

Two bombings in Iraq kill 22

AFP, Baghdad

At least 22 people were killed in two bombings in Iraq on Friday, including one targeting a Sunni mosque on the day of Muslim prayers, as authorities imposed a sudden curfew in Baghdad.

At least 12 people were killed and 20 others wounded when the bomb went off outside the Hibhib Al-Kabir mosque in the village of Hibhib, north of Baghdad, as worshippers were leaving Friday prayers, police said.

The bomb was planted close to the rear door of the mosque, police said, adding that the front gate of the shrine was closed for security reasons.

Hibhib, close to the restive city of Baquba, hit world headlines after US forces killed Al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in the village on June 7.

Baquba and its surroundings have seen widespread violence in the past few months given the city's mixed ethnic background, with US forces also carrying out extensive raids in the area since Zarqawi's killing.

In the second major attack, in

the country's south, at least 10 people were killed in a suicide car bombing in Basra, Iraq's second largest city.

Basra police said 18 others were wounded when the car exploded near a service station in the center of Basra city at about 12:00 noon (0800 GMT).

4 Bangladeshis

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Tariqul, 20, Khokon, 24, Jamal Hossain, 18, and Golam Hossain, 18, residents of Sarsha upazila.

Witnesses said the Indian border guards opened fire on the youths while they were working on a paddy field at Panchbhulot village.

Later, the BSF troops walked into Bangladesh territory and dragged away two of the injured -- Khokon and Jamal.

The two other injured -- Golam Hossain and Tariqul -- were admitted to Bagachhara health complex.

When contacted, BDR officials confirmed the incident. Meanwhile, local BDR sent a letter to BSF protesting the firing.

Zealots call for hartal

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blood, as much as the government wants, and if necessary to sacrifice our lives to realise our demands," he said.

Several thousand Khatme Nabuwat activists armed with sticks and wearing headbands with KNAB inscribed on them in red and yellow gathered yesterday at the north gate of the Haji Camp at Ashkona of Uttara after the Juma prayers and held rally.

At the rally, KNAB declared a three-point demand and issued an ultimatum to the government for fulfilling the demands before its tenure ends. The organisation demanded that the government declares the Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims, forms a foundation after the name of Prophet Mohammad, and that it recovers an Ahmadiyya mosque in Sakthira to hand it over to the Muslims.

Khatme Nabuwat has been carrying out hate campaigns against the Ahmadiyyas across the country since November 2003 and has been vowing to do whatever necessary to realise its demand.

After the rally, its followers marched towards Naddapara mosque at 4:00pm in an attempt to replace the signboard on the Ahmadiyya mosque, but they were intercepted by police in front of Ashkona Community Centre.

Although the fanatic leader had hoped that over one lakh Khatme Nabuwat activists and a thousand security volunteers would take part in the programme, only several thousand participated in the rally.

The outfit has been holding mass campaigns in Uttara area for the last few days and held processions asking people to join in the attack.

A large contingent of police and

law enforcers were deployed around the Ahmadiyya mosque to ensure security of the minority community. Barricades had been set up on every road to resist the bigots' attack on the mosque.

Meanwhile, the Ahmadiyya community at Uttara, who has been in panic for days after the announcement of the siege programme, yesterday passed the day amid tension and uncertainty.

Different civil society and rights organisations yesterday went to the Ahmadiyya mosque to resist the zealots.

KNAB earlier foiled a religious programme of the Ahmadiyyas in Sarishabari of Jamalpur on June 16.

Nurul Huda Abedi, principal of Jamalpur Aramnagar Alia Madrasa also brother-in-law of captured Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdul Rahman, led the attack.

AHMADIYYAS THANK THE GOVT

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Bangladesh yesterday in a news release thanked the government for its 'stern' and 'positive' role in resisting the programme of the religious fundamentalists.

The release said the Ahmadiyyas expect that the government will continue discharging its constitutional duties neutrally in the future also.

Also thanking the media, civil society, rights activists, the Ahmadiyya Jamaat said 'honest will' of the government and the administration is good enough to resist the religious fanatics.

Nagorik Committee

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going from door to door for collecting information about prospective voters, the EC asked the people to go to election offices to register as voters and to lodge complaints to delete fake names. The lowest tier of election offices is located at the thana level, the letter added.

In cases, eligible voters will have to travel 10 to 15 miles on foot to reach the election offices to check whether their names are on the list or to get registered," the letter predicted.

