

## SHOLAKIA ATTACK

## Charge sheet filed against 5 JMB men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police yesterday pressed charges against five operatives of outlawed Neo JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) in connection with the Sholakia attack in Kishoreganj, more than two years after the militant strike left four including a suspect dead.

The police have found involvement of 24 JMB militants in the attack but made five of them accused as the rest were killed in different raids, Arifur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Kishoreganj Sadar police, told The Daily Star.

Islamic thinker Maulana Farid Uddin Masoud, also the Imam of the largest Eid congregation, was the target of the attack for his anti-militancy speech and activities. The militants eventually attacked policemen, who stopped them on their way to the target, he added.

Arifur, also the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kishoreganj yesterday afternoon.

The accused are Jahangir Alam alias Rajib Gandhi, 32, Mizanur Rahman alias Boro Mizan, 60, Abdus Sabur Khan alias Sohel Mahfuz, 33,

Jahidul Haque Tanim 24, and Anwar Hossain, 45.

All five are now behind bars, said Toufiqul Islam, court inspector of Kishoreganj.

Rajib and Sohel had earlier given confessional statements under section 164 before the court.

The duo and Mizanur were also accused in a Gulshan café attack that left 20 hostages, mostly foreigners, and two police officials killed on July 1, 2016.

Rajib was a fund collector and Mizanur and Sohel were grenade suppliers of "Neo JMB" that carried out both the café and Sholakia attacks within a span of one week.

In the Sholakia attack, 40-year-old Jharna Rani Bhowmik and two policemen were killed as a group of six to seven militants attacked the law enforcers, who were frisking people at the entry to the Eidgah ground on July 7, 2016.

A suspected militant was also killed in police retaliation.

Soon after the incident, police arrested suspects Shaiful Islam alias Shariful Islam alias Saiful Islam, 22, and Jahidul Haque Tanim.

Shaiful and an unidentified youth

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Bangladesh Water Development Board is dumping sandbags along the bank of the Padma to prevent erosion at Mulfatganj Bazar in Naria. Locals say the sandbags barely have any effect. Inset, locals form a human chain demanding effective steps. The pictures were taken yesterday.

## Shots fired from AL nomination aspirant's convoy in Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

At least nine blank shots were fired from the convoy of Sheikh Anny Rahman, who wants to contest the upcoming national polls with Awami League nomination, in Pirojpur town on Tuesday night.

Anny claimed that her supporters fired the shots in self-defence after a group of criminals, carrying arms, attacked them in Damodar Bridge area around 8:00pm.

The incident happened when Anny, wife of Sheikh Hafizur Rahman, a cousin of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, along with her supporters was on way to her home in Pirojpur town from Hafizur's house in Gopalganj's Tungipara.

"To save us from the attack, our security men and even my husband fired blank shots with their licensed arms," she told The Daily Star yesterday. "No one was injured and no vehicle was damaged."

Witnesses, however, said when some motorcycles and cars in Anny's convoy were crossing the area, some youths hurled "abusive slogans" at her supporters. At this, the vehicles hurriedly left the place. After a while,

Anny's men fired blank shots.

At least nine shots were fired in the air in several places of the town, including near Pirojpur Police Station and the house of the additional superintendent of police, said witnesses and police.

It spread panic among the locals. Many closed the shutters of their shops.

SM Ziaul Haque, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they were investigating the matter.

"We haven't yet found any evidence that Anny's convoy was attacked," he said.

Meanwhile, a chase and a counter chase between the supporters of Anny and her rivals took place in Pirojpur town yesterday evening.

The situation in the town was tense last night. Additional police members were deployed to avert any untoward situation.

Anny, daughter of late Enaet Hossain Khan, former president of Pirojpur AL and lawmaker from the district, wants to contest the parliamentary polls, likely in December, with AL nomination from Pirojpur-1 constituency. She has attended several rallies and brought out processions in the district recently.

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## Khaleda didn't appear

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Khaleda's lawyers filed a petition yesterday, saying that the makeshift court inside the prison could not continue its proceedings without permission from the Supreme Court.

Previously, the trial used to be at a makeshift court in Bakshibazar area, but the law ministry on September 4 issued a gazette notification, stating that the trial in the graft case would be held at Old Dhaka Central Jail on Nazimuddin Road.

The decision, it said, was made taking Khaleda's security into consideration.

During the first hearing at the makeshift court on September 6, Khaleda was produced before the court where she expressed no confidence in the special court.

Centring the trial, a large number of law enforcers were present in and around the court area yesterday. Around 10:00am, officials entered the court. Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajal went to the court around 10:40am and then Khaleda's lawyer Sanaullah Mia appeared.

During the hearing, Sanaullah said the court was not an "open court" and it was against the constitution. He prayed to extend bail for Khaleda.

Then Aminul Islam, lawyer for another accused Ziaul Islam Munna, told the court that the court was like a cage.

Praying to adjourn the court proceedings for a month, the lawyer said he never saw such a court in his 30-year career in law.

There is no adequate space for lawyers and journalists to sit and no scope for the common people to enter the courtroom to see court proceedings, said Aminul. "It cannot be an open court."

Anti-Corruption Commission

## Election as per constitution

Says Obaidul Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the upcoming Bangladesh parliamentary polls would be held like the elections in other democratic countries and there was no scope of going beyond the constitution.

