



Indian cardiologist Ashok Seth awarded Padma Shri

Internationally renowned Indian cardiologist Dr Ashok Seth has been awarded 'Padma Shri' for his outstanding contribution in the field of angioplasty and cardiology, says a press release.

Dr Seth, chief of Invasive and Interventional Cardiology at Escorts Heart Institute, New Delhi, received the award from President A P J Abdul Kalam at a ceremony held at Rashtapatri Bhavan in New Delhi, on April 3.

Dr Ashok Seth is also an honorary professor at the Bangladesh Medical College, Dhaka, and has been closely associated with Bangladesh. He has trained a number of Bangladeshi cardiologists through WHO fellowship programmes and SAARC Cardiac Society fellowship programme.

The government of Bangladesh has also sponsored cardiologists, nurses and technicians of NICVD, Dhaka, to be trained by him in the field of angiographies and angioplasties.

Dr Seth is one of the cardiologists in the world who have performed maximum numbers of angiographies and angioplasties -- a fact mentioned in the Limca Book of Records. His expertise and skills have saved the lives of numerous heart patients in India, Bangladesh and Asia Pacific region.

Dr Seth visited NICVD two years ago to train the cardiologists and treat patients.

He and the cardiologists of NICVD treated the poor patients free of cost with the help of various companies who provided stents, balloons and catheters worth about Tk 20 lakh.

JS session prorogued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The short-lived seventh session of the Jatiya Sangsad was prorogued last night with the speaker urging the boycotting main opposition Awami League to return to the House in the next budget session.

The session began on Thursday to fulfil the constitutional obligation and had only four sittings. It passed two bills and disposed of other business like formation of 11 standing committees, questions, notices and call attention notices.

AL legislators boycotted the session and staged a black-flag demonstration in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan against the switching off of the opposition leader's microphone in parliament.

At the end of yesterday's business, Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar read out the prorogation order by the president.

Arab states condemn

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message to his Saudi counterpart, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, spelling out "Kuwait's condemnation of these criminal acts".

The emirate would support "all measures that Riyadh may take to safeguard its security," said the message.

In Manama, Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa also backed any "steps Riyadh may take to eliminate these terrorist acts aimed at destabilising" the kingdom.

State Department officials in Washington said more than 90 people died, including 10 to 12 US citizens. The Saudi interior ministry had reported 29 dead, including nine bombers and seven Americans, and 194 injured.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Muslim World League (MWL) also joined in the chorus of condemnation.

The GCC, which groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, reaffirmed its "rejection of all forms and sources of terror attacks".

The Mecca-based MWL termed the attacks "carried out by terrorists in the dark in Riyadh as criminal acts".

The League's secretary general Abdullah al-Turki, himself a senior cleric, said Islam forbade the killing of non-Muslims especially those living in Islamic countries.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called the attacks "contrary to Islam" in a telephone conversation with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, the official Egyptian news agency Menaport said.

He "denounced terrorism in all its forms, which is contrary to the values of Islam and aims to damage security and stability," the report said.

Mubarak said he was "deeply

'Murdered Khulna policeman was on PBCP hit list'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Subedar Ashraf Hossain, the policeman who was killed in Monday's bomb attack in Sonadanga, was on the hit list of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), sources in the Khulna District Police said yesterday.

The policeman was targeted for his bold efforts to contain PBCP activities as chief of Nandanpur police camp under Rupsha thana. He was later transferred as officer-in-charge of MT section of the district police for security reasons, said the sources.

AC Mizanur Rahman of South Zone of Khulna Metropolitan Police said the attackers hurled bombs directly at Subedar Hossain killing him on the spot. Hossain

and his colleague Constable Tayebur Rahman were at a garage waiting for their pickup to be fixed. Police recovered a live bomb from the murder spot.

Constable Tayebur Rahman and car mechanic Masum Ali had their hands and legs blown off by the explosion, and were admitted to the Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, an FIR (First Information Report) in connection with the bomb attack was lodged with Sonadanga thana by Shahjahan Ali, Reserve Inspector of Khulna District Police Lines.

