



Current and former students of Dhaka University observe a candle-light vigil in front of the graffiti of singer, songwriter and journalist Sanjeeb Chowdhury on his 11th death anniversary yesterday. They also performed songs in memory of the revered artiste.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Robber' killed in 'shootout'

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"Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the criminals opened fire at the Rab men, prompting them to retaliate. After a gunfight, Manik was found with severe bullet injuries and was taken to Moheshkhali Upazila Health Complex. He was declared dead around 8:15am," he added.

Rab claimed to have recovered two firearms, eight live cartridges and six bullet shells from the spot.

Earlier on October 20, a total of 43 members of six separate gangs of robbers surrendered at Moheshkhali in presence of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Director General of Rab Benazir Ahmed. The robbers also surren-

dered 94 firearms and 7,637 arms and ammunition.

Meanwhile in Pabna, two alleged robbers were arrested with bullet injuries after a "gunfight" between police and a robbery gang in Ishwardi upazila.

The arrested robbers, Mofizul Islam, 30, and Faruk Hossain, 35, were taken to Pabna Medical College Hospital after receiving severe bullet injuries.

The incident took place when police officials conducted a raid, led by Assistant Superintendent of Police Johurul Haque, in Jotgari Mor in the upazila around 1:30am, where eight to 10 robbers were taking shelter, said Md Bahauddin Faruki, officer-in-

charge (OC) of Ishwardi Police Station.

"Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the "robbers" hurled crude bombs at the cops, who then opened fire in retaliation. Two robbers Mofizul and Faruk sustained bullet wounds, while the others managed to flee," he added.

At least five police men, including an ASP, were also injured during the gunfight, police claimed, adding that they recovered a Chinese axe, matchboxes and exploded crude bombs from the spot.

Both arrestees were accused in seven to eight robbery cases with different police stations in the district, the OC said.

66pc radicalised

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at a city hotel.

The exact number of the women involved in terrorism is difficult to estimate as they usually remain out of suspicion, she said.

Though the role of females was largely limited to assisting the males, recruitment and terror financing, some females were found to be equipped with suicide vests during anti-militant drives, said the CITC official.

According to CTTC findings, more than half of the female suspects come from low-income families, which is 57 percent of the total samples, while 26 percent are from affluent families.

Influence of family members, having a sense of belongingness and empowerment, ideological commitment, hope of reward in the afterlife, frustration and fear of uncertainty and revenge for loss of family members are the major causes of females joining militancy, CITC officials found.

In the latest drive in a militant den in Narsingdi, suspected female militant Aklima was killed along with a male militant on October 16, while two other female militant suspects -- Khadija Parveen Meghna and Israt Jahan Mou -- holed up in another den and they surrendered to police the next day.

In the programme, Lailufar Yasmin, deputy director of Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs, Dhaka University Assistant Prof Umme Wara of criminology department, Ayesha Kabir, consulting editor (English section) of Prothom Alo, also presented separate keynote papers.

The Daily Star Associate Editor Brig Gen (ret'd) Shahedul Anam Khan, Switzerland Ambassador to Bangladesh René Holenstein and BIPSS President Maj Gen (ret'd) ANM Muniruzzaman also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers said family members, especially mothers, sisters and wives, could play a vital role in preventing violent extremism as they could notice early signs of radicalisation of their near ones.

Jamaat men

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Shamshul for it.

Contacted, Enamul Hoque, a close aide of Shahjahan, said Shahjahan had played a pioneering role in making the area a stronghold of Jamaat, so he deserved the party ticket.

"Shahjahan would contest here under the banner of Satkania-Lohagara Nagorik Committee if he fails to get the party ticket," said Enamul, joint convener of the platform floated by Jamaat men.

Tarique didn't violate

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Tarique made a videoconference on the day.

The matter was brought to the EC's attention after the Awami League, on Sunday, sent them a letter alleging that the electoral code of conduct was violated as Tarique, a convicted fugitive in three cases, talked to the nomination seekers.

However, later at a press conference on the same day, Faruk Khan, AL presidium member, did not disclose which part of the electoral code was violated.

After the Awami League sent a written complaint on the issue to the EC, the commission discussed the matter at its meeting and made the observations, the EC secretary said.

"The commission found that as he [Tarique] is now aboard, the electoral code of conduct will not be applicable for him," Helal said.

Additionally, he said that everyone should abide by the High Court order that had barred media outlets and others from publicising any statement of Tarique Rahman.

BTRC BLOCKS SKYPE

The telecom regulator blocked the communication application Skype.com on Sunday night and later blocked its mobile application yesterday.

A top official of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission confirmed the news without commenting any further on the issue.

