

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

Bombs found at Shaheed Minar in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Two bombs were found and defused at the Rajshahi Medical College Shahid Minar yesterday morning, averting a planned midnight explosion aimed at disrupting the Shaheed Day commemoration. Police suspect that the bombs had been planted in the bushes behind the Minar to foil the Ekushey programme that began at midnight. The recovery came barely after a week of unearthing a plan by Islamic militants to bomb various secular events. Police bomb squads searched all the Shahid Minars in Rajshahi. Securities have been tightened. Rajshahi City Corporation cleaners found three bombs at 9:00am.

One of the bombs exploded when the cleaners threw stones at it. The loud noise of the blast prompted the medical college authorities to inform police. "I heard a loud noise of bomb explosion," said Principal Ziara ShamsAsadi. Police took the rest two bombs they claimed powerful to the Rajpara Police Station and put them in a bucket of water for safety. "The bigger of the two bombs weighs about a kilogram," said a Rajpara police official. The officer-in-charge of Rajpara Police Station said the bombs were inactive, a claim contested by intelligence agencies. He also denied explosion of the first bomb at the Shaheed Minar.

The bomb find has created panic among socio-cultural activists who planned to place wreaths at midnight. Additional Inspector General of Police of the Criminal Investigation Department Ashraf Huda said, "We cannot say anything about these bombs right now. We need some time to investigate." The bomb scare has returned with the death of three persons in blasts at a cinema and a circus in Satkhira in September last. Blasts at four Mymensingh cinemas killed 20 persons on December 7. Seven died in bombings in Tangail on January 17. Probes into the incidents did not make any headway because of alleged lack of interest by the

authorities. But the link of fundamentalist Islamic organisations to the bombings became evident when seven bombs exploded at the den of Islamic militants in Dinajpur on February 13. Police also seized arms, ammunitions, bomb making equipment, communication devices, maps and documents proving that these Islamic militants were getting ready to disrupt Ekushey rallies and other cultural events. Extremist Islamic groups have serious reservations against traditional cultural events like Pahela Baishakh and Ekushey February. The Dinajpur police reported to Dhaka that the militant group.



Students of the Fine Arts Institute, Dhaka University, give the final strokes to *alpana* on the pavements leading to the Central Shaheed Minar on the eve of the Amar Ekushey.

Midnight salute to language heroes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Thousands queued at the Central Shaheed Minar to pay homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement at the stroke of midnight. Barefooted and singing Amar Bhaiyer Roktey Rangano... they awaited their turn to place flowers and wreaths at the altar to mark their respect for Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and many others who had sacrificed their lives for the mother tongue. On this day 51 years ago, the students of Dhaka took to the streets in protest at the denial of Bangla as the national language and

WAVE AGAINST WAR



Some 10,000 people march past the Baitul Mukarram Mosque yesterday, waving banners and placards and shouting slogans against the US-led drive for military action in Iraq.

BNP lawmaker not named in Sabbir murder case, says Altaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
No case was filed against BNP lawmaker Mohammed Giasuddin with the Fatullah Police Station for the killing of a businessman in Narayanganj, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury told the House yesterday. During a question-answer session in parliament, Mirza Azam, an Awami League (AL) lawmaker, asked the minister whether Giasuddin was accused in the case. Newspapers reported that Taimur Alam Khondokar, a BNP leader and elder brother of the slain businessman Sabbir Alam Khondokar, filed a case against Giasuddin and 11 others on Wednesday. Sabbir was shot dead

'Delhi should go by 1992 communique on illegal immigration'

STAR REPORT
Bangladesh wants India to follow a laid-down procedure in dealing with illegal immigrants. "Any deviation means departure from the written understanding between the two countries," Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury said yesterday. Bangladesh has not changed its policy to address the illegals issue, he said at a weekly briefing at the foreign office. Dhaka and New Delhi signed a communique during a visit of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to India in 1992. The paragraph 11 of the communique explains the procedure to deal with illegals from India and Bangladesh and it has no scope for misinterpretation, he said. Any attempt by militant outfits

Narayanganj murder 4-party leaders divided over Giasuddin's role

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj
Leaders of the ruling four-party alliance yesterday gave confusing versions about the murder of Sabbir Alam Khondokar, a top businessman of the town, allegedly by a BNP lawmaker and his supporters. Demands for trial of the lawmaker, Giasuddin, and also proper probe to find out the killers without blaming the legislator now were made at a press conference addressed by them at the local press club.