Police took into custody an alleged criminal Abu Sayeed, 31, as a suspect in the case without showing him arrested. Thirteen witnesses of the incident are also being questioned, officer-in-

charge of Sonadanga thana said.

The body of the deceased was sent to Paikpara under Baghpara thana of Jessore district for burial at his family graveyard.

With the murder of Subedar Ashraf Hossain, the number of policemen killed in bomb attacks over the last five months now stands at five. The four other victims are Sergeant Ariful Islam of Traffic Division, and Constables Ramesh, Shariful and Shahab Ali. Eight policemen were also injured in these attacks.

No breakthrough has yet been achieved in any of these five murder cases, sources said.

The attacks on police are designed to create panic among the people, DIG of Khulna Range told The Daily Star.

Cyclone threat persists

UNB, Dhaka

The severe cyclonic storm over southwest Bay and adjoining southeast Bay moved north-northwestwards into southwest Bay and adjoining west central Bay yesterday.

According to a special bulletin of the Storm Warning Centre, the cyclonic storm centred about 1320 kms southwest of Chittagong port, 1255 kms southwest of Cox's Bazaar and 1205 kms south-southwest of Mongla port at 6pm yesterday.

The storm is likely to intensify further and move in a north-northwesterly direction.

Maximum sustained wind speed within 74 kms of the storm centre is about 95 kph, rising to 115 kph in gusts or squalls. Sea will remain high.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazaar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted distant warning signal number two (R) two.

All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay and deep sea have been asked to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution so as to take shelter at a short notice.

WI chase

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Australia were bidding for a 4-0 series clean sweep in the Caribbean, but centuries by Ramnaresh Sarwan and Shivnarine Chanderpaul and stout lower order batting prevented the world champions from achieving that.

The Australians took an early wicket on the final day when Brett Lee had Chandepaul caught behind by Adam Gilchrist for 104, leaving the West Indians 46 runs from victory.

But Drakes joined Omari Banks and the pair took their team to an historic win.

Detained Turkish vessel vanishes from Ctg port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A detained Turkish vessel fled from the outer anchorage of the Chittagong Port, officials said.

The MV Baha Karahasan, a mother vessel, was detained on its arrival at the outer anchorage of the port on April 27 following a suit filed by a Turkish company at the admiralty court of Bangladesh.

Talking to The Daily Star, Captain Kamrul Islam, the port harbour master, said the vessel just had disappeared on Monday, and they could not locate it despite frantic search by the port's patrol boat.

"We have sent messages to our nearest ports to locate the fleeing ship. And we are also going to ask its owner to send back the vessel," said Kamrul.

The vessel arrived here carrying 41,000 tonnes of cement clinkers. The cargo was already unloaded.

Khosru

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kidnapped either from a place under city's Doublemooring thana or from somewhere in Sitakunda.

Relatives, however, believe Doublemooring thana BNP General Secretary Nurul Islam might have a hand in the abduction. Police still have no clue to the motive or the culprits behind the incident. They also believe if he is arrested, there might be some headway in the case.

Islam and three others were accused in a case filed in this connection with the Doublemooring Police Station by Khosru's family on May 6. Two separate general diaries (GD) were also lodged with the Sitakunda and Doublemooring police stations immediately after his abduction.

Islam, who is an influential ruling party leader in Sitakunda and has the blessings of a BNP high-up, went into hiding since the filing of the case.

Sources alleged Islam is hampering the investigation and the search for Khosru through his political influence and connections.

"It is not a tough job for us to find the motive or clue provided we can carry our duties without any hindrances," commented a police source.

Putin

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Alexander Yakovenko said in a statement.

"This leaves no doubt that the problem of terrorism in all its forms has not only not disappeared, but that it calls for the further mobilization and concentration of the powers of all countries to fight against this evil," he said.

Overnight, three blasts targeted residential compounds housing Westerners in Riyadh, killing at least 29 on the eve of a visit by US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

In northern Chechnya, at least 52 people were killed when suicide bombers drove a truck loaded with explosives into a local government building.

