



Homecoming day of Sheikh Hasina today

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 40th homecoming day of Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

On May 17 in 1981, she returned to the country after a long exile.

Boarding on an aircraft of the Indian Airlines, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina reached the then Kurmitola Airport here from the Indian capital of New Delhi via Kolkata at 4.30pm on the day.

Father of the Nation

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A man holds his little boy in his arms as they along with others, with masks on, enter Baitul Muqarram National Mosque for Eid prayers on Friday. Like the previous year, Eid in the country was celebrated without any outdoor programme and Eid jamaat at Eidgahs this year due to the pandemic.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

It's a risky job; we do it to ensure citizens' safety

In conversation with bomb disposal unit chief Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and HASAN MEER

Since its inception in 2006, Bomb Disposal Unit -- a specialised force of police trained to disarm bombs and other explosive devices -- has been responding to calls for services that include possible improvised explosive devices, bomb threats, detecting and defusing explosives, busting explosive-stashed militants' dens, and recovering deteriorated explosives. In an interview with The Daily Star, the unit's chief, Additional Deputy Commissioner Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, talks about the force's accomplishments, challenges and future plans.

The Daily Star (DS): How did the unit start its journey? How long have you been involved with it?

Rahmat Ullah: The unit started its journey in 2006. At the time, whenever explosives, crude bombs and Improvised Explosive



Devices (IED) were recovered from different areas of Dhaka, we had to call the military unit. They would often take a long time to arrive.

So, with an aim to deal with these explosive devices swiftly and to ensure public security, this unit started its journey with the support of the US government.

I joined in 2013. At that time, the unit was looking for an assistant superintendent of police with a science background. My field of study was chemistry, so I showed interest to join and work as an explosives expert.

DS: Can you elaborate on your role? How many bomb calls have the unit responded to under your command?

Rahmat Ullah: There was once a tradition to lead operations from the back-end. There were limitations. Officials would fear getting too close to explosives.

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DEATH IN FERRIES

Govt served legal notice to give Tk 1cr to victim family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rights organisation has served a legal notice to the government, requesting it to give Tk 1 crore in compensation in three days to each of the families of people who died after falling sick due to the heat on two overcrowded ferries on Padma River in Madaripur on May 12.

Law and Life Foundation sent the legal notice through its lawyers Mohammad Humayun Kabir Pallab and Mohammed Kawar on May 13, also asking the authorities concerned of the government to conduct an inquiry to find out the people responsible for the death and to bring them under trial.

The legal notice was sent through email and courier to the secretaries to the ministries of shipping and home affairs, chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Development Authority (BIWTA) and director general of department of shipping, saying that the ferries run under their control.

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Another Eid celebrated amid Covid-19 pandemic

AGENCIES

Eid-ul-Fitr, the largest religious festival of Muslims, was celebrated on Friday with due fervour and enthusiasm after a month of fasting.

Like last year, Eid was celebrated without any outdoor programmes and prayers at Eidgahs across the country due to the pandemic.

In separate messages, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greeted the nation on the occasion.

In his message, the president said, "Eid brings the message of happiness after the month-long fasting and practice of self-restraint. It is a day when joy is spread out amongst all."

"The coronavirus pandemic is threatening both life and livelihood nowadays. In this difficult time, I call on the affluent section of the society to stand by the poor," the president said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her message prayed for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the country's people and the Muslim Ummah.

She expressed gratitude to all those who have been working from the frontline to tackle the pandemic in the country.

The premier assured countrymen that everyone would be brought under vaccination programme as her government by now has contacted multiple sources to collect Covid-19 vaccines alongside taking measures to domestically co-produce the jabs with original manufacturers.

She also urged all to stand by each other and maintain health rules.

Like the previous year, Eid in the country was celebrated without any outdoor programmes as the government imposed restrictions on all social gathering and urged the devotees to pray at the nearest mosques instead of the Eidgah and open spaces in the wake of the pandemic.

Following the directives, no Eid congregation was held at open spaces, including the National Eidgah on the High Court premises in Dhaka as well as Kishoreganj's Sholakia Maidan.

In the capital, people performed Eid

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Bahrain road accident kills 3 Bangladeshis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three Bangladeshis were killed and another was injured when a private car collided with another vehicle in Bahrain early yesterday.

Two of the deceased were identified as Sujon Matobbor from Shariatpur and KM Ruhul Rabbi of Brahmanbaria.

According to the Bangladesh Embassy in Bahrain, the accident occurred around 3am when they were returning to Manama, the capital of Bahrain, from a beach.

They went to visit the beach on Eid-ul-Fitr, the embassy said.

Critically injured Md Rubel from Sreepur Bazar in Chandpur's Haziganj upazila is undergoing treatment at a hospital.

16 killed on roads during Eid holidays

STAR REPORT

At least 16 people were killed and 36 injured in road accidents in eight districts during the Eid holidays.

In Tangail, a bus helper was killed and 20 passengers were injured after the bus skidded off the road and fell into a ditch beside Bangabandhu Bridge east link road on Saturday.