Nagorik Committee apprehended that there is a possibility that many eligible voters will remain out of the list, especially those who live far from the election offices.

Moreover if a member of a family goes to an election office and registers more than one person's names then the possibility of having fake voters on the list will only increase," the letter said.

Referring to the government's admission that a large number of fake voters' names remain on the voter roll, the letter added that it should not be expected that the so-called fake voters will go to the election offices to delete their names.

The letter also raised the question regarding how the people who died or left the country will go to the election offices and delete their names from the voter list as the EC will not delete their names unless it receives official objections regarding those names.

Signatories of the open letter to the CEC are: Member of Board of Trustees of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) also Chairperson of BRAC Fazle Hasan Abed, President of Centre for Democracy also former foreign secretary and former secretary-general of Saarc Ambassador Abul Hasan, member of CPD Board of Trustees Dr Anisuzzaman, Executive Director of CPD Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Chairman of Square Groups Samson H Chowdhury, former adviser to a caretaker government Maj Gen (Rtd) Moinul Hussain Chowdhury Bir Bikram, Member of CPD Board of Trustees also Chairman of APEX Founder and Executive Director of Banche Sekha Ms Angela Gomes, former cabinet secretary M Mujibul Huq, Chairman of the Department of

Electronics and Computer Science at Shahjalal Science and Technology University Prof Mohammad Zafar Iqbal, President of Women for Women Dr Mahmuda Islam, former attorney general Mahmudul Islam, Professor Emeritus of Research Centre for Mathematics and Physical Sciences at the University of Chittagong Jamal Nazrul Islam, Member of CPD Board of Trustees also former president of MCCI Ms Laila Rahman Kabir, Executive Director of Ain-O-Shalish Kendra Advocate Sultana Kamal, former adviser to a caretaker government also former comptroller and auditor general of Bangladesh M Hafizuddin Khan, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) also Managing Director of Transcom Group Latifur Rahman, President of Bishwa Shahitya Kendra Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, former adviser to a caretaker government ASM Shahjahan, Chairman of CPD Prof Rehman Sobhan, and Member of CPD Board of Trustees also Chairman of Bank Asia M Syeduzzaman.

Protesters damage

lawmaker's decision to construct a road through the graveyard without having their consent.

Abdul Haque, a Bangladeshi expatriate living in the US, said, "I came here to pray for the departed souls of my mother and father but their graves have been destroyed."

Asha Enterprise, the construction company reportedly owned by the ruling party lawmaker of Lalbagh, began the road construction earlier this month.

Initially, a 20-foot-wide road was supposed to be built but later it was widened to 23 feet. This move would leave no trace of at least 4,000 graves instead of previously thought 200 graves, the relatives claimed.

Following the news run by a number of national dailies about the construction of the 1.5 kilometre road over the graveyard, Sadeque Hossain Khoka ordered the halt of work but the construction firm continued its work under cover of night, locals alleged.

AL anniversary

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ousting the autocratic alliance government."

Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury warned those who are 'trying to change the country's flag and national anthem will be tried at this historic Suhrawardy Uddyan.'

Amir Hossain Amu accused the BNP-Jamaat alliance government of conspiring to return to power by illegal means. He urged the people to unite and strengthen the current anti-government movement.

Lawmaker Abdur Razzaq alleged the alliance government is hatching a conspiracy against the country, its people and democracy. "We have to save the country by ousting the government," he added.

After the rally, Zilurina inaugurated the procession around 5:15pm.

Senior AL leaders Zilur Rahman, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzaq MP, Mofia Chowdhury, Obaidul Kader, Mukul Bose, Abdul Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya led the procession on board a truck.

Thousands of people, leaders, workers and supporters of AL joined the procession that paraded the main thoroughfares of the city amid tight police security.

The participants carried national and party flags, banners, festoons, and portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and AL President Sheikh Hasina.

Many in the procession sang patriotic and songs. The historic seventh March speech of Bangabandhu was played over loudspeakers from different trucks in the procession. Awami League's election symbol, the 'boat', was displayed on the trucks.

The procession went from Suhrawardy Uddyan to Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi 32 going through Shahbagh, Elephant Road, Science Laboratory, Mirpur Road, Kalabagan and Russell Square.

The processionists shouted slogans calling for upholding the spirit of the Liberation War and ousting the alliance government. They also chanted, "Today is a happy day -- the birth day of Awami League."

The procession however caused heavy traffic jam on many city streets.

Earlier, in the morning, AL leaders placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban.