Powell, who said the Saudi blasts had "all the earmarks of al-Qaeda," was due to arrive in Moscow late Tuesday.

Gas, power price

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On Sunday, the Energy Ministry had submitted a proposal to increase gas price by 50 per cent for domestic consumers, 18.4 per cent for the Power Development Board and 25 per cent for fertiliser factories. These consumers use 88 per cent of the total gas production. The finance ministry rejected the proposal the same day.

Five killed in Bogra road mishaps

UNB, Bogra

Five people were killed and two others wounded in separate road accidents here yesterday.

Rubel, 16, and Monwar, 30, of Sherpur and another 30-year-old unidentified man died as a Bogra-bound bus from Dhaka crashed into a roadside hotel at Honka Bazar.

Rubel and the unidentified man died on the spot while Monwar at Muhammad Ali Hospital.

A man was also injured in the accident.

In another accident, two persons-Hitlu, 35, and Aminul, 8 -- died when a speeding truck hit their motorcycle at Indol on the Bogra-Naogaon Highway at about 5pm.

A college girl, Papiya Siddiq, was injured in the accident. Protesting the accident, locals put up a barricade on the highway, disrupting traffic for about an hour.

Mock JS session

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ment, and say 'no' if they disagreed.

The response was loud and unanimous with everyone saying 'yes'. The former speaker then announced three, "yes has won." The crowd cheered.

Earlier, some 25 AL lawmakers out of the 58 brought out the procession denouncing the reinstatement of some alleged killers in jobs, the government's indifference to smooth functioning of the parliament, denial of the opposition's right to speak in the House and corruption and nepotism in the administration.

The slogan-chanting AL deputies carried banners and placards and marched through Manik Mia Avenue and Mirpur Road.

In the 19-month rule of the BNP-led alliance, the AL enforced over half a dozen hartal but its

Suicide attacks

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interior ministry announced a toll that included seven Saudis, seven Americans, two Jordanian children, two Filipinos, a Lebanese and a Swiss national, in addition to nine charred bodies believed to be the attackers.

Ten people were killed in the first explosion overnight at Al-Hamra compound, two at Al-Jadawel compound and eight at the Vinnell complex, the ministry said.

It made no mention of an Australian or three Jordanian adults who officials in Canberra and Amman claimed had been killed.

The attacks were "suicide bombings using booby-trapped cars filled with explosives," the ministry said.

Security men guarding the residential compounds exchanged fire with the bombers, which helped avoid a larger number of casualties due to the high "quality and large quantity of explosives used," the ministry said.

The Al-Hamra blast claimed the life of Mohammed al-Blaiehd, a 35-year-old son of Riyadh's deputy governor Abdullah al-Blaiehd, and Jihad Dallou, a nephew of former Lebanese defence minister Mohsen Dallou, as well as two Filipino workers.

The charred bodies of four armed men were found in a car at the scene of the attack, residents said.

The force of the blast destroyed dozens of villas, blew the huge concrete blocks erected to protect the compound dozens of metres (yards) away and left a crater five metres (17 feet) deep.

"At least 44 Americans were injured. Their wounds vary -- some are critical, others were cut by flying glass," John Burgess, counsellor for public affairs at the US embassy, told AFP.

A British embassy spokesman said a "small number" of Britons were lightly wounded but he could not confirm any British dead, adding that the embassy was still checking with hospitals.

Japan, Italy and the Netherlands each reported three of their nationals injured, with one of the Dutch in intensive care, and a Norwegian and a Spanish national of Venezuelan origin were also hurt.

French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said some French nationals were also hurt, but he gave no details.

Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said "these explosions were suicide bombings, which are unprecedented in the kingdom" and are linked to a terror

cell uncovered in Riyadh last week.

Riyadh announced on May 7 it had uncovered an Al-Qaeda cell that planned to carry out major attacks in the kingdom and that security forces were hunting 17 Saudis, one Kuwaiti-Canadian of Iraqi origin and a Yemeni.

