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## UNFORGIVABLE

The mindless massacre at Gulshan café



### Verdict today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The verdict in the Holy Artisan attack case is set to be delivered today. Judge Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka is scheduled to read out the judgement in presence of all eight accused in the afternoon, said court sources. Security has been beefed up in and around the court and several other areas in the capital on the eve of the verdict. On November 17, the tribunal had set today for delivering the verdict on completion of placing arguments from the prosecution and defence. During the closing arguments, the prosecution sought capital punishment for the accused, saying that it was able to prove all the

**WASIM BIN HABIB**

The Friday evening fell quietly at the Holy Artisan Bakery on July 1, one of the last days of Ramadan in 2016. But soon the ritzy eatery in the posh Gulshan neighbourhood would be buzzing with activities -- guests ordering coffee, croissants, bagels, pizzas and pastries and a staff of about 20 rushing to serve the diners. The two-storey Western-style café, right next to the Gulshan Lake, with large windows and a manicured lawn, was a favourite hangout for both expatriates and Bangladeshis. On the ground floor, Italian national Nadia Benedetti was at a farewell dinner with eight other Italian businesspeople, having a lively discussion. It was past 8:00pm. Just a few yards away, Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain was catching up with his friends Abinta Kabir and Tarishi Jain. Sitting at the table placed in the rear of the hall room, Makoto Okamura was dining with six other Japanese nationals. Hasnat Karim, a former teacher of a private

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#### TIMELINE

**JULY 1**

- Five terrorists storm the Holy Artisan café at 8:45pm
- 19 hostages, including 16 foreigners, killed within 30 mins
- One more foreigner killed a couple of hours later
- 31 police officials injured in grenade attacks around 10:30pm
- Rab DG urges TV channels to stop live coverage at 11:20pm

**JULY 2**

- Banani OC Salauddin declared dead at 12:14am
- DB AC Robiul Islam pronounced dead at 1:08am
- SITE Intelligence reports at 1:26am that IS claimed responsibility
- Meeting held at the Gono Bhaban among the PM, chiefs of the three services and top officials of law enforcement agencies around 3:00am
- Army, navy, police, BGB, Rab and SWAT prepare for commando operation around 5:00am
- Army-led "Operation Thunderbolt" begins at 7:40am
- The operation ends at 8:30am; 5 militants, one chef killed



#### WHAT FOLLOWS

- Eight firearms, including three AK-22 rifles, seven magazines, and 129 bullets recovered
- Police file case with Gulshan Police Station on July 4, 2016
- Investigation finds 21 people involved; five of them were killed on the spot and eight in anti-militancy drives later. The other eight are in jail.
- Police pressed charges against the eight on July 23 last year; six of them gave confessional statements
- 211 shown as prosecution witnesses; number of seizure list 13
- Court framed charges against the eight on November 26 last year
- Trial proceedings began on December 3 last year and ended on November 17 this year

**A light shines in darkness**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

July 1, 2016, is considered one of the darkest days in the history of Bangladesh that saw the worst terrorist attack in the capital's Gulshan. In the darkness shone a bright light -- Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain whose courage and human qualities continue to inspire people all over the world. Faraaz, 20, son of Simeen Hossain and Waquer Hossain, and a meritorious student of Emory University in Atlanta, USA, gave his life by refusing to abandon his friends during the attack at Holy Artisan Bakery.

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## Rescued from a living hell

Abused Bangladeshi woman taken to safe home by Saudi cops after her video clip went viral

**STAR REPORT**

A Bangladeshi female migrant worker in Saudi Arabia has been rescued by local police after a video clip of her seeking help to escape torture went viral and made headlines. The migrant worker -- Hosna Akter, 25, of Anandapur village in Habiganj's Azmiriganj upazila -- was taken to a safe home in Jeddah on Monday, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Watching the video clip, the foreign ministry directed Jeddah Consulate General to take action. Following the direction, the consulate general sought help from Saudi police and rescued Hosna from her workplace in Najran, a city located around 1,000-kilometre away from Jeddah, the press release said. Hosna sent a video message to her husband in Habiganj urging him to "save her from torture by the house owner". Her husband, with the help of their relatives, uploaded the video message on internet.

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## Shut illegal brick kilns in 15 days

HC asks govt to conduct mobile court drives in Dhaka, 4 neighbouring districts to check air pollution

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The High Court yesterday ordered the government to conduct mobile court drives to shut down the illegal brick kilns in five districts -- Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Munshiganj, and Manikganj -- within 15 days. In response to a writ petition, the court directed the authorities to take necessary measures to remove dust and waste from streets, footpaths, and flyovers in the capital within seven days. The order comes days after worrying data regarding the capital's air pollution was made public. The authorities have also been asked to have water sprayed in dust-affected areas, walls, and trees in the city at least twice a day. At the same time, the HC asked the government to form a high-powered committee, led by the environment secretary, within 15 days to formulate a guideline for reducing air pollution in and around the capital and to find out how the air is being polluted. Other committee members include the chief executive officers of Dhaka north and south city corporations, representatives of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, Dhaka Electric Supply Company and other agencies concerned, the HC said.