2 Africans held

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with two women came to his fast food shop Yummy Yummy at Lalmaia.

At one stage of conversation, the foreigner proposed to run a joint business and collected his visiting card for further contact, Abdul Mujib said.

Later, the Ghanaian and Cameroon citizens came to his shop at Pallabi on Thursday evening and had a detailed discussion on the business. "At one stage, they showed me two 10-dollar notes and said they had made the notes," Mujib mentioned in the FIR.

They also tried to tempt him to do a 'brisk business' by selling dollars. As Mujib asked them to make dollars in front of him, they manufactured two 100-dollar notes, Mujib said, adding that he promptly caught the two foreigners with the help of staff and informed Detective Branch of police of the matter.

At around 2:00am police reached the spot and arrested the two foreigners with the fake notes and dollar-making materials.

The two foreigners had stayed at a hotel on Topkhana road in the city, police said, adding that they are investigating whether 'Yummy Yummy' owner Abdul Majid Chowdhury has any link to the illegal activity.

Matiur's remains

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Ministry of Liberation War Affairs said all the three wings of the defence forces, the Army, the Navy and the Air force have taken their preparation to pay homage to the national hero.

Namaz-e-Janaza of Matiur Rahman and a special prayer will be held at the National Parade Square tomorrow at 10:00am. The coffin will be kept at the parade square for people from all walks of life to show their respect to him.

Afterwards the remains will be buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur with state honour.

On August 20, 1971 Matiur Rahman attempted to pilot a T-33 trainer aircraft from Karachi, Pakistan to India in an effort to defect from the Pakistan Air Force and join the liberation war of Bangladesh. He couldn't complete his desired mission, as the other pilot on the aircraft, Rashid Minhas, forced the plane to crash.

For his attempt, Matiur Rahman was awarded the title Bir Sreshtho, the highest honour given by the Bangladesh government. An air base in Jessore is also named after him.

Tax evasion

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system of collecting information from the customs offices in different countries.

Contacted, a high official of the NBR said the government has no immediate plan to discontinue the existing system.

The official however said the government is considering introduction of collecting dedicated and instant information from the customs houses at all the major trading ports around the globe to stop tax evasion.

Sharing information will take some more time to replace the system as it needs signing bilateral agreements with a number of countries, the official added.

Jatrabari flyover

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expert requesting anonymity.

Under the agreement, the government will not be able to build any bypass or alternative facility for the drivers not interested in using the flyover.

Besides, the joint venture company planned to build seven toll plazas on the ground level which will be a major bottleneck at the flyover, said an expert. Everywhere toll plazas are built on flyovers but there is no example of building it on the ground level, he explained.

The government should try to get the maximum benefit out of such a massive investment instead of becoming hostage to a particular company, he said.

When contacted, Ashiqur Rahman, project director of Jatrabari flyover, found the clause in the agreement logical as construction of any infrastructure parallel to the flyover will not be possible. He, however, declined to go into details about the agreement between Belhassa Accom and DCC without examining all the description.

Rahman alleged that many people make comments without knowing about the investment project. He said this is a new concept in constructing mega projects with private investments and people should know about it first.

The construction work of the project already started and everything is progressing smoothly without any problem, he told The Daily Star.

According to the agreement the company will construct the flyover on built, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) basis spending Tk 700 crore. The construction is scheduled to be completed in three years time. After commissioning of the flyover,

the company will operate it for 24 years to get return on the investment by collecting toll.

Experts said while constructing a flyover, the government should take measures so that the existing facilities are not curtailed. They said such high capacity facilities should not end at a junction like Gulistan as mentioned in the existing layout.

Gulistan is a very busy congested area having a number of connecting roads, so the flyover should not end at that place rather it should have options of diverting vehicles to other places for easing the congestion, they pointed out.

The experts said according to the existing layout the flyover will also not have any scope to integrate with other flyovers or elevated expressways. They further said the flyover built at Mohakhali will also face similar problems as it also lacks the scope of integration with future elevated expressways or flyovers.

"We should not go for any expensive infrastructure which would make expansion or integration difficult in the future", commented an expert.

The experts also observed that the estimated cost of the project for Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover is much higher than the actual expenditure. They alleged that the estimation is high because the company wants to extend the time of concession for managing the flyover to realise the return on its investment.

Ashiqur Rahman, however, said construction cost of any new project is bound to be several times higher than the previous ones due to recent price hike of construction materials including rod and cement.