Searches of their hideout netted a huge cache of arms, including 55 hand grenades, 377 kilogrammes (829 pounds) of explosive, and 2,545 bullets of different calibres, the interior ministry said Wednesday.

Prince Nayef said one fugitive had surrendered to security forces but provided little information about the cell.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal bin Abdul Aziz said: "It is truly a matter of long-standing that we are waging against terrorism."

Al-Qaeda implied it carried out the bombings in a message received Tuesday by a London-published Saudi weekly newspaper, Al-Majallah.

The group had "been planning major operations for a long time in the Gulf where it had stocked large amounts of arms and explosives," Al-Qaeda operative Abu Mohammed al-Abjal wrote in an e-mail to the paper.

Burgess said there were reports, which he could not confirm, that a fourth bomb targeted the premises of a US-Saudi joint venture, the Saudi Maintenance Co., or Siyanco, which provides maintenance services for buildings.

The US embassy urged the up to 40,000 Americans residing in the kingdom to stay at home and "away from windows and doors" and to remain vigilant.

The embassy and consulates were closed and Burgess said US citizens should not go to work on Tuesday.

With anti-US sentiment running high in Saudi Arabia following the war on Iraq, Riyadh and Washington announced in late April they were ending the presence of some 10,000 US troops, dozens of aircraft and a state-of-the-art command and control system in the kingdom.

The departure of US forces from the kingdom, home to Islam's holiest sites, was the main demand of bin Laden, who is accused of masterminding the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States carried out by 19 Islamist militants, including 15 Saudis.

A Saudi Islamist group believed close to bin Laden's network called on an Islamist website Sunday for revenge attacks on US interests following the huge arms seizure in Riyadh.

Children at greater risk of SARS

Speakers at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Participants at a discussion in the city yesterday stressed on immediate preventive measures to avert any outbreak of the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Bangladesh.

They listed the measures as training of doctors and health workers on all aspects of this viral disease, combating environmental pollution and creating public awareness. The civil society must play a more active role in facing the situation, they felt.

Children will be the worst victims in case of failure to prevent outbreak of the disease, the speakers warned at the discussion on "SARS Epidemic and Environment: Practical Reality".

Organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, the discussion was chaired by Prof. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury.

Child specialist Prof. Nazmun Nahar said children should use inhaling masks as they are more vulnerable to SARS. She mentioned that about four lakh children in the city are already infected with asthma mainly because of air pollution.

Prof. Noyeem Chowdhury, who was the chief guest, said to prevent

viral diseases like SARS all have to be careful to keep the environment clean.

Dr. Mirjadi Sebrina Flora noted that people of all age groups could be infected with SARS virus through close contact with the already infected persons.

JK Boral of Proshika mentioned that according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 7,480 people have been infected with SARS virus so far with a death rate of 7.5 per cent.

Prof. Rashid-e-Mahbub of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University said, "There is no medical preparation so far and doctors and paramedics are not so aware of SARS management."

Jamilur Reza Chowdhury said there should be adequate respiratory supporting system for SARS management.

The others who spoke included Mozammel Hossain, deputy editor of the Prothom Alo, and Robert Breighman of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases and Research, Bangladesh.

Moudud

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smooth functioning of this commission as well as the existing Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC), he said, explaining why the cabinet did not approve the draft bill.

Once the parliament approves the bill, the BAC would be placed directly under the commission. However, the commission would retain the officials who it felt are impartial and competent while it would send the remaining staff back to the government's executive wing.

"BAC would be integrated into the commission under the rules of business of government employees. That is why the issues should be looked into by the SCAD," he added.

Replying to a question, the law minister said SCAD would clear the bill "as soon as possible." "By the end of the budget session, we will place the bill before the parliament. The parliament would then scrutinise it before endorsing it."

College girl

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vehicle. Police seized the vehicle.

A case was filed with the Demra Police Station.

In yet another incident, a young man died when his motorbike was hit by a police van at Merul Badda yesterday morning.

Kazi Mohammad Shahjalal, 32, was leaving his residence at Merul Badda around 7:00am when a police van rammed his motorbike.

