

Bomb attack on JP rally in Rajshahi : 7 hurt

RAJSHAHI, Aug 24: A bomb attack on a Jatiya Party rally at Shahebbazar crossing in the city today left seven people injured and triggered a violent backlash, reports UNB.

After the attack, witnesses said, some youths went on a rampage and ransacked several shops at the Shah Mokhdum Sarani Market.

However, the meeting organised by the Rajshahi City and District units of the JP to demand immediate release of former President Ershad, ended peacefully after a little disruption.

Witnesses said some unidentified men hurled a powerful bomb on the rally from a distance when JP leader Kazi Zafar Ahmed was addressing it at about 6 pm.

Seven people received splinter injuries in the explosion which disrupted the meeting for a while scaring away the people attending it.

Among the injured, Joni Babu, Mosharrar, Enamul and Malek were admitted to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital while Anisur and Razzak admitted to Sadar Hospital.

In his speech, JP president member Kazi Zafar Ahmed said his party would not take part in any elections under the BNP. He said JP would resist at any cost government move to hold elections without neutral caretaker government.

Condemning the bomb attack on the meeting, he said the forward march of the JP could not be deterred through repression and attack.

Presided over by City unit president Nurunnabi Chand, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Shafiqul Gani Swapan, Tajul Islam Chowdhury, Dewan Mohammad Nurunnabi and Mahmudul Haque.



SWEET SIXTEEN: In cascading Bengali attire, sixteen dancing maidens ushered peace and happiness at the opening ceremony of the VI Commonwealth Youth Handball Championship at the Indoor Stadium on Thursday. — Star photo

20 hurt as JCD, JCS clash at Matlab

CHANDPUR, Aug 24: At least 20 students were injured in a clash today between rival groups in the run-up to the student union election of Matlab Degree College, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said activists of the Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal and the Jatiya Chhatra Samaj locked in the clash following explosion of crackers while both the groups were holding projection meetings for the ensuing election, scheduled for August 28.

Reliable campus sources said a faction of JCD, who failed to secure nomination, blasted the crackers to foil the election. However, JCD and Chhatra Samaj blamed each other for the attack.

During the hour-long clash, both the groups used lethal weapons and hand-made bombs.

Police rushed to the scene and brought the situation under control.

Seriously injured JCD leaders Masud Parvez, Sohel Ahmed and Al Amin were admitted to Matlab Thana Health Complex.

Release of Ershad demanded

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Mahila Party, the women front of the Jatiya Party, yesterday brought out a procession in city demanding immediate release of former president H M Ershad, reintroduction of the upazila system and general elections under a caretaker government.

The Dhanmondi thana unit of the Jatiya Mahila Party organised the procession after a workers meeting, Begum Sabiha Chowdhury presided over the meeting.

RUTA wants VC to quit

RAJSHAHI, Aug 24: The adjourned general meeting of the Rajshahi University Teachers' Association (RUTA) concluded today (Thursday) with a fresh demand for resignation of Vice Chancellor Prof Yusuf Ali, reports UNB.

The meeting held with RUTA president Prof Aminul Islam in the chair at Juberi House this morning. The meeting withdrew its earlier decision of boycotting the Vice Chancellor, till September 30.

Sanjay may be freed on bail next month

NEW DELHI, Aug 24: Sanjay Dutt, one of India's most popular movie actors, who has been linked to the serial bombing in Bombay in 1993 that killed more than 300 people, is likely to be released on bail next month, reports AP.



The federal investigating agency told a Bombay court today that it has no objection to Dutt's release. Judge J N Patel said he will take up the film actor's case on Sept 27.

Dutt is among 192 suspects linked to the 13 explosions that destroyed the city's stock exchange and damaged several skyscrapers in March 1993. Forty-five of the accused are fugitives.

His detention caused enormous losses to Indian film-makers who have invested Rupees 40 crore in films featuring him.