The BTRC issued the order to all the internet international gateways, internet service providers and mobile operators.

A top official of the Internet Service Provider Association of Bangladesh said they complied with the order within a few hours of getting it and the software was no longer available in the country.

"However, other communication channels and applications are open for video chatting and video conferencing," he said, requesting

anonymity.

Earlier in 2015, the government had blocked for sometime almost all the communication applications, including Facebook, Whatsapp, Viber and others, immediately after the Supreme Court pronounced a verdict upholding the death penalty of two war criminals.

In August this year, the Telecom and ICT Minister Mustafa Jabbar said they would consider blocking social media sites like Facebook again and if needed, the internet connection could also be shut down to "save the state and citizens of the country".

NAYAPALTAN CLASH A CRIMINAL OFFENCE

EC Secretary Helaluddin Ahmed said that after reviewing the police report on the Nayapaltan clash, the commission considered it a "criminal offence" and added that the police could go ahead with investigation.

Speaking to reporters at the briefing, he said that the commission also asked him to send another directive to the Inspector General of Police to urge them not to harass any innocent people.

On Sunday night, police sent the report on the November 14 clash between BNP activists and law enforcers in front of the party's Nayapaltan office.

BNP SEEKS CLARIFICATION

The BNP, in a letter to the EC yesterday, sought clarification on whether or not elected chairmen of Zila Parishad and Upazila Parishads could contest the parliamentary polls.

The party's chairperson's advisory council member, Bijan Kanti Sarkar, handed over the letter to EC officials.

He said that they were not sure whether these were offices of profit or not as the Representation of the People Order 1972 was silent on the matter.

So they sought the clarification, he said.

Helal said that the legal wing of the commission was working on the issue and they would send a clarification as soon as possible.

UN calls for calm

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equal rights, citizenship and safety - fearing similar long-term confinement if they do.

Villagers told AFP that four Rohingya were shot and wounded as Myanmar police entered the Ah Nauk Ye camp in central Rakhine state's Pauktaw township Sunday morning.

In an emailed statement Knut Ostby, head of the UN office in Myanmar, called for "calm, non-violence and restraint" in an area which can be accessed only with official permission -- but is believed to suffer from some of the worst conditions in the displacement camps.

One witness said that officers were trying to arrest two Rohingyas suspected of links with a boat carrying 106 Rohingyas that was found last week off the coast of Myanmar's biggest city Yangon.

The discovery fuelled speculation of a fresh exodus of Rohingyas by boat.

The group, who told reporters they were trying to reach Malaysia, were taken back to Rakhine on Sunday by Myanmar's navy.

Noor Hakim, an Ah Nauk Ye resident, told AFP that the trouble started on Sunday soon after 20 police arrived and crowds gathered.

"I am not sure where the police shot but four people got injured and among them, one seriously," he said.

He added that one of the wounded was sent to Sittwe hospital. Another man told AFP his son was hit on the left thigh. Police in Sittwe declined to comment.

More than 4,000 people live in Ah Nauk Ye.

The NGO Solidaritas International described it last year as a "natural environment unsuitable to human settlement", citing water shortages, hostile host communities, lack of proper shelter and toilets.

For years Rohingyas have fled persecution in Myanmar by boat, usually starting around this time of year when the monsoon season ends.

But a crackdown on sea trafficking in 2015 closed the route.

The 720,000 Rohingyas living in crowded camps in Bangladesh were last week supposed to begin the complex and controversial process of returning to Myanmar.

But they did not leave Bangladesh after an outcry that conditions in northern Rakhine were still dangerous.

The UN says Myanmar's generals should be prosecuted for genocide in connection with the army campaign that expelled the Rohingyas.

Myanmar has denied almost all claims of abuse and said it was defending itself against Rohingya militants who attacked police posts.

Family fights

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the development of the area.

"As he has been assuming the chair for around 20 years, a sense of autocracy has come about. We want a change [for that]," said Shahidul Islam Ratan, president of Atghoria upazila AL.

On the other hand, Ishwardi upazila AL Secretary Mokhlesur Rahman Mintu said, "Sherif has gained much popularity because of his good performance over the years, so we want him again."

Grassroots

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Meeting sources said when the candidates entered the meeting room, Fakhrul welcomed them and then Tarique Rahman made a speech before them.

Mamun Rahman, an aspirant of Khulna-5, said Tarique Rahman asked them to work together to ensure victory.

ASSAULTS MARS INTERVIEW

However, incidents of assaults marred the entire process.

When Shahidul Huq, a contender of Barishal-2, entered the office, he was physically assaulted by the party leaders and activists due to his role in the army-backed caretaker government.