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## CLIMATE CRISIS Cut emissions now or face disaster: UN

**AFP, Paris**

The world will miss its chance to avert climate disaster without an immediate and all-but-impossible fall in fossil fuel emissions, the UN said yesterday in its annual assessment on greenhouse gases. The United Nations Environment Programme said that global emissions need to fall by 7.6 percent each year until 2030 to limit global temperature rises to 1.5C. The harsh reality is that emissions have risen on average 1.5 percent annually over the last decade, hitting a record 55.3 billion tonnes of CO2 or equivalent greenhouse gases in 2018 -- three years after 195 countries signed the Paris treaty on climate change. The World Meteorological Organization said Monday that atmospheric

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## ROHINGYAS GETTING NIDS Top EC officials directly involved

**Ctg EC staffer tells court in confessional statement**

**FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg**

Some high-ranking Election Commission officials in Dhaka and Chattogram took money using their office staffers as middlemen and forged national ID cards for the Rohingyas. The EC officials' direct involvement came to light after an office assistant made a confessional statement before a court mentioning the names of the officials, Chattogram court and police sources said. Investigators are now waiting for the green light from higher authorities to arrest the officials. According to the confessional statement of Chattogram Regional EC office's Office Assistant Md Najim, 40, the then Panchliash zone Election Officer Md Abdul Latif Sheikh and a top official of Dhaka NID wing were directly involved in the NID forgery. They used to share the money, Najim told metropolitan magistrate Khairul Amin on November 21. Latif is now the senior election officer at the Pabna EC office. With Najim, five EC staffers, two data-entry operators and three office assistants, have given confessional statements in the much talked about NID scam case filed with Kotwali Police Station on September 17. The Counter Terrorism (CT) unit of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) is investigating the case. So far,

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## ONION PRICE HIKE CIID quizzes 32 more importers

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) yesterday quizzed 32 more onion importers and initially found that importers did not hoard the bulb that reached its highest ever price in recent days. With them, the CIID has so far grilled 43 importers, who brought more than 1,000 tonnes of onions between August and November this year, to "gather information" on sales and stock of the cooking ingredient. On Monday, the CIID questioned 11 other onion importers. The CIID's initiative came in the wake of surging onion prices that hit as high as Tk 250 per kilogram last week, owing to a shortage of supply. Earlier, the field office under the National Board

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## Dhaka trusts New Delhi's assurance

**Says Momen on NRC in India**

**UNB, Dhaka**

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday again ruled out any worry for Bangladesh over the National Register of Citizens (NRC) issue, saying that Bangladesh believes in India's assurances. "The NRC is an internal matter of India and it'll in no way affect Bangladesh," he told reporters after attending a function in the city, referring to India's repeated commitments and assurances to Bangladesh. When a reporter wanted to know about the entry of some people into Bangladesh from India, the minister said he was seeing some media reports, but did not know anything about it officially. "I don't understand what's the panic ..."

He added that it would not be wise for him to make any comment unless he comes to know about it

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## DEMAND FOR KHALEDA'S RELEASE BNP men block road, vandalise vehicles in city

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Activists of a pro-BNP organisation and police personnel clashed after the activists, while agitating for Khaleda Zia's release, blocked a road in the capital's High Court area yesterday. The protesters damaged several vehicles in the area, said police, adding that they also had not taken permission for the demonstration. The incident happened two days after BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said they would no longer seek any permission to hold any programmes. "We will arrange programmes as per our wish," he said at a rally in front of the party's Nayapaltn headquarters on Sunday. Around 1:00pm yesterday, around 200 BNP men, led by the party's Vice Chairman Abdullah Al Noman and under the banner of Jatiyatabadi Muktiyoddha Projonmo Dal, took position on the road and started chanting slogans demanding the release of the party chairperson. The protest caused a huge traffic congestion in the area and police asked the demonstrators to leave. As the BNP men defied the police call, the law enforcers baton-charged them and lobbed tear gas canisters to disperse them. The agitators retaliated by throwing brickbats at the policemen, said witnesses. At one point, the protesters left. Sazzadur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Ramna Division) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the BNP men were staging the protest without taking any police permission.

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**A vehicle being vandalised during a demonstration by Jatiyatabadi Muktiyoddha Projonmo Dal in the city's High Court area yesterday, demanding release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail. Inset, a policeman chases protesters after a clash broke out between the law enforcers and the demonstrators.**