The Hindi film actor has been accused of possessing an illegal AK-56 assault rifle. Dutt was also accused of rendering assistance to the terrorists by storing some of the arms and ammunition in his house.

Dutt says he was holding the arms for his own defense.

Tension mounts on BAU campus

From Our Correspondent

MYMENSINGH, Aug 24: Tension mounted on the Agriculture University campus here following the arrest of the leader of a faction of the pro-BNP Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on Wednesday morning.

Sporadic gun shots were fired today from different residential halls which are under the occupation of two JCD groups — led by Shamsul Alam Tofa and Shadat Hossain Chanchal.

Chanchal, vice president of the University's Student Union and five others were arrested in a massive police raid, while Tofa, general secretary of Agriculture University Central Students Union managed to escape.

During the raid, police recovered a huge quantity of arms from Chanchal's possession including 2.2 bore rifle, one shot gun, one revolver, one country-made gun and huge ammunition from Nazmul Ahsan Hall and Shamsul Haq, police said.

But sources said, supporters of both groups were still capturing Nazmul Ahsan, Shamsul Haq and Ashraf Haq halls. Police have been deployed on the campus.

Some 1500 students, staying in these halls have become hostage in the hands of terrorists. The university authorities cancelled all examinations from today.

The supporters of Chanchal have called a half-day hartal in Mymensingh on Saturday demanding release of their leader.

Hartal observed in Chittagong

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 24: Normal life was disrupted in the port city today as the Awami League enforced a half-day hartal protesting the arrest of its leader and industrialist Rafiqul Anwar, better known as Shona Rafiq.

Shona Rafiq arrested in Dhaka a few days ago on a charge of smuggling and was given a 120-day detention.

No untoward incident was reported during the hartal hours, police said.

All kinds of vehicles, except a few rickshaws, stayed off the roads.

Road communication between Chittagong and other parts of the country remained suspended.

Most of the shops and markets were closed while few offices functioned with thin attendance.

Local govt Bill

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present parliament had initiated the Zila Parishad bill in early 1993 but faced obstruction from the Opposition.

Later, the House formed a 15-member special parliamentary committee, headed by the LGRD Minister, to accommodate the Opposition views on the concept of local government. The committee's activities were, however, stalled as its members failed to be unanimous on its terms of reference.

The special body was formed with seven members each from the treasury and the opposition benches. The opposition members did not continue as they started boycotting, Parliament sessions from on March 1, 1994.

The 147 opposition lawmakers resigned on December 28, 1994.

DU deans

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for expansion and development of education.

She announced that Taka 14 lakh would be provided to the residential halls of the university as subsidy for improvement of diets.

She sought cooperation from the teachers' community to make the government's massive education programme a success.

Deans Dr Ershadul Bari of the Law Faculty, Prof Shafi Chowdhury of the Science Faculty, Prof Moinuddin Khan of the Business Studies Faculty, Prof Sultanuddin Hassan of the Biological Science Faculty, Prof Asaduzzaman of Social Science Faculty, Syndicate members Prof Mostafizur Rahman, Prof Shafiqur Rahman and Associate Professor Moslehuddin Tareq and Finance Committee member Prof Mahbubur Rahman were among those who met the PM.

None has right to dismiss me: Mushtari Shafi

Begum Mushtari Shafi, a founder member of the Ekatortor Ghatok Dal Nirmul Committee, yesterday said none had right to dismiss her from the post of convener of the organisation, reports UNB.

"Nirmul Committee is the organisation of the people and they are the main force to take any decision as to who will be its convener and who not," she said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, protesting a move against her.

Denying the allegation of split in the Nirmul body or any conflict inside the committee, Mushtari Shafi said those who want to go to power with the political support of Jamaat, naturally would try to weaken the agitation of Nirmul Committee.

Manpower export

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for recruiting manpower from outside the country.

In line with this development, Bangladesh and Malaysia reached a settlement on August 16 when a seven-member Bangladeshi delegation led by the Manpower Secretary held meetings with a 14-member Malaysian team led by the country's Deputy Home Minister and signed the 'note of understanding'.

