

# Picking up the pieces after July 1, 2016

MUNTAKIM SAAD and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

It used to draw Dhaka's hip crowd and the expat community alike.

Diners would frequent the trendy Holey Artisan Bakery not only for the delicious baguettes and croissants, but also the ambience it offered.

The lakeside eatery at the end of Road 79 in Gulshan used to get busier after sundown until that evening on July 1, 2016, when five gunmen stormed into restaurant -- taking dozens of diners hostage -- carrying out the deadliest terrorist attack in Bangladesh's history.

Twenty people -- including 17 foreigners -- were murdered. Two police officers also lost their lives. The bloodbath did not only leave behind a warzone-like scene, it also left the entire nation in a state of shock.

Following the unprecedented terror attack, the entire diplomatic zone wore a spooked look for months. Security was beefed up throughout Banani-Gulshan-Baridhara areas.

After three years, the verdict of the sensational Holey Artisan Bakery attack case is scheduled to be delivered tomorrow.

The building with large windows -- offering soothing views of the lush lawn and the lake -- that used to house the restaurant still stands there, but it does not enjoy the lively conversations of happy clients.

The walkway on the eastern side of the house, along the lake, has been closed ever since the tragedy.

The building has been renovated by the owners and they occasionally stay there. However, the house rarely receives visitors, said a security guard at the establishment.

"Some renovation is still happening... The family mostly stays at another apartment in Banani," the guard added.

He said entry is restricted, including for media personnel.

The tranquil lakeside property was originally allotted to Dr Suraiya Zabin -- to be used as a residential building-clinic in 1979. In 1982, Lakeview Clinic was built



The building with large windows -- offering soothing views of the lush lawn and the lake -- that used to house the restaurant still stands there, but it does not enjoy the lively conversations of happy clients.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH

on one side of the plot adjacent to Gulshan Lake.

After Dr Suraiya's death, her daughters -- including Samira Ahmed -- became owners of the plot. Later, Samira's husband Sadat Mehdi started the restaurant there, along with his friend Nasimul Alam Porag, his wife, and Ali Arsalan in 2014.

After the attack, the owners were shattered by what had happened to the project that took immense effort, considerable resources and a lot of passion.

Holding their nerve, they reopened the eatery on January 10, 2017 at a shopping centre near Gulshan-2 Circle, just a few blocks away from its previous location.

The new Holey -- much smaller but attractive nevertheless -- has found a loyal client base.

When the owners of Gourmet Bazar, a supermarket chain, opened its first outlet near Gulshan-2 circle and offered the owners of Holey a space to reopen the bakery, they did not take much time to respond

positively, said Ali Arsalan, one of the owners of the café.

The most important thing for them is security; the new Holey is located right by a police check-post, he added.

Sadat Mehdi, another owner of Holey, said, "I don't want to call it a revival... We're just using a smaller space now."

He added they have no plan yet to relocate to a larger space like the previous Holey.

The employees of Holey Artisan, who were in the restaurant during the attack, are also trying to move on with their lives but the trauma continues to haunt them.

Delwar Hossain, an assistant chef who hid in a washroom along with several coworkers, said the horrific moments of the night flashes through his mind every now and then and would haunt him for the rest of his life.

He added that regular customers still visit the bakery which can accommodate around 20 people at a time. They obviously miss the charm of the old place, he remarked.

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## INT'L DAY FOR ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

# Cry for justice rings louder

Rape victims, family members share ordeal at event

DU CORRESPONDENT

The gang-rape victim of Noakhali's Subarnachar upazila yesterday alleged that she and her family members feel insecure as the perpetrators continue to threaten them.

"The accused who are in and outside jail are still threatening me and my family members so that we don't speak up. They threatened to set my house on fire and tried to kill my elder daughter a few days ago while we went to attend a court hearing," she said while addressing a daylong symbolic hunger strike.

"They have bought witnesses and told them not to testify before court, otherwise they will face similar consequence," she alleged.

"We Can", a women's rights organisation, arranged the programme on Central Shaheed Minar premises. Victims of rape, sexual harassment along with family members of women killed after rape participated in the event.

