashed on the campus and no BCL men were involved in the incident.

Yasinul Haque, officer-in-charge of Habiganj Sadar Police Station, said BCL men clashed to establish supremacy on the campus.

## THOSE WE LOST TO MADNESS

9 Italians, 7 Japanese, 1 Indian and 5 Bangladeshis who lost their lives in July 1 attack



Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain



Abinta Kabir



Tarishi Jain



Ishrat Akhond



Rabiul Karim



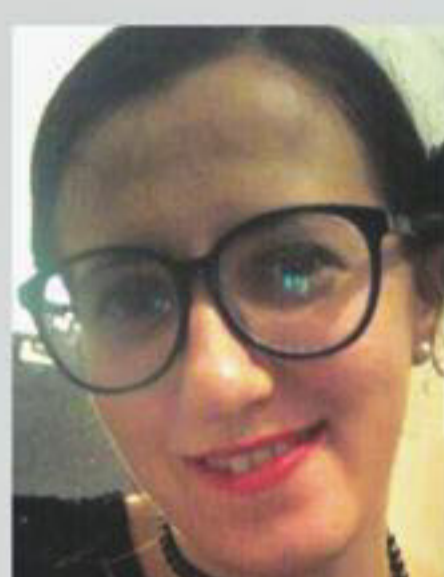
Salahuddin Khan



Marco Tondat



Vincenzo D'allestro



Maria Rivoli



Nadia Benedetti



Adele Puglisi



Claudio Cappelli



Cristian Rossi



Claudia Maria D'antona



Simona Monti

THE 7 JAPANESE VICTIMS : Ogasawara, Tanaka Hiroshi, Shakai Yuku, Kurusaki Nubuhiri, Okamura Makato, Shimudhuira Rui and Hashimoto Hideiko.

## All-out efforts in tough times only

FROM PAGE 1

Even after the country's bloodiest terror incident, the attack on Gulshan's Holey Artisan Bakery in 2016, experts say there is apparently no fundamental change in government's counterterrorism strategy.

Amid subversive activities by terror groups, particularly the banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the government formed a high-powered body named "Committee for Resistance and Correction Militancy" in April 2009.

Its objective was to launch a country-wide massive awareness programmes by screening feature films and documentaries even in villages alongside running ad campaigns and holding discussions.

Under the initiative, imams of mosques were to deliver anti-militancy sermons after Jum'a prayers while UP chairmen and members would train in anti-militancy motivation programmes.

The plans were implemented to some extent. The move, coupled with mounted surveillance and raids by law enforcers, yielded results and militancy could be largely contained till 2011-12.

After that the campaigns faded away. The committee headed by the home boss even stopped holding meetings regularly, said a ministry official.

IT REARED UGLY HEAD AGAIN

As the authorities relax, a new breed of radicals grew in silence.

Bangladeshi-Canadian Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury, who was inspired by global terror organisation Islamic State, entered Bangladesh in October 2013 and held a meeting with a faction of JMB. He also looked for fresh blood and found some educated, tech-savvy youths from well-off families.

This was how a new radical group, the "Neo JMB" as police call it, emerged in 2014. The next year it would draw law enforcers' attention by carrying out deadly attacks one after another.

The group was behind the Gulshan café siege, which led to the killing of 20 hostages, including 17 foreigners, on July 1, 2016. Two police officers also lost their lives as they responded immediately.

Besides, five attackers and a restaurant staffer died during the Operation Thunderbolt that brought an end to the nerve-racking 12-hour hostage crisis at the posh eatery.

Tamim, the chief coordinator of the attack, would get killed in a Narayanganj raid the next month.

The Gulshan incident served as a wake-up call to the government and triggered a massive hunt for militants. Law enforcers succeeded in busting a number of militant dens through counterterrorism operations.

Apart from using force, the government launched awareness campaigns and the home ministry held several meetings and conferences with leaders of all religious communities as part of anti-militancy campaigns.

But everyone apparently lost interest as soon as the situation improved. Interfaith meetings were supposed to be held in divisional and district headquarters on regular basis but that hardly happened in the last one year.

The counterterrorism efforts apart from drives are now largely confined to

speeches of ministers and politicians and issuance of directives.

Awareness programmes are also supposed to be held at educational institutions but there is no monitoring for that.

"We receive directives in letters from the government time to time asking us to take different anti-militancy initiatives and programmes. Nobody is there to oversee whether those are being implemented," said a management-level official of a private university, wishing anonymity.

Our reporters visited seven mosques in the capital's Rayshaebazar, Narinda, Wari, Dayaganj, Jatrabari, Farmgate and Mirpur areas on June 22 and found no imam delivering anti-militancy sermons.