Featuring out the various aspects of the new recruitment procedures, the Manpower Secretary briefed the newsmen that employers in Malaysia will recruit overseas workers through 'Foreign Workers Taskforce' and in Bangladesh BOESL will keep in touch with that taskforce for exporting manpower from here to that country.

The employers have to deposit the work permit fees, levy and other fees to the Malaysian government before the recruitment and no fees could be paid up from workers salaries and also, the employers would bear the air fare for workers when their term of work rolled over, he added.

The Secretary further added that instead of the present individual visa system, 'block visa' would be introduced and employers would provide the employees with the work permit at the entry point and an identity card within a month.

About the fate of the work-seekers, who have already deposited money with private recruiting agencies, the Secretary said, "We have told the Malaysian authorities to consider their cases and they assured us that their cases would be considered one by one."

Under the new procedures, the workers must be of 20-40 years of age and letter-literate.

Dr Harunur Rashid, who visited Malaysia twice within a month, explained the new 'Govt to Govt' procedures conform a number of benefits like, recruitment expenditure cut down to half, job-security, reducing the tendency of work-contract changing, simplification of immigration

Malaysia to allow visitors without visa for 72 hrs

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 24: Relaxing its strict visa rule for visitors from poor countries, Malaysia will allow them entry for up to 72 hours without visas, a newspaper reported Thursday, says AP.

They will be given a transit pass at the point of entry, but only if they show confirmed onward reservation, the New Straits Times said quoting Transport Minister Ling Liong Sik.

It said the decision was made by the Cabinet at its weekly meeting on Wednesday. The ruling will affect travelers from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba who were barred entry unless they had obtained visas from Malaysian embassies in their country.

Showcase notices on BIWTA Chairman, 8 others

The High Court yesterday issued showcase notices on nine people, including the Chairman of the BIWTA, for violating court order, reports UNB.

An HC bench comprising Justice A M Mahmudur Rahman and Justice Mahfuzur Rahman issued the rule upon a petition from Gazi Delwar Hossain, the owner of the MV Gazi Express.

The nine respondents are Nurul Abedin, Chairman, BIWTA, Mohammad Ali Khan, Director (Ports and Traffic) BIWTA, Saiduzzaman, Sr. Deputy Director (Dhaka Port), Shafiqul Haq Khan, Asst Director, Mobin Chowdhury, Traffic Inspector, KM Afazuddin, Traffic Inspector, Havildar Mizanur Rahman of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), Constable Siraj of DMP and Glasuddin Al Mamun, Director M/s Rahman Shippers (BD) Ltd.

An HC Division bench comprising Justice Habibur Rahman and Justice Ruhul Amin, upon a petition on August 7, directed the BIWTA authorities to allow MV Gazi and MV Nadim to ply in Dhaka-Bhola-Borhanuddin route as before, suspending plying of two launches — Coco 3 and 4.

MV Gazi and MV Nadim had been plying in this route for several years, but suddenly cancelling the route permits the BIWTA authorities allowed launches of the new company, Coco 3 and Coco 4, to sail on this route.

But the BIWTA authorities, in disregard of the court order, stopped MV Gazi while it was taking off from the terminal on August 11.



Destitute women demonstrating in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Investing in women good economics : WB

WASHINGTON, Aug 24: With international meetings on women starting in Beijing next week, the World Bank is pressing one of its basic themes: more money spent on women's health, schooling and work will help lift poor countries out of poverty, reports AP.

Two thick illustrated reports, news conferences and statements are all making the point.

"Investing in women is good economics," said Minh Chau Nghien, the bank's manager of gender analysis and policy. Such investment increases production, helps society in general and makes poor people less poor, she argued at a news conference Wednesday.

Beijing confce celebration at Temple of Heaven

BEIJING, Aug 24: China will mark the start of the UN fourth World Women's Conference with celebrations at the 15th century temple of heaven in Beijing, the official Xinhua news agency reported today, says AFP.