The Noakhali victim said, "I was assured by the government that I would be given a piece of land along with a house to live, but I am yet to get those. So far, no one [from the government] has contacted me to know about my circumstances except these rights organisations," she added.

The woman, who was gang-raped by a group of miscreants allegedly led by Awami League's Subarnachar unit former publicity secretary Ruhul Amin on December 31 last year, demanded justice and urged the government to ensure her and her family members' security.

A sombre mood prevailed at yesterday's event while many shared their ordeals and sought justice.

Hafizur Rahman, brother of Rupa Khatun who was raped on a moving bus and killed afterwards, expressed doubt over getting justice as the case has been pending with the higher court for more than two years.

"A lower court has delivered a verdict but

the case has been pending with the higher court since many days. I doubt whether the verdict will be upheld..." said a teary Hafizur.

Mahbubur Rahman, brother of a woman who was sexually assaulted and killed by her husband, said he does not demand justice anymore because he knows they will not get it.

Speaking at the event, noted human rights activist Sultana Kamal said, "Only a handful of tortured persons have gathered here, but if we look at the statistics we will be shocked. Around 5,000 women were raped in the last 10 months. Why did we not raise our voice against this after hearing the numbers? Because a mentality has grown among us that we would not get justice even if we seek it."

"We have protested against such repression and spoke on several occasions, but incidents of torture are on the rise. The main reason behind it is that we have established a culture of impunity," she added.

A report on rape and harassment prepared by Ain o Salish Kendra and Manusher Jonno Foundation was also presented during the programme.

The report, prepared by these organisations, gathered information from media reports of nine national dailies -- Prothom Alo, The Daily Ittefaq, Samakal, The Sangbad, the Daily Janakantha, Daily Nayadiganta, The Daily Star, New Age and Dhaka Tribune.

A memorandum, which will be included with this report, will be submitted to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with their nine-point demand.

Their demands include, transforming the women and children repression prevention tribunal into a special tribunal for ensuring quick trials, providing compensation, treatment and security to victims during trials and declaring a "zero tolerance" policy against rape and sexual harassment.

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## 3 'JMB militants' arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counter-terrorism officials yesterday claimed to have arrested a top militant of the banned group Jamaa'tul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and two other operatives from the city's Bhatara area.

Abu Raihan alias Mahmud alias Abdul Hadi was made the local "ameer" in 2017 after JMB declared itself "a global militant outfit", said Monirul Islam, chief of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit, said at a press briefing at DMP Media Centre.

The two other arrestees are: Habibur Rahman alias Chan Miah and Rajibur Rahman.

The trio were arrested on Sunday night along with 150 detonators, extremism-provoking books and explosives when they gathered in Bhatara to head for a training camp they set up in the hill tracts, Monirul said.

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## ROAD TRANSPORT ACT

# We didn't fully implement it due to ground reality: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday claimed the government took necessary preparations to execute Road Transport Act-2018, but did not enforce several sections of the act considering "the reality on the ground".

Quader, also general secretary of Awami League, said they are scrutinising the demands of transport leaders to amend some sections of the law. They will consider if the demands are "rational and just".

He was speaking at a press briefing at his secretariat office on contemporary issues, but it was dominated by questions on the new act.

The authorities started to enforce the road transport act on November 17, two weeks after the law came into effect on paper.

However, transport workers in response went on strikes in different districts from the following day, while truck workers and owners called an indefinite

strike on November 19, demanding amendments to the law.

The strikes were later called off after the home minister assured them that they will not be penalised for violations of several key sections of the act regarding licence, fitness, parking and medication until June next year.

When asked about the long deadline, Quader said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal took the "rational" decisions following discussions with stakeholders and considering the actual reality.

"We didn't backtrack on implementing the law... We have taken a soft stance on several issues [of the act], considering public interest and the actual reality," he said while replying to a query.

Quader said before enacting the law, they had necessary discussions with stakeholders for three years, and the law is not an outcome of student agitation for safe roads last year.

# Must challenge toxic masculinity: Mia Seppo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Society must change the narrative of rape from blaming victims to holding perpetrators accountable for using rape as a means to exert power and dominance over women, said United Nations Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo yesterday.

