

# Dream shattered

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After reaching Mohakhali, Rumpa called her husband around 4:45am.

"When we had the last conversation, my bus was with Cumilla. I then asked Rumpa to go to Shyamoli and wait there for me as her interview was in Dhanmondi," Mohsin told The Daily Star.

Rumpa then took the auto-rickshaw to go to Shyamoli. When she was crossing Bijoy Sarani around 5:00pm, a speeding bus, coming from Farmgate, hit the auto-rickshaw from the right, according to police and witnesses.

Some workers nearby rushed Rumpa to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), where doctors declared her dead around 5:20am, said Bachchu Mia, officer-in-charge of DMCH police outpost.

One of the workers, Abu Hanif Shamim, said they were working to set up a signboard at the Bijoy Sarani intersection.

"Suddenly, we saw a speeding white Volvo bus of Greenline Paribahan hit the auto-rickshaw. The bus staffers first stopped and opened the door to observe the situation. When they realised that the situation was bad, they locked the door and drove away, hitting the auto-rickshaw once again," he added.

"I reached Dhaka around 7:30am. When I called my wife's cell phone, a police official received the call and told me about the accident. I went to DCMH and found her dead," said Mohsin.

In a voice quivering with devastat-



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The mangled three-wheeler on Tejgaon Police Station premises.

tion, Mohsin said he was supposed to meet his wife yesterday after a long time.

"We met at last, but after her death," Biddyt, the driver of the CNG-run auto-rickshaw, was also undergoing treatment in a local hospital with critical injuries.

Contacted, Mazharul Islam, officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station, told The Daily Star that the victim's husband filed a case with them accusing unnamed people.

About identifying the bus, the OC said they were trying to arrest the accused and identify the bus from the available video footages.

Abdus Sattar, general manager of Green Line Paribahan, claimed none of their buses was involved in the accident.

Hailing from Halisahar of Chattogram, Rumpa was the second of three children to retired family planning officer Akteruzzaman and his wife Nurjahan Begum. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Optometry at the Pahartali Eye Hospital campus at Institute of Community Ophthalmology.

Mohsin said the accident was a clear case of reckless driving. "I want exemplary punishment to those people responsible for the murder," he added.

# Civilisations

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that the human species has, and so we ought to be aware of what we've done and recognize the responsibility that we now have in our hands."

Asked about the United States, which President Trump has said will leave the Paris Agreement, Attenborough pleaded for the US to remain committed to fighting climate change.

"Please join the rest of the world," he implored. "The entire rest of the world is united in trying to take action on this. The United States is a very, very powerful voice. Please, please, join us."

COP stands for Conference of Parties. COP21, in 2015, led to the landmark Paris Agreement, a legally binding agreement to fight climate change, where countries committed to keep global warming well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and, if possible, below 1.5 degrees.

At COP24, nations must finalise implementation guidelines for the Paris Agreement -- known as the Paris Agreement Work Program or Paris Rulebook.

The conference ends on December 14.

Among the world leaders speaking at the opening ceremony, Arnold Schwarzenegger unexpectedly took to the podium, invited by Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen.

The actor and former Governor of California said: "Every time you talk about America, you're right when you say that our leadership in Washington is a little bit backwards. But you're wrong when you say that America dropped out of the Paris Agreement."

"Because if you look a little bit beyond Washington you will see ... all the extraordinary work that is going on at a state and city level in America."

Earlier in the day, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the event "the most important gathering on climate change since the Paris Agreement was signed."

"We are still not doing enough, nor moving fast enough, to prevent irreversible and catastrophic climate disruption," Guterres continued, saying the majority of countries most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions were behind in their efforts to meet their Paris pledges.

"What we need is more political will and more far-sighted leadership," he added. "This is the challenge on which this generation's leaders will be judged."

Referring to ongoing discussions around the Paris Rulebook, Guterres said: "We cannot afford to fail in Katowice."

# SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA

## 'Dozens of workers shot dead in Papua'

AFP, Wamena

An Indonesian soldier was killed while investigating reports that more than two dozen construction workers were shot dead by separatist rebels in restive Papua province, officials said yesterday.

If confirmed, the killings would mark the deadliest bout of violence in years to hit a region wracked for decades by a low-level independence insurgency.

Citing local police, Indonesian media reported late Monday that the workers were shot dead on Sunday in Nduga, a district in the centre of the far-flung region on the western half of New Guinea island, just north of Australia.