The temple was built in 1421 during the Ming dynasty and was used by emperors to offer sacrifices to heaven.

According to Jing Changshun, Director of Tiantan Park, the celebrations, named 'night at Tiantan', will be similar the lavish ceremonies conducted for imperial sacrifices with 1,000 lanterns, incense burners, ancient music and tolling bells.

The Midnight File

BBC Islamabad office ransacked

ISLAMABAD, Aug 24: A group of young men who appeared to be Islamic militants ransacked the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) office in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad today and beat up its two reporters, witnesses said. They said the group of five to six young men attacked the office in central Islamabad at about 6.30 pm, reports Reuter.

Experts critical of FAP

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pared under strong guidance from the World Bank while the role of Bangladeshi professionals, specially professionals from implementing agencies such as BWDB, HWTA, LGED, BADC, DPHE and WASA, was minimal.

So success at operation and maintenance stage of completed project still remains doubtful, said Nisbat, a teacher of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

Prof Z U Chowdhury, from BUET's Institute for Flood Control and Drainage Research, observed that the suggestion of the final draft with the earlier completed national water plan clearly show the lack of vision of the country's planners.

"First they worked out the national plan, then flood action plan and now they are proposing for integration. Why have not they thought of integrating it in the first place as flood is a part of water?" questioned Chowdhury.

Prof Adnan, a former professor of Economics at the University of Chittagong termed the draft as an "optical illusion" and alleged that the contents omitted critical facts and figures.

"For example, no cost figures whatsoever have been provided for the candidate projects and programmes listed in the table 3 of the report," he added.

Adnan, who independently studied the FAP, termed the strategy as urban-based and noted, "There is little in the way of suggested legal or mandatory provisions for involuntary resettlement of the people."

US activist

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The United States has called for the human rights activists' immediate release on humanitarian grounds.

The US is seeking further clarification on the expulsion sentence, deputy White House press secretary Ginny Terzano said in Wyoming, where President Clinton is vacationing.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Chen Jian, speaking at a briefing, would not say when Wu would be expelled.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the trial was held Wednesday and the verdict announced Thursday morning.

It said Wu wrote a confession before the trial, but gave no details.

US Embassy spokesman Robert Laing said Wu and his attorney decided not to appeal. A consular official attended the trial, he said.

Wu, 58, emigrated to the United States in 1985 after 19 years in labour camps for criticising the Communist Party.

Malian president

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President Konare will straight drive in a ceremonial motorcade to Bangabhaban where he will be given a guard of honour. Later, the two Presidents will have exclusive talks.

The Malian President will stay at the State guest house Korotoa. He will offer Jumma prayers at the Baitul Mukarram national mosque.

In the afternoon, he will lay wreaths at the national mausoleum at Savar to pay homage to the martyrs of Liberation War in 1971.

Official talks will be held at the International Conference Centre (ICC) on Monday morning, covering bilateral matters as well as regional and international problems of common concern.

During the visit, President Konare will visit Rice Research Institute at Gazipur. He is also scheduled to visit Comilla to see Grameen Bank activities, Mainamati Museum and Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD). He will also visit the national museum.

Handball

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Seven teams — England, Nigeria, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, Kenya and the hosts — will be competing for the men's championship while England, India and Bangladesh make up the ladies group.

In the opening match of the tournament, the Bangladesh boys team pulled off a spirited 21-17 victory over defending champion England. The locals came back with a late surge after being down 7-11 at half time.

In today's matches the Bangladesh girls' team take on India at 9:30 am while the men's competition continues with Pakistan taking on Hong Kong at 4 pm and Bangladesh playing Nigeria at 5:30 pm.

Move to free

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coming back home unless she manages some earning there," said the saddened Secretary.

Attributing to Bangladesh Embassy sources in Malaysia, Dr Harunur Rashid said 25 Bangladeshis died in Malaysia during their stay in captivity.

Sonia
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urged to take over the party leadership, much to the prime minister's irritation.