Finishing his interview, Shahidul came out of the office and apologised for his role, after which the party leaders and activists allowed him to leave the office, witnesses said.

Former lawmakers Israt Sultana Elen Bhutto and Rashid Howlader also faced a similar situation for their roles during the army-backed caretaker government.

Rebel leader

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and an influential political figure, tweeted that he wanted his group to announce "readiness to suspend and halt all military operations" and stop firing missiles on Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh, which is backing the Yemeni government, also lent its support to new talks.

The Iran-backed Huthi rebels have controlled Yemen's capital Sanaa since capturing it in late 2014. They also still hold the key port of Hodeida on the Red Sea in what has become a brutal almost four-year war, which has pushed millions of Yemenis to the brink of starvation.

The rebels have also fired hundreds of ballistic missiles into neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which has since 2015 has led a military coalition to restore to power President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's government.

Bringing hope

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local farmer, donated a 15-decimal plot of land, while many other locals donated money which was used to purchase bricks, corrugated iron sheets and bamboo sticks to build the one-story school.

With the support of these individuals, Nur was able to finally help their dream, of bringing a positive change for children with development disorder, turn into a reality.

The school is situated on Dinajpur-Parbatipur road and enrolls students from grades one to four. The school currently has a voluntary workforce of eight teachers, including two female teachers, said Nur, headmaster of the school. The teachers were the very individuals who helped Nur establish the school.

"They are all qualified to be teachers. The only lacking we have is the knowledge or training needed to deal with children with special needs," Nur said, adding, "We are however trying our best to arrange training for us in this regard."

The students learn three basic subjects- Bangla, English and Mathematics, while the school runs from 9:00am till 12:00pm, six days a week. This timing also allows the teachers to return to their other jobs for income, which is mostly farming. Some rickshaw vans are also assigned to pick up and drop the children, and they are served snacks as well, like samosas or toast, during their break.

With security in mind, they kept the area enclosed with a bamboo fence, and kept a space open in front of the school for the students to play.

The school initially did not have too many students, Nur said, adding, "But as word got around, more parents began trusting us."

Milon Chandra Das, one of the

teachers said there were now 220 special needs children who were students of Rasulpur Protibondhi O Autistic Punarbasan Bidyalaya.

First and second grade students use floor mats in the classroom, while third and fourth graders are provided with desks and benches. In addition, parents of students with severe autism are allowed to stay in the classroom to help their children whenever needed, whether for bathroom breaks or sudden behavioural changes.

"Many quality schools have been set-up in the village over the last decade. But no one had previously given any thought to the children with special needs," said Keshab Chandra Roy, a teacher of the school.

Rubel, a second grade student at the school, was born deaf. His father enrolled him into the school a year ago. The 10-year-old boy can now write in both Bangla and English. "My son being able to go to school was beyond my expectations!" Rubel's proud father said.

Apan Chandra Shil accompanies Nishika Shil, her seven-year-old daughter with autism, to the school every day. "Since enrollment, I have noticed a significant improvement in her behaviour," she said.

It takes a collective effort to help these children be accepted in society, who are often considered a "burden" on their families, said Abdul Hamid, a teacher, adding, "We hope to get some support from the government and other non-governmental organisations."

Looking forward to helping the glimmer of hope shine even brighter, Nur said, "Every month we raise funds to bear the school's expenses. However, we have applied to the Ministry of Social Welfare for registration last year and hope to hear from them soon."

Parties agree

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Front, Tamil National Alliance and the JVP or the People's Liberation Front discussed the proposal by Sirisena made at the all party meeting to have a floor test by name or electronic vote for the third motion of no trust against Rajapaksa.

Mano Ganesan, one of the leaders who attended the meeting, said the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA of Sirisena and Rajapaksa) "flatly refused and backtracked" on the proposal.

During yesterday's session, Dinesh Gunawardena on behalf of the disputed government of Rajapaksa asked the deputy speaker that since they were the government they should have the majority in the select committee.

JVP leader Anura Kumara Disanayake argued that since the Rajapaksa government had not proved their majority the select committee should have a majority of members from the group that commands majority.

Yesterday's session was conducted peacefully. Last week Sri Lanka's parliament witnessed unprecedented violence as lawmakers threw furniture and chilli powder at each other.

The public and VIP gallery were shut for diplomats on a request by Rajapaksa's United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA). The security was also tightened to prevent any incident, officials said.



Employees of Dhaka Power Distribution Company shifting a transformer to a higher place in the capital's Nasirabad yesterday, a day after The Daily Star ran a photo, right, showing that the transformer was barely two feet above the ground, posing risk to locals, especially children.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