Quader, also the general secretary of the Awami League, made the comments while talking to journalists after the 11th board meeting of the Dhaka Road Transport Coordination Authority at Nagar Bhaban.

He said one more parliament session would be held after the current one.

"The ministers will only do their routine work after the announcement of the election schedule," he said.

The minister also said the Awami League, along with the countrymen, would give a befitting reply if the BNP tried to incite violence centring the upcoming national polls.

"We will welcome any non-violent movement of the BNP and will face it politically...If they want to create anarchy in the name of movement, we will prevent it along with the common people."

Quader said an overall movement was not possible by holding a hunger strike programme as the BNP would need strength which it did not have.

About BNP's demands for the resignation of the prime minister

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## No plan to take in Rohingyas permanently

Says foreign secretary

REUTERS, Hanoi

Bangladesh has no plans to take in hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees permanently, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque said yesterday, adding that they "belong" to Myanmar from where they fled.

Some 700,000 Rohingya refugees crossed from the west of mostly Buddhist Myanmar into Bangladesh from August last year, according to UN agencies, when Rohingya insurgent attacks on Myanmar security forces triggered a sweeping military response.

Bangladesh and Myanmar reached a deal in November to begin repatriation within two months, but it has not started, with stateless Rohingyas still crossing the border.

"We are not thinking of assimilating them in Bangladesh. They belong to Myanmar," Shahidul Haque told Reuters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on Asean in Hanoi.

He also called on developed countries to take in more Rohingyas on a humanitarian basis.

The Rohingyas would stay in refugee camps until they return to Myanmar or are resettled in other countries, Haque said.

INvestigators last month said Myanmar's military carried out mass killings and gang rapes of Rohingyas with "genocidal intent", and that the commander-in-chief and five generals should be prosecuted for the gravest crimes under international law.

Myanmar has denied allegations of

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## Poor healthcare

FROM PAGE 1

Tahmina also gets an hour-long for her lunch but she isn't allowed to eat any meal in the factory as per the company's rule. This often forces her to leave the factory premises and look for other places to have lunch.

Compounding her problems are the issues of maternity leave and pay, along with healthcare issues.

"We get 112 days of paid maternity leave. Of that, 40 days are reserved for before childbirth."

The labour law in Bangladesh specifies a 16-week maternity leave with full pay.

However, a study by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) in 2018 found that only 28.70 percent of the workers get maternity leave for four months. This is further exacerbated by the fact that 71.30 percent of the workers believe the leave is actually for lesser than four months.

In terms of maternity pay, Tahmina feels a lot more can be done.

She has been told that she would be paid maternity leave dues when she rejoins work. "Obviously, it would have helped if I had the money in hand at the moment as there are growing expenses. But this is how it is."

However, the procedure of payment is to pay eight weeks' salary within three days of submitting proof of pregnancy with the remaining amount provided after the submission of proof of delivery within three working days.

The other option is to pay the entire 16 weeks' salary within 3 days of proof of delivery.

The recently proposed Bangladesh Labour Law entitles workers to eight-week maternity leave and other benefits within three days of submission of necessary documents.

According to the draft, an owner may face a penalty of Tk 25,000 if they do not abide by these rules.

Siddiqur Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said as per the practice in factories, the eight weeks' advance salary would be given before going on leave and the remaining salary would be given after rejoining.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Executive Director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), said in non-compliance factories, during maternity leave, female garment workers go on leave without payment.

In some cases, workers have also been sacked and indirectly requested to come back after giving birth to the child.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Mujibul Haque Chunnu said it was mandatory for every factory to provide paid maternity leave as it was a right.

## HEALTH WOES REMAIN

Right after the birth of a child, the new mother has to join the factory within a couple of months, hampering their postnatal care.

Tahmina recently came under the care of Dr Subrina, chief medical officer of Awaj Foundation, an organisation which provides free health care facilities to RMG workers and their children and raises awareness on their rights and responsibilities.

Subrina said that rejoining work two months after childbirth was harmful for both the mother and the child. The mother is compelled to work for long hours, thus being unable to take care of or even breastfeed her child.

A baseline survey by the SNV Netherlands Development Organisation in 2015 reported that 59.7 percent of female RMG workers responded that they were not aware of the need for postnatal care, while 55.6 percent workers reported that they delivered their child at home.

Most expecting female workers go to their hometown for childbirth, after being influenced by their elderly relatives.

Myanmar has denied allegations of

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## Padma

FROM PAGE 1

The BWDB is currently dumping

sandbags along the bank.

But the

method

has

hardly

any

effect

on

erosion, locals said.

Another issue is the lack of medical

facilities and the long hours workers

are

expected

to work.

Despite the presence of a medical

officer in her factory, Tahmina says

that

this is more

convenient

for her to visit

Awaj Foundation.

The medical

officer

sits

on a lower

floor,

and I have to go downstairs to visit

her.

This takes

time and affects my

productivity,

and in turn will affect my

evaluation,

she said.

Her story is similar to those of many

others.

Ruby, 22, can't visit government hospi-

tals because of her long working hours

and she can't afford the visitation fees of a

private institute.

Her 10-hour workday means she has

to set out for work by 7:00am and work

the long shift, with only an hour's break.

By the time she is done, she is too tired

and the doctors are too far away for her to

go for check-ups.

"We need to stay at work for a long

period of time, and so it is impossible to

see