The victim was sent to the DMCH where the on-duty doctors declared him dead. The body was sent to the hospital morgue.

The victim's brother Abul Kalam Azad filed a case with the Badda Police Station accusing the police van driver.

Tax: Professionals

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returns," Saifur told journalists after the meeting.

Earlier, President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Yussuf Abdullah Harun proposed making submission of tax return compulsory, saying it would fetch the government around Tk 1,000 crore annually.

Harun asked the finance minister to ensure correct utilisation of funds as much of the money spent on education and health is not properly used.

He stressed the need for reducing interest rates on loan and eliminating complexities in taxation.

However, Saifur said the government cannot dictate interest rate in a free economy. "The private banks should play a responsible role," he said.

In the face of the businessmen's demand, Saifur said the government might be forced into introducing a regulated interest rate system if the situation demands.

Talking on corruption, he said reports of different international organisations such as the

Transparency International Bangladesh are not based on facts.

He cited a World Bank report that said it takes 253 days to get a telephone connection. "How did they count the period?" he asked.

At this, a businessman stood up and said, "Yes, the report is false as it took me two years to get a connection."

The finance minister then said an isolated case cannot exemplify the whole situation.

Saifur also met top economists in the afternoon.

Prof. Rehman Sobhan said a budget committee should be formed to make meaningful discussions on the budget in parliament.

He said more investment is needed for growth and if the private sector cannot do it, public spending has to be increased.

Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud said the stability in the macroeconomy should be exploited to increase investment. He said while quality of the annual development programme has to be improved, corruption in tender process has to be rooted out.

AL picketers club

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Hospital while others were admitted to Shamorita Hospital.

At around the same time, opposition activists brought out a procession from the party headquarters at the Bangabandhu Avenue, breaking through a police barricade on the stadium end of the avenue. They advanced towards the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque at nine in the morning. Some activists suddenly pelted brickbats at a running double-decker BRTC bus, smashing a few windshields.

Police promptly drove the activists back into the party office. A huge contingent of riot police bolstered barricades on both ends of the Bangabandhu Avenue.

AL leaders Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Mukul Bose, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Asaduzzaman Noor addressed a rally there.

Some 25 AL lawmakers out of 58 brought out a procession from the Jatiya Sangsad at around 11:30am. Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid led the procession with MPs carrying placards and banners denouncing the government.

The MPs marched up to the Russell Square where they held an impromptu rally.

AL President Sheikh Hasina and General Secretary Abdul Jalil visited the BSMMU in the afternoon to see injured Navana.

Our staff correspondent from

Chittagong adds: The half-day hartal was observed peacefully in the port city. Vehicles remained off the roads during the hartal hours.

Educational institutions, business establishments and shopping centres remained closed. Thin turn out of workers at mills and factories in the industrial areas hampered production.

Loading and unloading of goods at the Chittagong Port was disrupted.

Double murder

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Friday.

Mohammad Amin Miah, father of Mohsin, one of the two victims, filed a murder case accusing 14 people including Rahid Hasan Sumon.

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case submitted a charge sheet against Rahid Hasan Sumon and 14 others on March 3, 2001.

But the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, ordered further investigation following a naraji petition submitted by Amin Miah.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police submitted the supplementary charge sheet against Rahid Hasan Sumon and 33 others on May 19 last year.

Of the accused, Sumon's father Sultanuddin Ahmed and Munna alias Seru Miah are now on bail, Sumon and 16 others in the custody and the rest 15 are still at large.

When we came back to the only and battered earthen road meandering through Askipara, some

was there and his presence gave him some assurance. We walked on together -- through a typical Garo village where people live in stark poverty. Children run naked. Women work hard. Strangely, men are hardly visible.

I recalled what Jatra said the previous night, in his honest way: "We have no head for ventures. There are some NGOs like World Vision and CARITAS who give us credit for projects. My wife and mother-in-law also took loans. But then we usually eat up the money. Such is our poverty that we cannot roll the money to buy goats or pigs. Rather we spend them to buy food or on some social functions. Both the ladies in