Police and military teams were sent to the area on Monday when they came under rebel gunfire with one soldier killed and another wounded in the firefight, authorities said.

The employees of state-owned contractor Istaka Karya were building bridges and roads as part of efforts to boost infrastructure in the impoverished region.

All construction work in the area would be temporarily suspended, the public works ministry said.

More than a dozen coffins were being readied in Wamena, the nearest major town to where the alleged killings happened.

"Some media are saying 31 workers are dead, some 24, so we really need to check ourselves," said Papua military spokesman Muhammad Aidi.

A team of about 150 personnel would delay its operation until this morning, fearing a confrontation with

rebels at night, the military said later yesterday.

"We think they'll be expecting us," local military chief Jonathan Binsar Sianipar told AFP.

A group of workers reportedly managed to escape the shootings, which were allegedly sparked by separatists angry at some workers taking pictures of pro-Papua independence activities.

The violence was reportedly carried out by rebels who have long fought against Jakarta's rule. Indonesia routinely blames separatists for violence in Papua.

Foreign media need permission to report from Papua and obtaining reliable information is difficult.

Authorities would "chase these criminals wherever they are", said national police spokesman Muhammad Iqbal.

"But we need to check whether it was really (the rebels) or not," he added.

The suspected killings could be the worst outbreak of violence in a "very, very long time", said Sidney Jones, director of the Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC).

"Every time we have had a significant incident that has involved military deaths, even though the main victims here were civilians, it is followed by massive retaliatory response," she added.

# Tabligh faction

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demanding arrest of their rivals who are loyal to Maulana Saad Kandhalvi.

An elderly man was killed and more than 200 others were injured as a fierce fight between the two factions virtually turned the Tongi Ijema Maidan into a battlefield on Saturday.

The two sides faced off over the control of the venue. Commuters were subjected to long tailbacks on Airport Road as the activists marched on the road, hurled brick chips and chased each other causing panic in the area.

The Zubair faction held a rally yesterday in Abdullahpur area and demanded arrest of their rivals.

Also yesterday, Hefajat-e Islam, which backs this faction, held a rally in Chattogram where its Secretary General Junaid Babunagari said followers of Saad were responsible for Saturday's violence.

Hefajat-e Islam yesterday placed a six-point demand to the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through Chattogram Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mahbubur Rahman.

The demands include arrest of who they said are "the killers and the attackers" immediately.

Hefajat also held a rally on the premises of Jamiatul Falah Mosque.

Addressing the rally, Babunagari demanded exemplary punishment of "the attackers".

In another development, the Saad faction on Monday proposed holding Ijema separately.

A rift developed among Tabligh members over the nomination of Indian Islamic scholar Maulana Saad Kandhalvi as the ameer over a year ago.

The faction led by Maulana Zubair opposed the nomination and even compelled the government to keep Saad away from the last Bishwa Ijema. Qawmi madrasa-based Hefajat-e Islam reportedly backs this faction.

# Natore BCL president 'shoots' his rival fellow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Natore Bangladesh Chhatra League President Rakibul Islam Jems allegedly shot former secretary of Natore Nawab Siraj Ud Dullah College unit BCL Shahriar Hossain Rion in Barogacha area of Natore town yesterday at 03:00pm.

It began when Jems allegedly took away a truck belonging to Rion's aunt Rosy Begum around 1:30am and then demanded Tk 10 lakh in order to return it to her, Rion said.

Rosy then went to Rion's father for help the next day. Rion said, "When aunty [Rosy] was talking with my father, Jems arrived and pulled a gun on my father. I came forward and requested Jems not to shoot my father and at that time she shot me on my right leg."

Rosy said Jems, along with Rubel, Rakib and Mukul, forcibly took away the keys to her truck from the driver.

"On Tuesday noon, I went to Jems and requested him to give back the keys but he threatened me with a pistol.

Afterwards, I ran to Shahriar Rion's house."

Rosy also claimed that Jems did not return the truck's keys and that she would file a case with Natore Police Station in this regard.

Meanwhile, Rion's father Alam Hossain filed a case with Natore Police Station over the attack.

Contacted, Jems said Rion attacked him with brick chips and injured him while he was crossing Rion's house.

"Shahriar Hossain Rion has been wounded by his own gun."