Blast hurts JCD cadre

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Akram -- went into hiding following the explosion, sources said.

Meanwhile, Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami, took control over the hall after the incident.

Residential students of the hall said they woke up after a huge explosion rocked the hall compound around 4:45am. They rushed to the spot and found Shafin's room filled with thick smoke. They found the JCD cadre's bloodstained body lying on the floor.

Some of Shafin's close aides admitted him to RMCH where doctors said splinters pierced deep into different parts of his body including the face.

Students and the hall security informed the provost and university authorities of the incident.

Assistant Commissioner Rezaul Hossain told The Daily Star that they are yet to get permission from the university authority to raid other rooms of the hall. "More firearms and explosives might be found if a search is allowed," he said.

Hall Provost Dr Aslam Hossain said, "We will investigate how a bomb maker terrorist can become a resident of the hall. The incident has created panic among the students."

Hasina holds talks

FROM PAGE 16

Emerging from meeting, State for External Affairs E. Ahmed told reporters "we talked about bilateral relations. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia recently visited India and now Leader of the Opposition is visiting. We have very good relations with the government of Bangladesh."

Briefing the media after Hasina's meetings, her Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said she had 'substantive' discussions with Sonia Gandhi and Pranab Mukherjee in a cordial and friendly atmosphere.

Saber said regional security, cross-border crime and economic cooperation both at bilateral level and within Saarc came up during the discussion between Hasina and the Indian leaders.

Measures to promote people-to-people contacts were also in focus as Hasina has always put forward measures to free South Asia from the shackles of poverty with great importance.

During her interaction with Sonia Gandhi, old relations between the families of Gandhis and Hasina, traditional ties between AL and Congress and Indo-Bangladesh relationship dominated the discussions.

The two leaders also talked about democracy in countries of the region and agreed that democracy is the best counter to all forms of extremism.

"We need a democratic, secular and liberal society in Bangladesh to stamp out extremism," Saber said.

He said, "We believe relations between countries should not be brought into domestic politics."

It was emphasised that there cannot be economic imbalance in the region and there has to be a minimum threshold of economic development in each country, he added.

Senior Congress leader Karan Singh was also present at the meeting Hasina had with Gandhi.

Meanwhile, Hasina has decided to skip her Kolkata visit tomorrow to receive the Mother Teresa Lifetime Achievement Award.

Saber said Hasina would instead extend her stay in New Delhi by a day and hold talks with two former Indian prime ministers Atal Bihari

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CPI (M) proposes int'l observers to monitor Bangladesh polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Senior CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury yesterday met Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and proposed appointment of international observers to monitor the upcoming polls in the neighbouring country.

"International observers should be there in Bangladesh to monitor the polls. Hasina also shares the same view," the CPI (M) Polit Bureau member told reporters after the meeting.

During the interaction, Hasina also briefed the CPI (M) leader about the ongoing agitation being carried out by the 14-party alliance seeking sweeping electoral reforms before the January 2007 polls.

"We are concerned over the situation in Bangladesh. India cannot afford a failed state as its neighbour. We cannot afford the exodus from that country if the experiment fails," Yechury, who played a key role in forging an accord between the Seven Party Alliance and Maoists in Nepal, said.

He said Left-led West Bengal and Tripura will be worst-affected if there is a breakdown in Bangladesh. "We cannot afford a fragile Bangladesh as our neighbour," he said.

BNP looking for

FROM PAGE 1

President Iajuddin Ahmed underwent a bypass at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore on May 26 and returned home on June 20. Arriving at Dhaka airport the president walked down the stairs and exchanged greetings with Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar.

Following the return of the president, the opposition questioned how Jamiruddin Sircar would continue his responsibilities as acting president while the president is in the country.

In a reply, Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Moudud Ahmed said that the president would perform his duty whenever he feels well enough to continue.

Nazmul Huda

FROM PAGE 1

About the CEC's gestures and decisions regarding the voter list, the communications minister said there might be two reasons behind it.

First of all, the CEC might be over confident about the responsibility the nation bestowed upon him for holding a free and fair post and Arsenal defender Senderos rose high to power a header past Lee.

Senderos clashed heads with Choi and blood started to stream down his face but the battling 21-year-old was too overjoyed at scoring his third international goal to feel any pain.

Korea had their brightest spell in the last five minutes of the half, Lee Chun-Soo seeing a snap effort stopped by Swiss 'keeper Pascal Zuberbuhler and Kim Jin-Kyu dragging the ball wide from six yards.