Earlier reports said Sabbir's brother Taimur Alam Khondokar filed a case with Fatullah Police Station on Wednesday, accusing Giasuddin, former president of district unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal Zakir Khan and 10 others of killing Sabbir on Tuesday. Member-Secretary of the alliance here Maulana Mainuddin told the press conference praised Sabbir as a brave and honest social worker. He mourned his death and demanded proper investigation and

trial of the killers. Asked about alleged involvement of Giasuddin and Zakar in the murder, Mainuddin said the killer can be identified through proper investigation and it is their (police) duty. It is not right to blame any one before investigation. But another alliance leader, Suruzzaman said, "We demand trial of Zakir Khan and Giasuddin" for the murder. He also demanded

Aussie juggernaut roll on

AFP, Potchefstroom
Reigning champions Australia beat minnows the Netherlands by 75 runs under the Duckworth-Lewis method in a rain-interrupted World Cup Pool A match here on Thursday. Damien Martyn's unbeaten 67 at North West Stadium saw the tournament favourites to 170 for two from 36 overs. But, due to the weather, this left the Dutch needing to score 198 off 36 overs for victory. Despite enthusiastic support, they finished well short on 122 all out and never looked like repeating their famous 1964 win over Australia at The Hague. Andy Bichel, called up for this match in place of rested speedster Brett Lee, took three for 13. Dutch captain Roland Lefebvre, the former Somerset and Glamorgan quick, was 14 not out after Jacob Jan Esmeeijer was caught in the slips by Australia skipper Ricky Ponting for nought. But it might just have been a different story had not Feiko Kloppenburg dropped a difficult return chance of his first ball when Martyn was on one. In reply, the amateurs lost opener Daan van Bunge (1) to the ninth ball of their innings, caught at first slip by Martyn off Jason Gillespie. Gillespie struck again to have Bas Zuiderent (5), caught behind by stand-in keeper Jimmy Maher, playing in place of the rested Adam Gilchrist, as the Dutch collapsed to 18 for two. Luuk van Troost (23) went boldly, giving Andy Bichel a catch at deep mid-wicket after lofting part-time spinner Darren Lehmann. And when left-arm Lehmann had his second wicket, Klaas van Noordwijk lbw for 13, it was 59 for four. However Tim de Leede, who earlier took two for 34, struck the first six of the match, Lehmann hoisted over long-off. But Bichel's pace was too much for de Leede, caught behind by the seamer's Queensland teammate Maher for 24, the Netherlands 85 for five in the 22nd over and well on the way to defeat. Reinout Scholte was then lbw to Bichel before Edgar Schiferli lofted Ian Harvey for six. But next ball medium-pace



Australian batsman Damien Martyn dabs one down to third man during his sheet-anchor 67 against the Netherlands in yesterday's pool A match of the World Cup at the North West Stadium in Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Iranian military plane crash kills 302

REUTERS, Tehran
An Iranian military plane crashed in mountainous terrain in southeastern Iran on Wednesday, killing all 302 Revolutionary Guards and crew on board in the country's worst ever air disaster, state media reported. There was no immediate explanation for what appeared to be one of the highest death tolls in world aviation history. Officials said poor weather, including strong winds, may have been a factor. Iran's official news agency IRNA said the plane, which was operated by Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards military organisation, crashed at 6:24pm local time 22 miles south-east of the city of Kerman. The victims included 18 aircrew.

The rest were members of the Sarallah brigade from the Revolutionary Guards, which is independent of Iran's regular army and answers directly to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The Revolutionary Guards, with about 120,000 personnel, were formed shortly after the creation of the Islamic Republic in 1979 and played a key role in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The death toll exceeded that of a 1988 disaster, when an Iran Air A-300 Airbus was shot down over the Gulf by the US warship Vincennes which wrongly identified it as an attacking fighter. All 290 people on board were killed in that incident. A senior source close to the government told Reuters some

high-ranking military officials were among the fatalities in Wednesday's crash. Officials refused to comment on why so many military personnel were travelling together. State media said the Russian-built Ilyushin aircraft had taken off from Zahedan, near Iran's border with Pakistan. About one hour into the flight the pilot told air traffic controllers that he wanted to land in Kerman, which lies 670 miles southeast of Tehran and is normally 45 minutes flying time from Zahedan. "In his last radio contact, the pilot said 'I am trying to approach the airport; maybe the weather conditions will get better'. At that moment, the contact was lost," Kerman state

governor Mohammad Ali Karimi, told IRNA. Part of one of the plane's wings was located in the early hours of yesterday morning and rescuers were combing the crash site area. The head of Kerman's Red Crescent Society said 60 relief workers of his office had set out for the snow-covered slopes in search of the bodies. There were no reports of any casualties on the ground. The Iranian government issued a message of condolence to the families of those killed in the crash, which was the latest in a series of aviation disasters in Iran, most of which involved Russian-designed aircraft.

PM leaves for NAM Summit Sunday

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to highlight "Bangladesh's principled stand on international terrorism and make a strong plea for a consensus-based international approach to combat terrorism" at the 13th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) beginning February 24 at Kuala Lumpur, an official announcement said yesterday. The prime minister leaves for the Malaysian capital on Sunday leading a delegation including Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, the Principal Secretary, the Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN, PM's Political Secretary-II, and other high officials and media representatives. Sixty heads of state or government are expected to attend the two-day summit of the broad-based

Holiday
The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today (Friday) on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Saturday).