Dr Mohammad Ali, emergency medical officer of Natore Sadar Hospital said, "It seems like a bullet wound but we did not find any bullet in his leg," adding that they would look into the matter further.

Meanwhile, Kazi Jalal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Natore Police Station, said there was an ongoing feud between Jems and Rion but they did not know about the shooting and were trying to find out how Rion was injured.

He added that they recovered a pistol and three bullets from the spot.

Contacted, Riyazul Islam Masum, secretary of the BCL unit said they would investigate the matter.

Naogaon

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drawing room of his house in the municipality's Mahmudpur area. He used to live there alone as his wife lived in Rajshahi while his sons were settled in other places in Nazipur.

The assailants had broken into the house while Hossain was still out and kept his housekeeper tied and gagged in a different room.

Then they waited for Hossain in the drawing room.

Hossain had been out campaigning for AL candidate Shahiduzzaman Sarker at Naogaon-2 (Patnitola-Dhamuirhat) constituency.

He left the upazila AL office at around 9:00pm and returned home in his private microbus.

When he entered the drawing room, the attackers swooped on him.

The killers, equipped with Chinese axes and large knives, were wearing lungis and had their faces covered, police said quoting witnesses.

Hearing Hossain's cry for help, his driver went to save him and the attackers also stabbed him before escaping.

Later, locals rescued the driver -- Dulal Hossain, 35 -- who was admitted to hospital as he received a stab wound on his left shoulder in the attack.

The police are yet to identify the attackers.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent contributed to this report.

40 families

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out him," Hridi said in a barely audible voice, cracked with emotion.

Then a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader from Bangshal in the capital, Parvez went missing on December 2, 2013, after some men identifying themselves as detectives picked him up from the capital's Shahbagh area, according to family members who were present at the time.

Hridi was only two at the time while Farzana was pregnant with Hridi's brother, Araf Hossain, who is now four-and-a-half years old.

Fingers gently wrapped around photos of their loved ones, members of some 40 families of enforced disappearance victims gathered at the Jatiya Press Club under the platform "Mayer Daak" ahead of the upcoming Human Rights Day on December 10, seeking government intervention to trace the victims. Most of the victims had been missing since 2013, the family members said.

The victim's families were joined by rights activists, civil society members, university professors and politicians.

They demanded that the government to form a judicial probe body headed by a justice to investigate each incident of enforced disappearance.

They also urged political parties to make specific pledges over enforced disappearances in their election manifestos ahead of the parliamentary polls.

They further called upon the Election Commission to take steps so that their dear ones could return and cast their votes.

Marufa Islam Ferdousi, sister of BNP leader Sajedul Islam Sumon, urged the countrymen to boycott those political parties which would not make pledges over taking action against crimes like enforced disappearance.

Sajedul, the then general secretary of BNP's ward-38 unit in the capital, and seven others were allegedly picked up by the Rab between 8:00pm of December 4 and 2:00pm of December 5 in 2013 from the capital's Bashundhara and Shahinbagh areas.

"Today, our family members have become victims of enforced disappearance. If you remain silent, you will see your family members are included in the list of enforced disappearance

# BNP's strategy works well

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found valid. In each of 11 constituencies, one out of three nomination papers was okay.

One out of four papers in each of two seats was accepted.

The BNP would have witnessed no candidate in many more constituencies in addition to the six had it not fielded multiple candidates, party leaders told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Our strategy has been proved effective," said Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman, a member of BNP standing committee.

Abdul Awal Mintoo, vice chairman of the BNP, said the party has joined the electoral race though none of its demands, including release of party chief Khalela Zia and dissolution of parliament, was met by the government.

"We feared that the government would create many obstacles, like influencing the Election Commission to cancel nomination papers of our candidates to keep us away from the election," he said in defence of fielding multiple candidates. "Our strategy worked very well."

Barkatullah Bulu, vice-chairman of the party, echoed the same.

The party finalised candidates in 88 seats, where only one nomination paper each has been accepted, as the party does not have any alternatives there, party insiders said.

It is working to pick a single contestant for each of the remaining 142 seats where multiple candidates were declared valid following the scrutiny.

Having valid candidates in all the constituencies appeared as one of the major challenges for the party high-command. After the scrutiny, its leaders think the next hurdle is to stay in the race till the polling day.

The party is also worried as to whether their candidates will be able to conduct electioneering freely.

"Even after the announcement of

too," she said, reading out a statement.