The Swiss then lost Senderos who was injured making a goalmouth clearance and had to go off in the 53rd minute.

Frei hung his head in anguish in the 63rd minute after his stinging shot came back into play off the left-hand post.

With France leading Togo 2-0 in the other Group G match, Advocate went for broke by bringing on Ahn and winger Seol Ki-Hyeon but they failed to make an impression.

TEAMS SWITZERLAND: Pascal Zuberbuhler; Philipp Degen, Patrick Muller, Philippe Senderos (Johan Djourou 53), Christoph Spycher; Raphael Wicky (Valon Behrami 88), Johann Vogel, Ricardo Cabanas, Tranquillo Barnetta; Hakan Yakin (Xavier Margairaz 71); Alexander Frei.

Yellow card: Senderos (43), Yakin (55), Wicky (69), Spycher (82), Djourou (90).

We have decided to go for indefinite hunger strike as no representatives of the government had a word with me even after the schools remained closed for one week," said AK Fazlul Haq, general secretary of Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association.

He said a procession from Muktagong will march different streets in the capital in the support of their demands today.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Graduate Primary Teachers Association will also start hunger strike till death from 11:00am at Muktagong demanding elimination of wage discrimination and 100 per cent departmental promotion.

Graduate teachers working in the primary schools will also hold a rally and submit memorandum to the authorities concerned, a press release of the association said yesterday.

Additional Secretary of the Directorate of Primary and Mass Education Directorate Rejaul Kabir told The Daily Star that he does not know what the government's stand is on the teachers strike because Prime Minister's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury is now dealing with the issue.

Moni Swapan

FROM PAGE 16

ter to my senior colleagues LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed and Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, but the problems were not solved," he said.

Devan said two secretaries had worked under him in the past but he had no problem with them. "I do not know how this secretary got the audacity to overrule my instructions."

"Under the circumstances, I have no option but to quit as I cannot go for fighting with him," he added.

Vieira inspires France

FROM PAGE 1

ing up for the first time in the competition with Henry in attack, had the ball in the back of Agassa's net in the 14th minute after some neat work between Frank Ribery and Henry only for the effort to be ruled offside.

Ribery, winning only his second full cap, then shot into the stands from the left of the box on the half hour mark, causing Henry to hit the turf in frustration.

Close to the break Agassa performed a near miracle to first block Florent Malouda's shot then scrambling around like a demon to keep out Trezeguet's attempt to knock in the rebound inches from his line.

But while France will have felt aggrieved not to be ahead at the break already knocked out Togo were fulfilling their promise not to make up the numbers, the African debutants looking dangerous on the counter attack with Fabian Barthez having to move smartly to punch clear a shot from Mohamed Kader.

With France's record goalscorer Michel Platini watching on Togo went close shortly after the break when Emmanuel Adebayor picked up Kader's lob into the box but the on-rushing Barthez smothered the danger.

Down at the other end Ribery was at fault again when his effort from in front of goal went sailing into the Cologne net.

But the young Marseille tyro made amends in no uncertain fashion in the 55th minute when beating off the Togo defence to find

Vieira who sent French fans wild when flashing the ball into the top right hand corner of Agassa's net.

Henry made a point of going over to hug the one they call the new Zidane.

Their nerves settled France doubled their lead six minutes later when Vieira, rising to the occasion, headed to Henry who rifled in low and left, the Arsenal striker celebrating by cupping his hand over his ear to savour the cheers from the crowd.

Vieira's night ended painfully when he came off after a nasty elbow to the face, but the reception he received and the knowledge that France now have a second round date with Spain in Hanover on Tuesday will have eased his evident discomfort.

TEAMS France: Fabien Barthez; Willy Sagnol, Lilian Thuram, William Gallas, Mikael Silvestre; Franck Ribery (Sidney Govou 77), Patrick Vieira (Alou Diarra 81), Claude Makelele, Florent Malouda (Sylvain Wilford 74); David Trezeguet, Thierry Henry.

Yellow card: Makelele (30) Togo: Kossi Agassa; Massamasso Tchangai, Jean-Paul Abalo, Dare Nibombe, Richmond Forson; Yao Aziawonou; Yao Junior Senaya, Cherif Toura (Adekanmi Oluofade 59), Moustapha Saifou; Emmanuel Adebayor (Thomas Dossevi 75), Mohamed Kader.

Yellow card: