



SETTING NUSRAT AFIRE

Brutality followed meet with Siraj

Followers visited madrasa principal in jail, got a 'directive'; attack was planned next day, says PBI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nusrat Jahan Rafi was set on fire two days after detained Sonagazi madrasa principal Siraj Ud Doula gave a directive to some of his followers when they visited him in Feni district jail, investigators said yesterday.

It remains unclear exactly what the directive was but officials said two prime suspects -- Nuruddin and Shahadat Hossain Shamim -- and three other youths had planned the brutal act on April 5, just a day after the jail meeting.

So far, 13 people, including two female students of the madrasa, have been found involved in the crime, said Banaj Kumar Majumder, chief of the Police Bureau of Investigation.

Shamim was among the four who set Nusrat ablaze on the rooftop of the three-storey administrative building at Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa in Feni on April 6, he added.



Investigators found that the attackers, all in veils, were students of the madrasa and included a female.

Briefing the press at the PBI office in Dhaka, Banaj said the group planned to burn her to death for two reasons.

Firstly, they believed Nusrat "demeaned Alem-Ulema" as the principal was arrested in a case filed for sexually assaulting her on March 27. Another reason was she repeatedly rejected Shamim's relationship proposal.

The victim was an Alim (equivalent to HSC) examinee and the incident took place minutes before the start of her Arabic first paper test at 10:00am.

Suffering about 75 percent burns, she died at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on April 10, triggering a huge public outcry across the country.

"They asked her to withdraw the case

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VOICES RING LOUDER FOR JUSTICE--PAGE 3

PAHELA BAISHAKH

Look back at roots of the festival

STAR REPORT

Taxation systems must have gone through many reforms over the past 400 years. But perhaps nothing was so phenomenal than the one reform that took place in 1585.

In those Akbar days, the very introduction of Tarikh-e-Elahi -- a solar calendar in place of the lunar one -- brought much relief to the agrarian communities of the then Bengal as well as many other parts of the subcontinent because it made the calculation of date and months more scientific. Also, it was in consistent with the harvesting season, thereby facilitating the Moghuls in better revenue collections.

Though introduced in 1585, the Tarikh-e-Elahi, also referred to as Fasli San (crop year), dates back to Emperor Akbar's accession to the throne in 1556. The New Year subsequently came to be known as

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A student of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Dhaka University paints a mural yesterday as part of the preparation for today's celebration of the Pahela Baishakh. Traditional handicrafts, inset, that are integral to the festivities, are sold at Doyel Chattar.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN/AMRAN HOSSAIN

Duty-free, quota-free access dominate bilateral talks

Dhaka, Thimphu sign 5 deals to enhance cooperation on waterways, health, agriculture, tourism

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Bhutan yesterday agreed in principle to work on duty- and quota-free access of a number of goods of the two countries to each other's market for mutual benefits.

The issue was discussed at the official bilateral meeting held between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Bhutanese counterpart Dr Lotay Tshering.

Bhutan sought duty- and quota-free access of 16 products, while Bangladesh sought that of its 10 items,

said Senior Foreign Secretary M Shahidul Haque while briefing reporters after the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office.

"Bhutan sought the duty- and quota-free access of 16 goods to Bangladesh market. Our prime minister said she'll consider it. It's expected that it'll happen," he said.

"There were positive discussions on it at the meeting. Our prime minister said the duty- and quota-free access of our 10 products will be negotiated. Now, we assume both sides have agreed in principle on it. Now, it has to

be worked out at the technical level," the foreign secretary added.

At the hour-long meeting, Sheikh Hasina led the Bangladesh team, while Dr Lotay Tshering the Bhutanese side.

After the talks, the two sides signed five bilateral instruments to enhance cooperation on inland waterways, health, agriculture, tourism sectors and Public Administration Training Centres.

These instruments are expected to enhance cooperation on cargo transportation, cooperation in health,

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her visiting Bhutanese counterpart Dr Lotay Tshering at the Prime Minister's Office in the capital yesterday. Bangladesh and Bhutan signed five bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation in cargo transportation, health, agriculture and tourism sectors and public administration training.

PHOTO: PTI

INTIMIDATION OF INDIAN VOTERS

BJP leaders in hot water

NEW DELHI

Two top members of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party including an estranged member of the Gandhi dynasty were in hot water yesterday for appearing to threaten people to vote for them in the ongoing mega-election.

Indian politicians are often accused of using hate or intimidation to win support of the electorate. Soliciting votes on religious lines or threatening voters is prohibited.

A video showed women and child welfare minister Maneka Gandhi, widow of former politician Sanjay Gandhi, warning a gathering of Muslim community members to vote for her or be shunned if she returns

to power.

"I am winning with the help of the people. But if my victory comes without the support of Muslims, then I will not feel good," Gandhi told a gathering during a campaign rally on Friday.

"It will leave a bitter taste. And then when a Muslim comes for any work, then I will think let it be."

Her comments sparked outrage online and demands for action by the opposition Congress party -- headed by her former husband's nephew Rahul Gandhi -- as local election authorities told her to explain her comments.

Bollywood actor Swara Bhaskar on Twitter

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Woman 'raped' by eight men in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A group of eight men on Friday night allegedly gang-raped a ready-made garment worker after physically assaulting her husband.

The victim's husband, another RMG worker, filed a case with Tangail Model Police Station.

Police arrested six of the accused that night and early yesterday.

The arrestees are Yusuf Rana, 25, Md Robin, 25, Jahidul Islam, 25, Md

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