"I have read out such written statements on several occasions in the past. I don't want to read it anymore."

Chairing the programme, Sajedul's mother Hajera Khatun pleaded for her son's to return. "I want my son back."

Sajedul's daughter Afsa Islam said she had been waiting for her father since her exams had finished but her wait was yet to come to an end.

"Take me too, so that I can meet my father," she said.

The home ministry and Rab on a number of occasions have denied involvement of any law enforcers in such incidents.

Addressing the programme, Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna alleged that "the government is devouring people like a monster".

People need to defeat the ruling party through voting in the upcoming election to establish their rights, he said.

Enforced disappearances could only be stopped by dethroning the ruling party as it was not paying any heed to demands of the victims' families, he added.

Rights activist Noor Khan said several hundred people had become victims of enforced disappearance over the past few years.

Political parties should make pledges to end the crime, said Noor, who has been closely involved with the victim's families and has been vocal about ensuring justice.

Talking to this correspondent, he said the platform "Mayer Daak" had been working to bring all families of the victims of enforced disappearance under one banner.

So far it reached about 170 families across the country, he said.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of the Central Executive Committee of Ganosamhati Andolon, said the government had turned the state into a "monstrous one".

The government should ensure the countrymen's security through making the country a democratic one, he said.

BNP Central Committee member Tabith Awal said it was unacceptable that the countrymen had to observe day for enforced disappearance.

# Uphill task

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The EC will start hearing the appeals tomorrow and continue until Saturday.

Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukder said the hearing would be fair.

"We will be neutral during the hearing," he told reporters after visiting the desks set up in front of the Nirbachan Bhaban for receiving the appeals.

The rejected aspirants include heavyweight candidates BNP Chairperson Khalela Zia, Jatiya Party Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader and Krishak Sramik Janata League President Kader Siddique.

Some of the rejected aspirants said their papers were not scrutinised by the ROs in a fair manner.

Fahima Hossain, BNP nominee for Dhaka-1, said, "The returning officers have cancelled nominations with the motive of keeping the BNP away from election."

Sarkar Badal, an independent for Bogura-7 and an upazila parishad chairman in Bogura, said, "The government did not issue any circular restricting upazila parishad chairmen [from contesting the election]. So, I filed my nomination papers without resigning from my post. But my nomination has been cancelled.... I will go to court."

Contacted, a joint secretary of the EC said a circular prohibiting such candidacies had been issued and officials had talked about the matter multiple times in press conferences.

According to EC schedule, December 9 is the last day for withdrawing from the race.

# Hospitalised

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he goes to CMH whenever he feels that he has any problem. There is nothing to take otherwise," Ranga said.

In reply to a query, Ranga said Ershad's physical condition would improve sometimes, and worsen other times. Besides, the growing demands of his party leaders to secure nominations had also put him in an embarrassing situation.

Considering the overall situation, he went to CMH to avoid the pressure, Ranga added.

He claimed Ershad was 100 percent physically fit and was in good health at present. But at the same time, Ranga said Ershad may go to Singapore after December 10 for a medical check-up.

Ershad's personal secretary Maj (ret'd) Khaled Akhtar said Ershad went to CMH to "keep in touch with doctors and nurses for proper treatment".

# US, European

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of Bangladesh wrote to the SAARC nations inviting them to send two election observers from each country for the December 30 polls, said EC sources.

Commonwealth headquarters was also requested to send its election observer group to Bangladesh, sources added.

Besides, the EC invited the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) and Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) to send two observers each from their respective organisations, sources said.

Bangladesh is a member of both AWEB and AAEA and regularly pays for subscriptions to the organisations.

The US is expected to have 20 teams, 12 from NDI and eight from the US embassy, along with its agencies like USAID, in Dhaka for observing the polls, foreign ministry officials said.

"I think none is flying in from the

# US, European

USA. NDI team members will mostly come from different Asian countries and the eight US embassy teams will comprise the diplomats and their local members in Bangladesh," said an official of the foreign ministry.

Each NDI team would comprise two observers to monitor various constituencies across Bangladesh, said a diplomatic source.

Washington has already cleared fund and instructed authorities concerned to send 12 observer teams to monitor the December 30 polls, diplomatic sources added.

An NDI pre-election observer team has already arrived in Dhaka and began its activities, said the diplomatic source.

A five-member delegation of NDI had a meeting with the EC yesterday to discuss its plan of monitoring the polls, EC sources said.