

# 'IS' KILLS JAPANESE MAN IN B'DESH

Dhaka

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for shooting dead a Japanese citizen in northern Bangladesh yesterday, days after they said they were behind the murder of an Italian aid worker in Dhaka.

Police said the latest victim, whom they named as Hoshi Kunio, aged 66, was riding in a rickshaw when he was shot dead in Kaunia town in Rangpur district at about 10:30 am local time (0430 GMT).

"He was travelling to the town from Rangpur city, where



Bangladeshi police officials stand guard at the site where a Japanese citizen was shot death

he had been living for a while, on a cycle rickshaw when his vehicle was stopped by three men riding on a motorcycle," deputy police chief of Rangpur, Saifur Rahman, said.

The IS jihadist group later claimed the killing on *Twitter*, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, a US monitoring organisation.

The shooting came less than a week after a 50-year-old Italian citizen, Cesare Tavella, was shot dead near the capital's diplomatic zone, an attack that was also claimed by IS.

The Bangladesh government had sought to calm security fears in the country after the first murder on Monday, describing it as an "isolated incident".

Yesterday, in the wake of the second killing, the government tried to allay mounting concerns over the safety of foreign nationals in the country, saying it was taking both murders "very seriously".

"The aim of the murder of innocent people in this way is to make an attempt to create instability in the country,"

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Kamal said.

Kunio was a frequent visitor to Bangladesh and worked on a farming project in Rangpur, about 300 kilometres (180 miles) north of Dhaka, police said.

"Two of the assailants shot him twice in the chest with pistols while the other waited with the motorbike ready to flee," local police chief Rezaul Karim said, adding four people had been interrogated over the murder but none had been arrested.

## FNC elections

# UAE GOES TO POLLS

Dubai

Emiratis went to polls yesterday to fill the elected seats on a government advisory body, but despite a broadening of the franchise some citizens were still denied the vote.

The electoral roll is drawn up by the rulers of the seven states that make up the United Arab Emirates who also appoint the remaining members of the Federal National Council.

FNC elections saw a total of 79,175 votes with a turnout of 35.29 per cent of the electoral roll across the UAE, said Dr

**A total of 330 candidates were contesting the 20 seats up for grabs. They included 87 women**

Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Federal National Council Affairs.

This year, 224,000 people had the right to vote out of a citizen population of just under one million. That compared with 129,000 in 2011 and just 6,000 in the UAE's first

election in 2006. The council has a purely advisory role and its 40 seats are shared 20-20 between elected and appointed members.

But, the authorities have been deeply cautious about their experiment with elections and last year introduced sweeping new

counterterrorism legislation. The 83 organisations blacklisted include not only the jihadists of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group, but also the Muslim Brotherhood of ousted Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi.

A total of 330 candidates were contesting the 20 seats up for grabs. They included 87 women. Meanwhile, in Ras Al Khaimah, candidate Abdul Aziz Al Shehhi died of a suspected heart attack. The votes given to the deceased will later be cancelled.



Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, visits the Dubai World Trade Centre FNC voting station



Sultan Al Mansouri, Minister of Economy, casts the first vote of the morning at the Dubai World Trade Centre polling station

## Germany marks 25 years of unity

Berlin

Germany celebrated 25 years since its joyful reunification, with its leaders urging the nation to muster the same strength and solidarity to face a record refugee influx.

The silver anniversary of the day communist East Germany and the capitalist West reunited as one country comes with Europe's top economy standing at a crossroads.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Joachim Gauck, both of whom grew up under communism,

attended ceremonies in the business capital Frankfurt with the resonant slogan "Overcoming Borders".

In the keynote speech, Gauck focused on the refugee crisis and called on Germans to recapture the same can-do spirit that gripped the country in the heady months between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the remarriage of east and west.

"Today we celebrate the courage and self-confidence of that time. Let us use this memory as a bridge," said Gauck, who was a dissident pastor in East Germany.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (R) and German President Joachim Gauck wave in Frankfurt/Main as Germany celebrates 25 years since its reunification

# Vatican acts after Polish priest reveals homosexuality

Vatican City

The Vatican reacted furiously yesterday after a priest employed as a senior official publicly declared his homosexuality on the eve of a synod of bishops that is due to touch on the divisive issue of the Church's relationship to gay believers.

In a statement, a spokesman for Pope Francis said Polish priest Krzysztof Charamsa's action had been "very serious

and irresponsible", and that he would be automatically kicked out of his post as a theologian in the Vatican.

Flanked by his Catalan boyfriend and sporting his priest's collar, Charamsa told a news conference in Rome he had been compelled to speak out against the hypocrisy and paranoia that he says shapes the Church's attitude to sexual minorities.

While appearing resigned to

the fact that his life as a priest is over, he said: "I'm out of the closet and I'm very happy about that."

Visibly moved at times, but always smiling, the 43-year-old added in Italian: "I want to be an advocate for all sexual minorities and their families who have suffered in silence."

In an indication that Charamsa had planned the move for some time, he presented a 10-point

"liberation manifesto" against "institutionalised homophobia in the Church", which he said particularly oppressed the gay men who, according to him, make up the majority of priests.

He also revealed plans for a book about his 12 years at the heart of a Vatican bureaucracy only just recovering from a scandal under previous pope Benedict XVI over the influence of a "gay lobby" among senior clergy. "I

dedicate my coming out to all gay priests," Charamsa said. "I wish them happiness even if I know that most of them will not have the courage to make the gesture I have made today."

"To my Church, I want to say that I reject and I denounce the current atmosphere of exasperating homophobia. Open your eyes to the suffering of gay people, to their desire for love."



Father Krzysztof Olaf Charamsa