Shameem Mohammad Afzal, director general of Islamic Foundation, said Islamic clerics have discussed different issues including militancy in the light of the Holy Quran and Hadith in the national mosque Baitul Mukarram.

Imams from different mosques in the country took lessons from the clerics, but it is not mandatory for them to deliver sermons on militancy before or after khutba, he added.

In the wake of continued attacks on religious minorities, foreigners, intellectuals and secular writers and just 11 days before the Holey Artisan attack, a section of religious scholars led by Bangladesh Jamiatul Ulema Parishad Chairman Maulana Fariduddin Masud issued a fatwa (religious edict) against militancy.

Prepared in the light of the Holy Quran and Hadith and signed by over 1 lakh clerics, the edict said Islam forbids terrorism and denounces killing of innocent people in the name of religion.

Regarding the use of fatwa, Masud said imams and Islamic scholars are supposed to deliver sermons based on the fatwa before or after prayers in mosque. Asked about the implementation, he said he has no information about it.

About the anti-militancy fatwa, Shameem Mohammad Afzal said the fatwa against militancy was solely initiated by Fariduddin Masud and he can say whether it was circulated in mosques.

Asked about socio-political campaign against terrorism, Sondip Kumar Singha, additional deputy commissioner of Sylhet, where two big dens were busted last year, said they are doing some routine work like sitting with law enforcers and imams.

But they are not holding any big-scale programme as it seems not necessary now, he added.

Our correspondents from Sylhet, Kushtia, Pabna, Chittagong and Khulna report that no noteworthy awareness campaigns took place in the districts in the last one year. Only a few community-based events were held by police and community police.

A senior official of Kushtia district administration said that in 2016-17, they used to screen six films as part of awareness programmes every month but this year it has become irregular as the threat of militancy has waned.

JAIL SHOULD BE IN FOCUS

De-radicalisation and rehabilitation of detained militants is another big issue in combating extremism, and the

government is yet to do anything in this front.

Militants need proper education to understand that their path is wrong, counselling to wipe out the hatred they harbour in mind, reconnection with their families and rehabilitation in society, international security expert Prof Rohan Gunaratna said at a programme in Dhaka last year.

A top counterterrorism official, wishing anonymity, said many militants are getting freed every year from prisons that have no de-radicalisation programmes.

A suspected top militant recruiter, currently on bail, said at a programme a few months ago that militants "discuss radical ideas in prison".

Quoting her son, the mother of another terror suspect said at the programme, "New recruits are becoming more radicalised in prisons."

Monirul Islam, chief of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of the DMP, thinks the major de-radicalisation initiatives should begin in jail. There also have to be psychological disengagement and motivation through proper religious education.

The family members need to remain in touch with the suspected militants and their profiles should be updated, he said.

A regular meeting has to be arranged between the accused and victim families so that the radicals realise the pain and loss of grieving persons and understand own faults, he said.

These are some major components of de-radicalisation but our jail code has no scope for these, Monirul said.

Since the Gulshan attack, law enforcers carried out at least 30 successful drives on militant dens where about 80 militants were killed and many arrested.

But counterterrorism officials, experts and researchers say the success did not guarantee that there would not be any attacks in future as militants could regroup and regain strength.

Security expert Air Commodore (retd) Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury compares the current counterterrorism strategy with the acts of fire brigade, saying when fire breaks out, firefighters rush to the spot and douse the blaze. Then everyone forgets it.

THREAT STILL THERE

Another security expert Maj Gen (retd) ANM Moniruzzaman said, "The process of radicalisation is still on and the militant outfits are still active as we have no long-term national strategic approach to counter violent extremism."

The Police Headquarters recently alerted all its units to possible terror attacks after receiving such intelligence from an agency.

Its letters to the unit chiefs read there is evidence of communication between local militants with those who sneaked to Syria and its adjoining states.

A counterterrorism official said the strength of "Neo JMB" has weakened but those who are still eluding arrest may try to regroup through new recruitment cashing in on Rohingya crisis and the recent "success" of Islamic State in Afghanistan.

So there is no room for a complacent attitude towards the problem, he added.

## Messi remains Club King

FROM PAGE 1

all time. Lionel Messi failed once again to win what was required for being alongside Diego Maradona, the football god of his country.

Little Leo could have done it this time in his fourth World Cup appearance with help from a right coach and a suitable game plan. He could have emulated his country's legend by winning the Cup for Argentina, a feat that is needed for his critics to place him in the same bracket with Pele and Maradona.

Messi, who has won every possible glory for his club Barcelona, was expected to reproduce the magic Maradona produced in the 1986 World Cup. But not all stories end the way they should. The Messi story seems to end without a World Cup.

strength as his Messi weakness. When a coach has a player like Messi at hand, it's only natural for him to let the team revolve around him. Argentina played all the matches centring on the five-time Fifa world player of the year.