"We should transform rigid social norms that are fuelling and perpetuating gender inequality, address gender biases and stereotypes, and challenge toxic masculinity," she said.

"It is clear that we must stress awareness about the key issue of consent, that only yes means yes, and that consent must be given without manipulation or force," Seppo added.

She was addressing a national dialogue on "Actions against Sexual Violence" at a hotel in the capital.

UN Bangladesh and the Ministry of

Women and Children Affairs organised the dialogue, marking International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

At the programme, a 16-day national campaign against gender-based violence that will run till December 10 was announced.

Addressing as special guest, Seppo called for making most out of the campaign to make 365 days of a year safe for women and girls.

She stressed for "comprehensive sexuality education" in schools and called for strengthening and expanding partnerships to undo the "prevailing culture of impunity".

A specific focus must be placed on legislative reforms, justice response and ensuring essential services, Seppo said. "Let us jointly push for revision of the penal code to include a clear definition of rape," she added.

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## TEA GARDEN WORKERS' RIGHTS

# Fix daily wage at Tk 260: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday demanded establishing the country's tea garden workers' rights, including fixing Tk 260 as the minimum daily wage along with free accommodation and medical treatment facility.

Mentioning that the current minimum wage is only Tk 99, they said the workers are also being deprived of their rights, as the government is not adequately monitoring the implementation of Bangladesh Labour Law Service Rules-2015.

Rights activists, NGO officials and tea labourers' leaders were speaking at a roundtable on "Tea garden workers' rights and social protection: present situation and way forward" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies (BILS), a labour rights platform, organised the discussion with support from Friedrich Ebert



Discussants at the roundtable at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Stiftung (FES), a German political foundation.

In his keynote presentation, Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union's chief advisor Tapan Datte alleged that the rights of over 1 lakh tea garden workers have not been established yet, despite their inclusion in Labour Law-2006.

"Government should take initiatives to protect tea workers' rights, including fixing minimum daily wage at Tk 260, accessible and clean sanitation for women workers, adequate medical treatment with ambulance facilities, quota for the

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# Need to prepare graduates for 4th industrial revolution

Visiting South Korean academician says

SAYED MOHMUD ULLAH



Dr Jekuk Chang

Asian universities should rethink how they can develop their graduates to fulfil the needs of the 21st century, said a visiting South Korean academician.

In a recent interview with The Daily Star, Dr Jekuk Chang, president of Dongseo University in Busan, said the 4th industrial revolution is around the corner.

"So, universities should expand their network with developed counterparts to learn about the breakthroughs in order to

cope with the changes it [4th industrial revolution] brings," he said.

Dr Chang participated at the 18th Asian University Presidents Forum (AUPF) 2019, held in Dhaka from November 22 to 24. Daffodil International University (DIU), in collaboration with Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB), organised the forum.

Dr Chang also delivered the speech on this year's AUPF theme, "Future of Entrepreneurship Education and

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## MEDIA FELLOWSHIP 2019

# Star journo among 15 awarded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifteen journalists were awarded "Media fellowship 2019" for reporting on population control and health issues at a programme yesterday.

The Information, Education and Motivation (IEM) unit of the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) awarded the fellowship under a memorandum of understanding with Dhaka

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## Ban Ki-moon gives his first overseas commencement speech at BRAC University



Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has come to address BRAC University's (BU) 13th Convocation on 23 November, 2019, as the commencement speaker. This was the first time he spoke at a convocation overseas.

Mr Ban Ki-moon accepted the invitation of BU Vice-Chancellor Professor Vincent Chang. The former Secretary-General supports education, global citizenship and energising students, and has been a lifelong believer of the possibilities of education and youth.

The convocation at the Bangladesh Army Stadium was chaired by Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and BU Chancellor Md. Abdul Hamid.

Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, M.P., Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, M.P. and BU Board of Trustees Chairperson Tamara Hasan Abed also spoke at the event.

Other members of the Board of Trustees were present at the ceremony. In total more than 9,000 people attended the event.

Earlier, Professor Chang and Foreign Minister Dr. Momen received Mr Ban Ki-moon at the airport and sent him off on Saturday night following the visit lasting less than 24 hours. This was the second time he visited Dhaka and it opened up the possibility for other upcoming visits.