The deceased is Fazlur Rahman (50) of Bogura.

The accident took place in Hatia area of Kalihati upazila around noon when the driver of a Dhaka-bound bus from Bogura lost control over the steering while trying to avoid collision with a human hauler, said OC Shafiqul Islam of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station.

In Narayanganj, a schoolboy was killed and eight of his friends were injured as a human hauler carrying them plunged into a canal in Arahazar upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Nayeem Hossain (16), a class VII student and resident of Bajbi village, said SI Shamim Al Mamun of Arahazar Police Station.

In another incident, a man was killed and three others were injured after an auto-rickshaw hit him in Boro Binairchhara area upazila on Saturday.

The deceased, Md Mohiuddin Miah (50), used to live in the same area, said OC Nazrul Islam of Arahazar Police Station.

In Chapainawabganj, three labourers were killed and six injured after a truck hit a human hauler in Nachole upazila on Saturday morning.

The deceased are Jahidul Islam (23), Rezaul Karim (45) and Abdul Malek (40) of Gomastapur upazila.

The victims were heading to Niamatpur upazila of Naogaon for

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PLAN TO ATTACK JATIYA SANGSAD

Ansar al Islam operative confesses to magistrate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An operative of the banned militant group Ansar al Islam on Saturday confessed to a Dhaka magistrate that he was planning to attack Jatiya Sangsad on May 5, as per instruction of its leader Ali Hasan Osama.

Metropolitan Magistrate Debrata Biswas recorded the confessional statement of Md Al Sakib after investigation officer (IO) of the case Kazi Mizanur Rahman produced him at his chamber on completion of his seven-day remand in two phases. After recording the statement, the magistrate sent Sakib to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

In his statement, Sakib told the magistrate that being "inspired" by speeches on YouTube and Facebook and as per direction of Ali Hasan Osama, he planned an attack on Jatiya Sangsad on the night of May 5, court sources said.

Earlier, Osama had directed all of his followers across the country for executing the plan, Sakib claimed.

Sakib asked his accomplices to gather in front of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with black flags. But before the attack, he was arrested and none of his accomplices arrived in Dhaka as news of his arrest spread across the country, he said in his confessional statement.

Meanwhile, Osama was sent to jail on Saturday on completion of his seven-day remand in two phases in the same case.

The IO did not submit any petition for recording his confessional statement, court sources said.

Counter Terrorism unit arrested Sakib from Dhaka's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area around 7:45pm on May 5 while Osama was arrested from Rajbari district the same day.

Osama, a khatib of Rajbari Bazar Jam-e-Masjid, was arrested for his provocative speeches while Sakib was arrested for announcing an attack on Jatiya Sangsad.

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES ON PALESTINE

'The worst example of barbarism'

Says GM Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Describing Israeli airstrikes on Palestinians as the worst example of barbarism, Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader on Sunday called upon the United Nations and the global community to come forward to stop it.

"Hundreds of innocent Palestinians are being killed every day in atrocious airstrikes by Israel. Thousands of Palestinians are being seriously injured every day. Palestinian homes are being flattened," he said.

GM Quader said even the offices of the international media were not spared from the Israeli airstrikes. The Israeli airstrikes on Palestinians are completely against humanity.

He said a peaceful solution must be ensured in Palestine by forcing Israel to refrain from the attacks through discussions under the leadership of the UN. "The world community, including the United Nations, must come forward to stop Israel's monstrous airstrikes," added GM Quader.

Since the fighting began between Israel and Hamas on Monday last, at least 181 people have been killed in Gaza.



Despite travel restrictions and constraints, millions of people left Dhaka to celebrate Eid with their loved ones at their village homes, leaving the streets of one of the most densely populated cities in the world in a familiar yet refreshingly empty state. Even the ever-bustling Shapla Chattar in Motijheel was yet to return to its old self yesterday, although work has already resumed in many offices.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



University student Jinnat Ferdous is not a paper-seller by profession, rather a social activist trying to raise awareness by educating people on terrorism, communalism, misinformation and religious exploitation. "We distribute these papers so that people of all classes can learn about these issues and be better citizens," she explained. Along with another student, Jinnat was seen selling these special bulletin papers for Tk 5 to people in South Shahjahanpur area of Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Guard found dead in capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar

Cops suspect thieves strangled him as he tried to resist them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a security guard of shops in Dhaka's Bhasantek area yesterday morning after thieves took away some goods from a shop.

The body of Sujon Mia (40), was found in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar with head injury and a scarf around his neck, police said. Police suspected that unidentified thieves killed him as he tried to resist them from looting the shops, and dumped the body in the area.

"Primarily we came to know that Sujon tried to resist when a group of thieves went to steal from the shops in Bhasantek. At one stage, they hit him in the head and took him to their vehicle," said Zahurul Islam, a sub-inspector of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Police rushed him to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Delwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Bhasantek Police Station, said Sujon used to work as a guard at some shops. Thieves took away some batteries, unlocking one of the shops around 3:30am. "A neighbour said he saw Sujon discharging duty there before the incident happened. We are suspecting that thieves killed him," he said.