So, strategy for Sampaoli's rivals was pretty simple: Neutralise Messi to neutralise Argentina. Luckily for Argentina, Messi is a player of unbelievable ability. With some mysterious sways, he, at times, could free himself from the defensive shackles placed around him to score or assist in group matches.

But it was not possible against France, who could implement their Messi plan perfectly. The two midfield generals N'Golo Kante and Paul Pogba simply snapped the supply of passes to Messi by moving themselves up the yards.

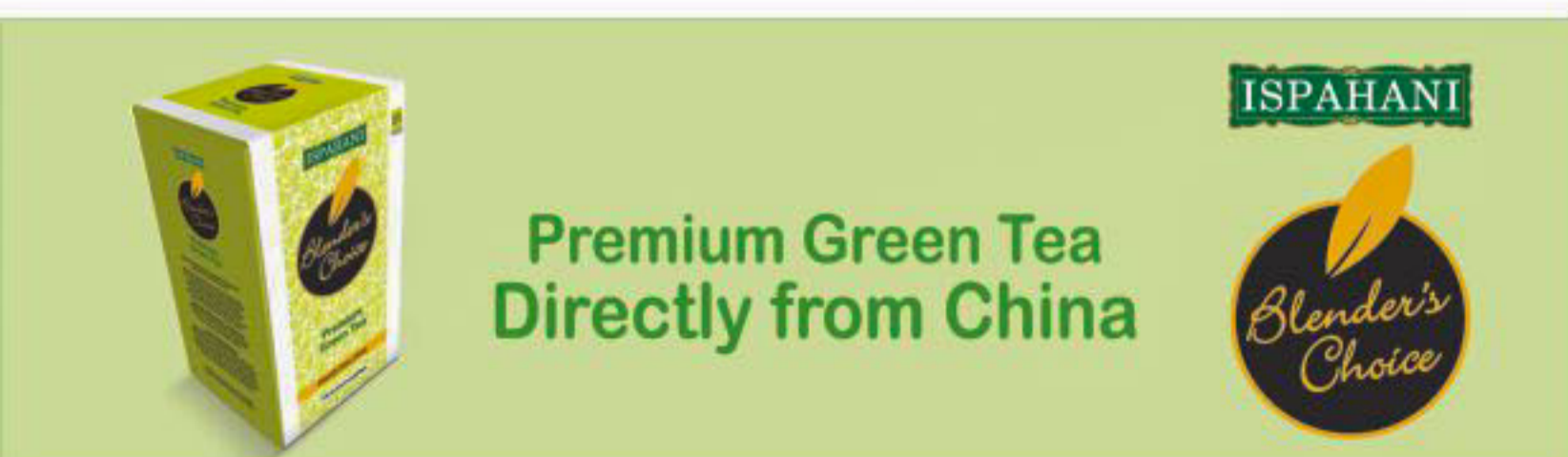
The Argentine teams of 1986 and 1990 revolved around Maradona, almost identically. Carlos Bilardo lived up to his reputation in 1986 as one of the shrewdest coaches in the world, inspiring Argentina to their Cup glory.

Bilardo masterfully exploited opponents' over-attention on Maradona by dropping the legend down in the midfield and pushing midfielder Sergio Batista up a little as his shield. Maradona himself scored and, when he couldn't, he made Jorge Burruchaga and Jorge Valdano score.

We haven't seen Messi doing anything like that in either of the four World Cups he played. Messi & Co lost simply because Sampaoli was no Bilardo. Argentina needed a Bilardo.

Messi will be 35 when the next World Cup takes place in Qatar, so he still has a chance to convert himself from Club King to World King. But he certainly has lost his best chance in Russia.

The writer is former Sports Editor of The Daily Star



It was, however, the night for France. The score-line would not be able to completely reflect the French domination. It could have been 5-3, had not Antoine Griezmann's superb free-kick ricocheted off the crossbar.

Coach Didier Deschamps must be a happy man seeing his plan work for Messi and immensely gifted booters deliver the goods. The 19-year-old French striker Kylian Mbappe showed his worth by scoring twice, with Griezmann and defender Benjamin Pavard scoring one apiece. This France have the potential to go far.

Angel di Maria scored the best of the three Argentine goals -- a 31-year beauty that kissed the net on the far post.

The match will be remembered as a harsh lesson for the Argentina coach of the future. Jorge Sampaoli refused to take lessons from his poor game plan in the tournament.

Sampaoli's strength was also his weakness. His opposite numbers successfully exploited his Messi